The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries

Adolf Harnack

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Dr Harnack opened the course of lectures which have been translated in this library under the title What is Christianity? with a reference to John Stuart Mill. The present work might also be introduced by a sentence from the same English thinker. In the second chapter of his essay upon “Liberty,” he has occasion to speak with admiration and regret of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, confessing that his persecution of the Christians seems “one of the most tragical facts in all history.” “It is a bitter thought,” he adds, “how different a thing the Christianity of the world might have been, if the Christian faith had been adopted as the religion of the empire under the auspices of Marcus Aurelius instead of those of Constantine.” Aurelius represents the apex of paganism during the first three centuries of our era. Chronologically, too, he stands almost equidistant between Christ and Constantine. But there were reasons why the adjustment of the empire to Christianity could not come earlier than the first quarter of the fourth century, and it is Dr Harnack's task in the present work to outline these reasons in so far as they are connected with the extension and expansion of Christianity itself. How did the new religion come to win official recognition from the state in A.D. 325? Why then? Why not till then? Such is the problem set to the historian of the Christian propaganda by the ante-Nicene period. He has to explain how and why and where, within less than three centuries, an Oriental religious movement which was originally a mere ripple on a single wave of dissent in the wide sea of paganism, rose into a breaker which swept before it the vested interests, prejudices, traditions, and authority of the most powerful social and political organization that the world hitherto had known. The main causes and courses of this transition, with all that it involves of the inner life and worship of the religion, form Dr Harnack's topic in these pages.

In editing the book for an English audience I have slightly enlarged the index and added a list of New Testament passages referred to. Wherever a German or French book cited by the author has appeared in an English dress, the corresponding reference has been subjoined. Also, in deference to certain suggestions received by the publishers, I have added, wherever it has been advisable to do so, English versions of the Greek and Latin passages which form so valuable and characteristic a feature of Dr Harnack's historical discussions. It is hoped that the work may be thus rendered more intelligible and inviting than ever to that wider audience whose interest in early Christianity is allied to little or no Greek and Latin.

The first edition of this translation was issued in 1904-1905, and the first volume is now out of print. Meanwhile, Dr Harnack published, in 1906, a new edition of the original in two volumes, which has been so thoroughly revised and enlarged that, with its additions and omissions, it forms practically a new work. His own preface to the second edition gives no adequate idea of the care and skill with which nearly every page has been gone over in order to fill up any gaps and bring the work up to date. The present version has been made directly from this edition. I have taken the opportunity of correcting some misprints which crept into the first edition of my translation, and it is hoped that English readers will now be able to find easy access to this standard history in its final form.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST GERMAN EDITION

No monograph has yet been devoted to the mission and spread of the Christian religion during the first three centuries of our era. For the earliest period of church history we have sketches of the historical development of dogma and of the relation of the church to the state—the latter including Neumann's excellent volume. But the missionary history has always been neglected, possibly because writers have been discouraged by the difficulty of bringing the material to the surface and getting it arranged, or by the still more formidable difficulties of collecting and sifting the geographical data and statistics. The following pages are a first attempt, and for it I bespeak a kindly judgment. My successors, of whom there will be no lack, will be able to improve upon it.

I have one or two preliminary remarks to make, by way of explanation.

The primitive history of the church's missions lies buried in legend; or rather, it has been replaced by a history (which is strongly marked by tendency) of what is alleged to have happened in the course of a few decades throughout every country on the face of the earth. The composition of this history has gone on for more than a thousand years. The formation of legends in connection with the apostolic mission, which commenced as early as the first century, was still thriving in the Middle Ages; it thrives, in fact, down to the present day. But the worthless character of this history is now recognised on all sides, and in the present work I have hardly touched upon it, since I have steadily presupposed the results gained by the critical investigation of the sources. Whatever item from the apocryphal Acts, the local and provincial legends of the church, the episcopal lists, and the Acts of the martyrs, has not been inserted or noticed in these pages, has been deliberately omitted as useless. On the other hand, I have aimed at exhaustiveness in the treatment of reliable material. It is only the Acts and traditions of the martyrs that present any real difficulty, and from such sources this or that city may probably fall to be added to my lists. Still, the number of such addenda must be very small. Inscriptions, unfortunately, almost entirely fail us. Dated Christian inscriptions from the pre-Constantine age are rare, and only in the case of a few groups can we be sure that an undated inscription belongs to the third and not to the fourth century. Besides, the Christian origin of a very numerous class is merely a matter of conjecture, which cannot at present be established.

As the apostolic age of the church, in its entire sweep, falls within the purview of the history of Christian missions, some detailed account of this period might be looked for in these pages. No such account, however, will be found. For such a discussion one may turn to numerous works upon the subject, notably to that of Weizsacker. After his labours, I had no intention of once more depicting Paul the missionary; I have simply confined myself to the general characteristics of the period. What is set down here must serve as its own justification. It appeared to me not unsuitable, under the circumstances, to attempt to do some justice to the problems in a series of longitudinal sections; thereby I hoped to avoid repetitions, and, above all, to bring out the main currents and forces of the Christian religion coherently and clearly. The separate chapters have been compiled in such a way that each may be read by itself; but this has not impaired the unity of the whole work, I hope.

The basis chosen for this account of the early history of Christian missions is no broader than my own general knowledge of history and of religion—which is quite slender. My book contains no information upon the history of Greek or Roman religion; it has no light to throw on primitive myths and later cults, or on matters of law and of administration. On such topics other scholars are better informed than I am. For many years it has been my sole endeavour to

remove the barriers between us, to learn from my colleagues whatever is indispensable to a correct appreciation of such phenomena as they appear inside the province of church history, and to avoid presenting derived material as the product of original research.

With regard to ancient geography and statistics, I have noticed in detail, as the pages of my book will indicate, all relevant investigations. Unfortunately, works on the statistics of ancient population present results which are so contradictory as to be useless; and at the last I almost omitted the whole of these materials in despair. All that I have actually retained is a scanty residue of reliable statistics in the opening chapter of Book I. and in the concluding paragraphs. In identifying towns and localities I have followed the maps in the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, the small maps in the fifth volume of Mommsen's Roman History, Kiepert's Formae orbis antiqui (so far as these have appeared), and some other geographical guides; no place which I have failed to find in these authorities has been inserted in my pages without some note or comment, the only exception being a few suburban villages. I had originally intended to furnish the book with maps, but as I went on I had reluctantly to abandon this idea. Maps, I was obliged to admit, would give a misleading impression of the actual situation. For one thing, the materials at our disposal for the various provinces up to 325 A.D. are too unequal, and little would be gained by merely marking the towns in which Christians can be shown to have existed previous to Constantine; nor could I venture to indicate the density of the Christian population by means of colours. Maps cannot be drawn for any period earlier than the fourth century, and it is only by aid of these fourth-century maps that the previous course of the history can be viewed in retrospect.—The demarcation of the provinces, and the alterations which took place in their boundaries, formed a subject into which I had hardly any occasion to enter. Some account of the history of church-organization could not be entirely omitted, but questions of organization have only been introduced where they were unavoidable. My aim, as a rule, has been to be as brief as possible, to keep strictly within the limits of my subject, and never to repeat answers to any settled questions, either for the sake of completeness or of convenience to my readers. The history of the expansion of Christianity within the separate provinces has merely been sketched in outline. Anyone who desires further details must, of course, excavate with Ramsay in Phrygia and the French savants in Africa, or plunge with Duchesne into the ancient episcopal lists, although for the first three hundred years the results all over this field are naturally meagre.

The literary sources available for the history of primitive Christian missions are fragmentary. But how extensive they are, compared to the extant sources at our disposal for investigating the history of any other religion within the Roman empire! They not only render it feasible for us to attempt a sketch of the mission and expansion of Christianity which shall be coherent and complete in all its essential features, but also permit us to understand the reasons why this religion triumphed in the Roman empire, and how the triumph was achieved. At the same time, a whole series of queries remains unanswered, including those very questions that immediately occur to the mind of anyone who looks attentively into the history of Christian missions.

Several of my earlier studies in the history of Christian missions have been incorporated in the present volume, in an expanded and improved form. These I have noted as they occur.

I must cordially thank my honoured friend Professor Imelmann for the keen interest he has taken in these pages as they passed through the press.

A. HARNACK.

BERLIN, Sept. 4, 1902.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND GERMAN EDITION

THE second edition is about ten sheets larger than the first, six of these extra sheets falling within Book IV. The number of fresh places where I have been able to verify the existence of Christianity prior to Constantine is infinitesimally small; my critics have not been able to increase the list. But I have tried to put more colour into the description of the spread of the religion throughout the various provinces, and also to incorporate several out-of-the-way passages. Several new sections have been added; the excursus on the "Alleged Council of Antioch," at the close of the first book, has been omitted as superfluous, however, though not as erroneous. After my disclaimer in the preface to the first edition, some may be surprised to find that maps are now added. What determined me to take this step was the number of requests for them, based invariably on the opinion that the majority of readers cannot form any idea of the diffusion of Christianity unless they have maps, while the ordinary maps of the ancient world require detailed study in order to be of any use for this special purpose. Consequently, I have overcome my scruples and drawn the eleven maps which are appended to the second volume. I attach most importance to the attempt which I have made in the second map. It was a venture, but it sums up all the results of my work, and without it the following maps would be misleading, since they all depend more or less upon incidental information about the period.

The index I have worked over again myself.

A. H.

BERLIN, Dec. 1, 1905.

BOOK I

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER 1

JUDAISM: ITS DIFFUSION AND LIMITS

To nascent Christianity the synagogues in the Diaspora meant more than the fontes persecutionum of Tertullian's complaint; they also formed the most important presupposition for the rise and growth of Christian communities throughout the empire. The network of the synagogues furnished the Christian propaganda with centres and courses for its development, and in this way the mission of the new religion, which was undertaken in the name of the God of Abraham and Moses, found a sphere already prepared for itself.

Surveys of the spread of Judaism at the opening of our period have been often made, most recently and with especial care by Schürer (Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes, Bd. III.(3) pp. 1-38; Eng. trans., II. ii. 220 f.). Here we are concerned with the following points:

(1) There were Jews in most of the Roman provinces, at any rate in all those which touched or adjoined the Mediterranean, to say nothing of the Black Sea; eastward also, beyond Syria, they were thickly massed in Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Media.1

(2) Their numbers were greatest in Syria,2 next to that in Egypt (in all the nomes as far as Upper Egypt),3 Rome, and the provinces of Asia Minor4. The extent to which they had made their way into all the local conditions is made particularly clear by the evidence bearing on the sphere last named, where, as on the north coast of the Black Sea, Judaism also played some part in the blending of religions (e.g., the cult of “The most high God,” and of the God called “Sabbatistes”). The same holds true of Syria, though the evidence here is not taken so plainly from direct testimony, but drawn indirectly from the historical presuppositions of Christian gnosticism.5 In Africa, along the coast-line, from the proconsular province to Mauretania, Jews were numerous.6 At Lyons, in the time of Irenæus,7 they do not seem to have abounded; but in southern Gaul, as later sources indicate, their numbers cannot have been small, whilst in Spain, as is obvious from the resolutions of the synod of Elvira (c. 300 A.D.), they were both populous and powerful. Finally, we may assume that in Italy—apart from Rome and Southern Italy, where they were widely spread—they were not exactly numerous under the early empire, although even in Upper Italy at that period individual synagogues were in existence. This feature was due to the history of Italian civilization, and it is corroborated by the fact that, beyond Rome and Southern Italy, early Jewish inscriptions are scanty and uncertain. “The Jews were the first to exemplify that kind of patriotism which the Parsees, the Armenians, and to some extent the modern Greeks were to display in later ages, viz. a patriotism of extraordinary warmth, but not attached to any one locality, a patriotism of traders who wandered up and down the world and everywhere hailed each other as brethren, a patriotism which aimed at forming not great, compact states but small, autonomous communities under the ægis of other states.”8

(3) The exact number of Jews in the Diaspora can only be calculated roughly. Our information with regard to figures is as follows. Speaking of the Jews in Babylonia, Josephus declares there were “not a few myriads,” or “innumerable myriads'” in that region.9 At Damascus, during the great war, he narrates (Bell. Jud., ii. 20. 2) how ten thousand Jews were massacred; elsewhere in the same book (vii. 8. 7) he writes “eighteen thousand.'” Of the five civic quarters of Alexandria, two were called “the Jewish” (according to Philo, In Flacc. 8), since they were mainly inhabited by Jews; in the other quarters Jews were also to be met with, and Philo (In Flacc. 6) reckons their total number in Egypt (as far as the borders of Ethiopia) to have been at least 100 myriads (= a million). In the time of Sulla the Jews of Cyrene, according to

Strabo (cited by Josephus, Antiq., xiv. 7. 2), formed one of the four classes into which the population was divided, the others being citizens, peasants, and resident aliens. During the great rebellion in Trajan's reign they are said to have slaughtered 220,000 unbelievers in Cyrene (Dio Cassius, lxviii. 32), in revenge for which “many myriads” of their own number were put to death by Marcus Turbo (Euseb., H.E., iv. 2). The Jewish revolt spread also to Cyprus, where 240,000 Gentiles are said to have been murdered by them.10 As for the number of Jews in Rome, we have these two statements: first, that in B.C. 4 a Jewish embassy from Palestine to the metropolis was joined by 8000 local Jews (Joseph., Antiq., xvii. 2. 1; Bell., ii. 6. 1); and secondly, that in 19 A.D., when Tiberius banished the whole Jewish community from Rome, 4000 able-bodied Jews were deported to Sardinia. The latter statement merits especial attention, as it is handed down by Tacitus as well as Josephus.11 After the fall of Sejanus, when Tiberius revoked the edict (Philo, Legat. 24), the Jews at once made up their former numbers in Rome (Dio Cassius, lx. 6, πλεονάσαντες αὖθις); the movement for their expulsion reappeared under Claudius in 49 A.D., but the enforcement of the order looked to be so risky that it was presently withdrawn and limited to a prohibition of religious gatherings.12 In Rome the Jews dwelt chiefly in Trastevere; but as Jewish churchyards have been discovered in various parts of the city, they were also to be met with in other quarters as well.

A glance at these numerical statements shows13 that only two possess any significance. The first is Philo's, that the Egyptian Jews amounted to quite a million. Philo's comparatively precise mode of expression (οὐκ ἀποδέουσι μυριάδων ἑκατὸν οἱ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν καὶ τὴν χώραν Ἰουδᾶιοι κατοικοῦντες ἀπὸ τοῦ πρὸς Λιβύην καταβαθμοῦ μέχρι τῶν ὁρίων Αἰθιοπίας: “The Jews resident in Alexandria and in the country from the descent to Libya back to the bounds of Ethiopia, do not fall short of a million”), taken together with the fact that registers for the purpose of taxation were accurately kept in Egypt, renders it probable that we have here to do with no fanciful number. Nor does the figure itself appear too high, when we consider that it includes the whole Jewish population of Alexandria. As the entire population of Egypt (under Vespasian) amounted to seven or eight millions, the Jews thus turn out to have formed a seventh or an eighth of the whole (somewhere about thirteen per cent.).14 Syria is the only province of the empire where we must assume a higher percentage of Jews among the population;15 in all the other provinces their numbers were smaller.

The second passage of importance is the statement that Tiberius deported four thousand able-bodied Jews to Sardinia—Jews, be it noted, not (as Tacitus declares) Egyptians and Jews, for the distinct evidence of Josephus on this point is corroborated by that of Suetonius (see above), who, after speaking at first of Jews and Egyptians, adds, by way of closer definition, “Judaeorum juventatem per speciem sacramenti in provincias gravioris caeli distribuit.'” Four thousand able-bodied men answers to a total of at least ten thousand human beings,16 and something like this represented the size of the contemporary Jewish community at Rome. Now, of course, this reckoning agrees but poorly with the other piece of information, viz., that twenty-three years earlier a Palestinian deputation had its ranks swelled by 8000 Roman Jews. Either Josephus has inserted the total number of Jews in this passage, or he is guilty of serious exaggeration. The most reliable estimate of the Roman population under Augustus (in B.C. 5) gives 320,000 male plebeians over ten years of age. As women were notoriously in a minority at Rome, this number represents about 600,000 inhabitants (excluding slaves),17 so that about 10,000 Jews18 would be equivalent to about one-sixtieth of the population.19 Tiberius could still risk the strong measure of expelling them; but when Claudius tried to repeat the experiment thirty years later, he was unable to carry it out.

We can hardly suppose that the Jewish community at Rome continued to show any

considerable increase after the great rebellions and wars under Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and Hadrian, since the decimation of the Jews in many provinces of the empire must have re-acted upon the Jewish community in the capital. Details on this point, however, are wanting.

If the Jews in Egypt amounted to about a million, those in Syria were still more numerous. Allowing about 700,000 Jews to Palestine—and at this moment between 600,000 and 650,000 people live there; see Baedeker's Palestine, 1900, p. lvii.—we are within the mark at all events when we reckon the Jews in the remaining districts of the empire (i.e., in Asia Minor, Greece, Cyrene, Rome, Italy, Gaul, Spain, etc.) at about one million and a half. In this way a grand total of about four or four and a half million Jews is reached. Now, it is an extremely surprising thing, a thing that seems at first to throw doubt upon any estimate whatsoever of the population, to say that while (according to Beloch) the population of the whole Roman empire under Augustus is reported to have amounted to nearly fifty-four millions, the Jews in the empire at that period must be reckoned at not less than four or four and a half millions. Even if one raises Beloch's figure to sixty millions, how can the Jews have represented seven per cent. of the total population? Either our calculation is wrong—and mistakes are almost inevitable in a matter like this—or the propaganda of Judaism was extremely successful in the provinces; for it is utterly impossible to explain the large total of Jews in the Diaspora by the mere fact of the fertility of Jewish families. We must assume, I imagine, that a very large number of pagans, and in particular of kindred Semites of the lower class, trooped over to the religion of Yahweh20—for the Jews of the Diaspora were genuine Jews only to a certain extent. Now if Judaism was actually so vigorous throughout the empire as to embrace about seven percent. of the total population under Augustus,21 one begins to realize its great influence and social importance. And in order to comprehend the propaganda and diffusion of Christianity, it is quite essential to understand that the religion under whose “shadow” it made its way out into the world, not merely contained elements of vital significance but had expanded till it embraced a considerable proportion of the world's population.

Our survey would not be complete if we did not glance, however briefly, at the nature of the Jewish propaganda in the empire,22 for some part, at least, of her missionary zeal was inherited by Christianity from Judaism. As I shall have to refer to this Jewish mission wherever any means employed in the Christian propaganda are taken over from Judaism, I shall confine myself in the meantime to some general observations.

It is surprising that a religion which raised so stout a wall of partition between itself and all other religions, and which in practice and prospects alike was bound up so closely with its nation, should have possessed a missionary impulse23 of such vigour and attained so large a measure of success. This is not ultimately to be explained by any craving for power or ambition; it is a proof24 that Judaism, as a religion, was already blossoming out by some inward transformation and becoming across between a national religion and a world-religion (confession of faith and a church). Proudly the Jew felt that he had something to say and bring to the world, which concerned all men, viz., The one and only spiritual God, creator of heaven and earth, with his holy moral law. It was owing to the consciousness of this (Rom. ii. 19 f.) that he felt missions to be a duty. The Jewish propaganda throughout the empire was primarily the proclamation of the one and only God, of his moral law, and of his judgment; to this everything else became secondary. The object in many cases might be pure proselytism (Matt. xxiii. 15), but Judaism was quite in earnest in overthrowing dumb idols and inducing pagans to recognize their creator and judge, for in this the honour of the God of Israel was concerned.

It is in this light that one must judge a phenomenon which is misunderstood so long as we

explain it by means of specious analogies—I mean, the different degrees and phases of proselytism. In other religions, variations of this kind usually proceed from an endeavour to render the moral precepts imposed by the religion somewhat easier for the proselyte. In Judaism this tendency never prevailed, at least never outright. On the contrary, the moral demand remained unlowered. As the recognition of God was considered the cardinal point, Judaism was in a position to depreciate the claims of the cultus and of ceremonies, and the different kinds of Jewish proselytism were almost entirely due to the different degrees in which the ceremonial precepts of the Law were observed. The fine generosity of such an attitude was, of course, facilitated by the fact that a man who let even his little finger be grasped by this religion, thereby became a Jew.25 Again, strictly speaking, even a born Jew was only a proselyte so soon as he left the soil of Palestine, since thereby he parted with the sacrificial system; besides, he was unable in a foreign country to fulfil, or at least to fulfil satisfactorily, many other precepts of the Law.26 For generations there had been a gradual neutralising of the sacrificial system proceeding apace within the inner life of Judaism—even among the Pharisees; and this coincided with an historical situation which obliged by far the greater number of the adherents of the religion to live amid conditions which had made them strangers for a long period to the sacrificial system. In this way they were also rendered accessible on every side of their spiritual nature to foreign cults and philosophies, and thus there originated Persian and Græco-Jewish religious alloys, several of whose phenomena threatened even the monotheistic belief. The destruction of the temple by the Romans really destroyed nothing; it may be viewed as an incident organic to the history of Jewish religion. When pious people held God's ways at that crisis were incomprehensible, they were but deluding themselves.

For a long while the popular opinion throughout the empire was that the Jews worshipped God without images, and that they had no temple. Now, although both of these “atheistic” features might appear to the rude populace even more offensive and despicable than circumcision, Sabbath observance, the prohibition of swine's flesh, etc., nevertheless they made a deep impression upon wide circles of educated people.27 Thanks to these traits, together with its monotheism—for which the age was beginning to be ripe28—Judaism seemed as if it were elevated to the rank of philosophy, and inasmuch as it still continued to be a religion, it exhibited a type of mental and spiritual life which was superior to anything of the kind.29 At bottom, there was nothing artificial in a Philo or in a Josephus exhibiting Judaism as the philosophic religion, for this kind of apologetic corresponded to the actual situation in which they found themselves30; it was as the revealed and also the philosophic religion, equipped with “the oldest book in the world,”that Judaism developed her great propaganda.31 The account given by Josephus (Bell., vii. 3. 3) of the situation at Antioch, viz., that “the Jews continued to attract a large number of the Greeks to their services, making them in a sense part of themselves”—this holds true of the Jewish mission in general.32 The adhesion of Greeks and Romans to Judaism ranged over the entire gamut of possible degrees, from the superstitious adoption of certain rites up to complete identification. “God-fearing” pagans constituted the majority; proselytes (i.e., people who were actually Jews, obliged to keep the whole Law), there is no doubt, were comparatively few in number.33 Immersion was more indispensable than even circumcision as a condition of entrance.34

While all this was of the utmost importance for the Christian mission which came afterwards, at least equal moment attaches to one vital omission in the Jewish missionary preaching: viz., that no Gentile, in the first generation at least, could become a real son of Abraham. His rank before God remained inferior. Thus it also remained very doubtful how far any proselyte—to say nothing of the “God-fearing”—had a share in the glorious promises of the future. The religion which repairs this omission will drive Judaism from the field.35 When it proclaims this message

in its fulness, that the last will be first, that freedom from the Law is the normal and higher life, and that the observance of the Law, even at its best, is a thing to be tolerated and no more, it will win thousands where the previous missionary preaching won but hundreds.36 Yet the propaganda of Judaism did not succeed simply by its high inward worth; the profession of Judaism also conferred great social and political advantages upon its adherents. Compare Schürer's sketch (op. cit., III(3) pp. 56-90; Eng. trans., II ii. 243 f.) of the internal organization of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, of their civil position, and of their civic "isopolity,"37 and it will be seen how advantageous it was to belong to a Jewish community within the Roman empire. No doubt there were circumstances under which a Jew had to endure ridicule and disdain, but this injustice was compensated by the ample privileges enjoyed by those who adhered to this religio licita. If in addition one possessed the freedom of a city (which it was not difficult to procure) or even Roman citizenship, one occupied a more secure and favourable position than the majority of one's fellow-citizens. No wonder, then, that Christians threatened to apostatize to Judaism during a persecution,38 or that separation from the synagogues had also serious economic consequences for Jews who had become Christians.39

One thing further. All religions which made their way into the empire along the channels of intercourse and trade were primarily religions of the city, and remained such for a considerable period. It cannot be said that Judaism in the Diaspora was entirely a city-religion; indeed the reverse holds true of one or two large provinces. Yet in the main it continued to be a city-religion, and we hear little about Jews who were settled on the land.

So long as the temple stood, and contributions were paid in to it, this formed a link between the Jews of the Diaspora and Palestine.40 Afterwards, a rabbinical board took the place of the priestly college at Jerusalem, which understood how still to raise and use these contributions. The board was presided over by the patriarch, and the contributions were gathered by "apostles'" whom he sent out.41 They appear also to have had additional duties to perform (on which see below).

To the Jewish mission which preceded it, the Christian mission was indebted, in the first place, for a field tilled all over the empire; in the second place, for religious communities already formed everywhere in the towns; thirdly, for what Axenfeld calls "the help of materials'" furnished by the preliminary knowledge of the Old Testament, in addition to catechetical and liturgical materials which could be employed without much alteration; fourthly, for the habit of regular worship and a control of private life; fifthly, for an impressive apologetic on behalf of monotheism, historical teleology, and ethics; and finally, for the feeling that self-diffusion was a duty. The amount of this debt is so large, that one might venture to claim the Christian mission as a continuation of the Jewish propaganda. "Judaism," said Renan, "was robbed of its due reward by a generation of fanatics, and it was prevented from gathering in the harvest which it had prepared."

The extent to which Judaism was prepared for the gospel may also be judged by means of the syncretism into which it had developed. The development was along no mere side-issues. The transformation of a national into a universal religion may take place in two ways: either by the national religion being reduced to great central principles, or by its assimilation of a wealth of new elements from other religions. Both processes developed simultaneously in Judaism.42 But the former is the more important of the two, as a preparation for Christianity. This is to be deduced especially from that great scene preserved for us by Mark xii. 28-34—in its simplicity of spirit, the greatest memorial we possess of the history of religion at the epoch of its vital change.43 "A scribe asked Jesus, What is the first of all the commandments? Jesus replied,

The first is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength. The second is: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no commandment greater than these. And the scribe said to him. True, O teacher; thou hast rightly said that he is one, and that beside him there is none else, and that to love him with all the heart, and all the understanding and all the strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is far above all holocausts and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered intelligently, he said: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

With regard to the attitude of Palestinian Judaism towards the mission-idea (i.e., universalism and the duty of systematic propaganda), the state of matters during the age of Christ and the apostles is such as to permit pleadings upon both sides of the question.44 Previous to that age, there had been two periods which were essentially opposite in tendency. The older, resting upon the second Isaiah, gave vivid expression, even within Palestine itself, to the universalism of the Jewish religion as well as to a religious ethic which rose almost to the pitch of humanitarianism. This is represented in a number of the psalms, in the book of Jonah, and in the Wisdom-literature. The pious are fully conscious that Yahweh rules over the nation and over all mankind, that he is the God of each individual, and that he requires nothing but reverence. Hence their hope for the ultimate conversion of all the heathen. They will have kings and people alike to bow before Yahweh and to praise him. Their desire is that Yahweh's name be known everywhere among the heathen, and his glory (in the sense of conversion to him) spread far and wide. With the age of the Maccabees, however, an opposite tendency set in. Apocalyptic was keener upon the downfall of the heathen than upon their conversion, and the exclusive tendencies of Judaism again assert themselves, in the struggle to preserve the distinctive characteristics of the nation. "One of the most important results which flowed from the outrageous policy of Antiochus was that it discredited for all time to come the idea of a Judaism free from any limitation whatsoever, and that it either made pro-Hellenism, in the sense of Jason and Alcimus, impossible for Palestine and the Diaspora alike, or else exposed it to sharp correction whenever it should raise its head" (Axenfeld, p. 28). Now, in the age of Christ and the apostles, these two waves, the progressive and the nationalist, are beating each other back. Pharisaism itself appears to be torn in twain. In some psalms and manuals, as well as in the 13th Blessing of the Schmone Esre, universalism still breaks out. "Hillel, the most famous representative of Jewish Biblical learning, was accustomed, with his pupils, to pay special attention to the propaganda of religion. 'Love men and draw them to the Law' is one of his traditional maxims" (Pirke Aboth, 1. 12). Gamaliel, Paul's teacher, is also to be ranked among the propagandists. It was not impossible, however, to be both exclusive and in favour of the propaganda, for the conditions of the mission were sharpened into the demand that the entire Law should be kept. If I mistake not, Jesus was primarily at issue with this kind of Pharisaism in Jerusalem. Now the keener became the opposition within Palestine to the foreign dominion, and the nearer the great catastrophe came, the more strenuous grew the reaction against all that was foreign, as well as the idea that whatever was un-Jewish would perish in the judgment. Not long before the destruction of Jerusalem, in all probability, the controversy between the schools of Hillel and Shammai ended in a complete victory for the latter. Shammai was not indeed an opponent of the mission in principle, but he subjected it to the most rigorous conditions. The eighteen rules which were laid down included, among other things, the prohibition against learning Greek, and that against accepting presents from pagans for the temple. Intercourse with pagans was confined within the strictest of regulations, and had to be given up as a whole. This opened the way for the Judaism of the Talmud and the Mishna. The Judaism of the Diaspora followed the same course of development, though not till some time afterwards.45

CHAPTER 2

THE EXTERNAL CONDITIONS OF THE WORLD-WIDE EXPANSION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

It is only in a series of headings, as it were, that I would summarize the external conditions which either made it possible for Christianity to spread rapidly and widely during the imperial age, or actually promoted its advance. One of the most important has been mentioned in the previous chapter, viz., the spread of Judaism, which anticipated and prepared the way for that of Christianity. Besides this, the following considerations46 are especially to be noted:—

(1) The Hellenizing of the East and (in part also) of the West, which had gone on steadily since Alexander the Great: or, the comparative unity of language and ideas which this Hellenizing had produced. Not until the close of the second century A.D. does this Hellenizing process appear to have exhausted itself,47while in the fourth century, when the seat of empire was shifted to the East, the movement acquired a still further impetus in several important directions. As Christianity allied itself very quickly though incompletely to the speech and spirit of Hellenism, it was in a position to avail itself of a great deal in the success of the latter. In return it furthered the advance of Hellenism and put a check to its retreat.

(2) The world-empire of Rome and the political unity which it secured for the nations bordering on the Mediterranean; the comparative unity secured by this world-state for the methods and conditions of outward existence, and also the comparative stability of social life. Throughout many provinces of the East, people felt the emperor really stood for peace, after all the dreadful storms and wars; they hailed his law as a shelter and a safeguard.48 Furthermore, the earthly monarchy of the world; was a fact which at once favoured the conception of the heavenly monarchy and conditioned the origin of a catholic or universal church.

(3) The exceptional facilities, growth, and security of international traffic:49 the admirable roads; the blending of different nationalities;50 the interchange of wares and of ideas; the personal intercourse; the ubiquitous merchant and soldier—one may add, the ubiquitous professor, who was to be encountered from Antioch to Cadiz, from Alexandria to Bordeaux. The church thus found the way paved for expansion: the means were prepared; and the population of the large towns was as heterogeneous and devoid of a past as could be desired.

(4) The practical and theoretical conviction of the essential unity of mankind, and of human rights and duties, which was produced, or at any rate intensfied, by the fact of the “orbis Romanus” [Roman world] on the one side and the development of philosophy upon the other, and confirmed by the truly enlightened system of Roman jurisprudence, particularly between Nerva and Alexander Severus. On all essential questions the church had no reason to oppose, but rather to assent to, Roman law, that grandest and most durable product of the empire.51

(5) The decomposition of ancient society into a democracy: the gradual equalizing of the “cives Romani” [Roman citizens] and the provincials, of the Greeks and the barbarians; the comparative equalizing of classes in society; the elevation of the slave-class—in short, a soil prepared for the growth of new formations by the decomposition of the old.

(6) The religious policy of Rome, which furthered the interchange of religions by its toleration, hardly presenting any obstacles to their natural increase or transformation or decay, although it would not stand any practical expression of contempt for the ceremonial of the State-religion. The liberty guaranteed by Rome's religious policy on all other points was an ample compensation for the rough check imposed on the spread of Christianity by her vindication of the State-religion.

(7) The existence of associations, as well as of municipal and provincial organizations. In several respects the former had prepared the soil for the reception of Christianity, whilst in some

cases they probably served as a shelter for it. The latter actually suggested the most important forms of organization in the church, and thus saved her the onerous task of first devising such forms and then requiring to commend them.

(8) The irruption of the Syrian and Persian religions into the empire, dating especially from the reign of Antoninus Pius. These had certain traits in common with Christianity, and although the spread of the church was at first handicapped by them, any such loss was amply made up for by the new religious cravings which they stirred within the minds of men—cravings which could not finally be satisfied apart from Christianity.

(9) The decline of the exact sciences, a phenomenon due to the democratic tendency of society and the simultaneous popularizing of knowledge, as well as to other unknown causes: also the rising vogue of a mystical philosophy of religion with a craving for some form of revelation and a thirst for miracle.

All these outward conditions (of which the two latter might have been previously included among the inward) brought about a great revolution in the whole of human existence under the empire, a revolution which must have been highly conducive to the spread of the Christian religion. The narrow world had become a wide world; the rent world had become a unity; the barbarian world had become Greek and Roman: one empire, one universal language, one civilization, a common development towards monotheism, and a common yearning for saviors![52]

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERNAL CONDITIONS DETERMINING THE WORLD-WIDE EXPANSION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION—RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM

In subsequent sections of this book we shall notice a series of the more important inner conditions which determined the universal spread of the Christian religion. It was by preaching to the poor, the burdened, and the outcast, by the preaching and practice of love, that Christianity turned the stony, sterile world into a fruitful field for the church. Where no other religion could sow and reap, this religion was enabled to scatter its seed and to secure a harvest.

The condition, however, which determined more than anything else the propaganda of the religion, lay in the general religious situation during the imperial age. It is impossible to attempt here to depict that situation, and unluckily we cannot refer to any standard work which does justice to such a colossal undertaking, despite the admirable studies and sketches (such as those of Tzschirner, Friedländer, Boissier, Réville, and Wissowa)53 which we possess. This being so, we must content ourselves with throwing out a few hints along two main lines.

(1) In spite of the inner evolution of polytheism towards monotheism, the relations between Christianity and paganism simply meant the opposition of monotheism and polytheism—of polytheism, too, in the first instance, as political religion (the imperial cultus). Here Christianity and paganism were absolutely opposed. The former burned what the latter adored, and the latter burned Christians as guilty of high treason. Christian apologists and martyrs were perfectly right in often ignoring every other topic when they opened their lips, and in reducing everything to this simple alternative.

Judaism shared with Christianity this attitude towards polytheism. But then, Judaism was a national religion; hence its monotheism was widely tolerated simply because it was largely unintelligible. Furthermore, it usually evaded any conflict with the State-authorities, and it did not make martyrdom obligatory. That a man had to become a Jew in order to be a monotheist, was utterly absurd: it degraded the creator of heaven and earth to the level of a national god. Besides, if he was a national god, he was not the only one. No doubt, up and down the empire there were whispers about the atheism of the Jews, thanks to their lack of images; but the charge was never levelled in real earnest—or rather, opinion was in such a state of oscillation that the usual political result obtained: in dubio pro reo.

It was otherwise with Christianity. Here the polytheists could have no hesitation: deprived of any basis in a nation or a State, destitute alike of images and temples, Christianity was simple atheism. The contrast between polytheism and monotheism was in this field clear and keen. From the second century onwards, the conflict between these two forms of religion was waged by Christianity and not by Judaism. The former was aggressive, while as a rule the latter had really ceased to fight at all—it devoted itself to capturing proselytes.

From the very outset it was no hopeless struggle. When Christianity came upon the scene, the polytheism of the State-religion was not yet eradicated, indeed, nor was it eradicated for some time to come;54 but there were ample forces at hand which were already compassing its ruin. It had survived the critical epoch during which the republic had changed into a dual control and a monarchy; but as for the fresh swarm of religions which were invading and displacing it, polytheism could no more exorcise them with the magic wand of the imperial cultus than it could

dissolve them under the rays of a protean cultus of the sun, which sought to bring everything within its sweep. Nevertheless polytheism would still have been destined to a long career, had it not been attacked secretly or openly by the forces of general knowledge, philosophy, and ethics; had it not also been saddled with arrears of mythology which excited ridicule and resentment. Statesmen, poets, and philosophers might disregard all this, since each of these groups devised some method of preserving their continuity with the past. But once the common people realized it, or were made to realize it, the conclusion they drew in such cases was ruthless. The onset against deities feathered and scaly, deities adulterous and infested with vice, and on the other hand against idols of wood and stone, formed the most impressive and effective factor in Christian preaching for wide circles, circles which in all ranks of society down to the lowest classes (where indeed they were most numerous) had, owing to experience and circumstances, reached a point at which the burning denunciations of the abomination of idolatry could not fail to arrest them and bring them over to monotheism. The very position of polytheism as the State-religion was in favour of the Christian propaganda. Religion faced religion; but whilst the one was new and living, the other was old—that is, with the exception of the imperial cultus, in which once more it gathered up its forces. No one could tell exactly what had come over it. Was it merely equivalent to what was lawful in politics? Or did it represent the vast, complicated mass of religiones licitae throughout the empire? Who could say?

(2) This, however, is to touch on merely one side of the matter. The religious situation in the imperial age, with the tendencies it cherished and the formations it produced—all this was complicated in the extreme. Weighty as were the simple antitheses of “monotheism versus polytheism” and “strict morality versus laxity and vice" these cannot be taken as a complete summary of the whole position. The posture of affairs throughout the empire is no more adequately described by the term “polytheism" than is Christianity, as it was then preached, by the bare term “monotheism.” It was not a case of vice and virtue simply facing one another. Here, in fact, we must enter into some detail and definition.

Anyone who considers that the domination of the inner life over external empiricism and politics is an illusion and perversion, must date the disintegration of the ancient world from Socrates and Plato. Here the two tempers stand apart! On the other hand, anyone who regards this domination as the supreme advance of man, is not obliged to accompany its development down as far as Neo-Platonism. He will not, indeed, be unaware that, even to the last, in the time of Augustine, genuine advances were made along this line, but he will allow that they were gained at great expense—too great expense. This erroneous development began when introspection commenced to despise and neglect its correlative in natural science, and to woo mysticism, theurgy, astrology, or magic. For more than a century previous to the Christian era, this had been going on. At the threshold of the transition stands Posidonius, like a second Janus. Looking in one direction, he favours a rational idealism; but, in another, he combines this with irrational and mystic elements. The sad thing is that these elements had to be devised and employed in order to express new emotional values which his rational idealism could not manage to guarantee, because it lay spell-bound and impotent in intellectualism. Language itself declined to fix the value of anything which was not intellectual by nature. Hence the Ὑπερνοητόν emerged, a conception which continued to attract and appropriate what ever was mythical and preposterous, allowing it to pass in unchallenged. Myth now ceased to be a mere symbol. It became the organic means of expression for those higher needs of sentiment and religion whose real nature was a closed book to thinkers of the day. On this line of development, Posidonius was followed by Philo.

The inevitable result of all this was a relapse to lower levels; but it was a relapse which, as

usual, bore all the signs of an innovation. The signs pointed to life, but the innovation was ominous. For, while the older mythology had been either naïve or political, dwelling in the world of ceremony, the new mythology became a confession: it was philosophical, or pseudo-philosophical, and to this it owed its sway over the mind, beguiling the human spirit until it gradually succeeded in destroying the sense of reality and in crippling the proper functions of all the senses within man. His eyes grew dim, his ears could hear no longer. At the same time, these untoward effects were accompanied by a revival and resuscitation of the religious feeling —as a result of the philosophical development. This took place about the close of the first century. Ere long it permeated all classes in society, and it appears to have increased with every decade subsequently to the middle of the second century. This came out in two ways, on the principle of that dual development in which a religious upheaval always manifests itself. The first was a series of not unsuccessful attempts to revivify and inculcate the old religions, by carefully observing traditional customs, and by restoring the sites of the oracles and the places of worship. Such attempts, however, were partly superficial and artificial. They offered no strong or clear expression for the new religious cravings of the age. And Christianity held entirely aloof from all this restoration of religion. They came into contact merely to collide—this pair of alien magnitudes; neither understood the other, and each was driven to compass the extermination of its rival (see above).

The second way in which the resuscitation of religion came about, however, was far more potent. Ever since Alexander the Great and his successors, ever since Augustus in a later age, the nations upon whose development the advance of humanity depended had been living under new auspices. The great revolution in the external conditions of their existence has been already emphasized; but corresponding to this, and partly in consequence of it, a revolution took place in the inner world of religion, which was due in some degree to the blending of religions, but pre-eminently to the progress of culture and to man's experience inward and outward. No period can be specified at which this blending process commenced among the nations lying between Egypt and the Euphrates, the Tigris, or Persia;55 for, so far as we are in a position to trace back their history, their religions were, like themselves, exposed to constant interchange, whilst their religious theories were a matter of give and take. But now the Greek world fell to be added, with all the store of knowledge and ideas which it had gained by dint of ardent, willing toil, a world lying open to any contribution from the East, and in its turn subjecting every element of Eastern origin to the test of its own lore and speculation.

The results already produced by the interchange of Oriental religions, including that of Israel, were technically termed, a century ago, “the Oriental philosophy of religion,” a term which denoted the broad complex of ritual and theory connected with the respective cults, their religious ideas, and also scientific speculations such as those of astronomy or of any other branch of knowledge which was elevated into the province of religion. All this was as indefinite as the title which was meant to comprehend it, nor even at present have we made any great progress in this field of research.56 Still, we have a more definite grasp of the complex itself; and—although it seems paradoxical to say so—this is a result which we owe chiefly to Christian gnosticism. Nowhere else are these vague and various conceptions worked out for us so clearly and coherently.

In what follows I shall attempt to bring out the salient features of this “Orientalism.” Naturally it was no rigid entity. At every facet it presented elements and ideas of the most varied hue. The general characteristic was this that people still retained or renewed their belief in sections of the traditional mythology presented in realistic form. To these they did attach ideas. It is not possible, as a rule, to ascertain in every case at what point and to what extent such ideas

overflowed and overpowered the realistic element in any given symbol—a fact which makes our knowledge of "Orientalism" look extremely defective; for what is the use of fixing down a piece of mythology to some definite period and circle, if we cannot be sure of its exact value? Was it held literally? Was it transformed into an idea? Was it taken metaphorically? Was it the creed of unenlightened piety? Was it merely ornamental? And what was its meaning? Theological or cosmological? Ethical or historical? Did it embody some event in the remote past, or something still in existence, or something only to be realized in the future? Or did these various meanings and values flow in and out of one another? And was the myth in question felt to be some sacred, undefined magnitude, something that could unite with every conceivable coefficient, serving as the starting-point for any interpretation whatsoever that one chose to put before the world? This last question is to be answered, I think, in the affirmative, nor must we forget that in one and the same circle the most diverse coefficients were simultaneously attached to any piece of mythology.

Further, we must not lose sight of the varied origin of the myths. The earliest spring from the primitive view of nature, in which the clouds were in conflict with the light and the night devoured the sun, whilst thunderstorms were the most awful revelation of the deity. Or they arose from the dream-world of the soul, from that separation of soul and body suggested by the dream, and from the cult of the human soul. The next stratum may have arisen out of ancient historical reminiscences, fantastically exaggerated and elevated into something supernatural. Then came the precipitate of primitive attempts at "science" which had gone no further, viz., observations of heaven and earth, leading to the knowledge of certain regular sequences, which were bound up with religious conceptions. All this the soul of man informed with life, endowing it with the powers of human consciousness. It was upon this stratum that the great Oriental religions rose, as we know them in history, with their special mythologies and ritual theories. Then came another stratum, namely, religion in its abstract development and alliance with a robust philosophic culture. One half of it was apologetic, and the other critical. Yet even there myths still took shape. Finally, the last stratum was laid down, viz., the glaciation of ancient imaginative fancies and religions produced by a new conception of the universe, which the circumstances and experience of mankind had set in motion. Under the pressure of this, all existing materials were fused together, elements that lay far apart were solidified into a unity, and all previous constructions were shattered, while the surface of the movement was covered by broken fragments thrown out in a broad moraine, in which the débris of all earlier strata were to be found. This is the meaning of "syncretism". Viewed from a distance, it looks like a unity, though the unity seems heterogeneous. The forces which have shaped it do not meet the eye. What one really sees is the ancient element in its composition; the new lies buried under all that catches the eye upon the surface.

This new element consisted in the political and social experience, and in speculations of the inner life. It would appear that even before the period of its contact with the Greek spirit, "Orientalism" had reached this stage; but one of the most unfortunate gaps in our knowledge of the history of religion is our inability to determine to what extent "Orientalism" had developed on its own lines, independent of this Greek spirit. We must be content to ascertain what actually took place, viz., the rise of new ideas and emotions which meet us on the soil of Hellenism—that Hellenism which, with its philosophy of a matured Platonism and its development of the ancient mysteries, coalesced with Orientalism.57 These new features58 are somewhat as follows:—

(1) There is the sharp division between the soul (or spirit) and the body: the more or less exclusive importance attached to the spirit, and the notion that the spirit comes from some other, upper world and is either possessed or capable of life eternal: also the individualism

involved in all this.

(2) There is the sharp division between God and the world, with the subversion of the naïve idea that they formed a homogeneous unity.

(3) In consequence of these distinctions we have the sublimation of the Godhead, “via negationis et eminentiæ.” The Godhead now becomes for the first time incomprehensible and indescribable; yet it is also great and good. Furthermore, it is the basis of all things; but the ultimate basis, which is simply posited yet cannot be actually grasped.

(4) As a further result of these distinctions and of the exclusive importance attached to the spirit, we have the depreciation of the world, the contention that it were better never to have existed, that it was the result of a blunder, and that it was a prison or at best a penitentiary for the spirit.

(5) There is the conviction that the connection with the flesh (“that soiled robe”) depreciated and stained the spirit; in fact, that the latter would inevitably be ruined unless the connection were broken or its influence counteracted.

(6) There is the yearning for redemption, as a redemption from the world, the flesh, mortality, and death.

(7) There is the conviction that all redemption is redemption to life eternal, and that it is dependent on knowledge and expiation: that only the soul that knows (knows itself, the Godhead, and the nature and value of being) and is pure (i.e., purged from sin) can be saved.

(8) There is the certainty that the redemption of the soul as a return to God is effected through a series of stages, just as the soul once upon a time departed from God by stages, till it ended in the present vale of tears. All instruction upon redemption is therefore instruction upon “the return and road'” to God. The consummation of redemption is simply a graduated ascent.

(9) There is the belief (naturally a wavering belief) that the anticipated redemption or redeemer was already present, needing only to be sought out: present, that is, either in some ancient creed which simply required to be placed in a proper light, or in one of the mysteries which had only to be made more generally accessible, or in some personality whose power and commands had to be followed, or even in the spirit, if only it would turn inward on itself.

(10) There is the conviction that whilst knowledge is indispensable to all the media of redemption, it cannot be adequate; on the contrary, they must ultimately furnish and transmit an actual power divine. It is the “initiation” (the mystery or sacrament) which is combined with the impartation of knowledge, by which alone the spirit is subdued, by which it is actually redeemed and delivered from the bondage of mortality and sin by means of mystic rapture.

(11) There is the prevalent, indeed the fundamental opinion that knowledge of the universe, religion, and the strict management of the individual's conduct, must form a compact unity; they must constitute an independent unity, which has nothing whatever to do with the State, society, the family, or one's daily calling, and must therefore maintain an attitude of negation (i.e. in the sense of asceticism) towards all these spheres.

The soul, God, knowledge, expiation, asceticism, redemption, eternal life, with individualism and with humanity substituted for nationality—these were the sublime thoughts which were living and operative, partly as the precipitate of deep inward and outward movements, partly as the outcome of great souls and their toil, partly as one result of the sublimation of all cults which

took place during the imperial age. Wherever vital religion existed, it was in this circle of thought and experience that it drew breath. The actual number of those who lived within the circle is a matter of no moment. “All men have not faith.” And the history of religion, so far as it is really a history of vital religion, runs always in a very narrow groove.

The remarkable thing is the number of different guises in which such thoughts were circulating. Like all religious accounts of the universe which aim at reconciling monistic and dualistic theories, they required a large apparatus for their intrinsic needs; but the tendency was to elaborate this still further, partly in order to provide accommodation for whatever might be time-honoured or of any service, partly because isolated details had an appearance of weakness which made people hope to achieve their end by dint of accumulation. Owing to the heterogeneous character of their apparatus, these syncretistic formations seem often to be totally incongruous. But this is a superficial estimate. A glance at their motives and aims reveals the presence of a unity, and indeed of simplicity, which is truly remarkable. The final motives, in fact, are simple and powerful, inasmuch as they have sprung from simple but powerful experiences of the inner life, and it was due to them that the development of religion advanced, so far as any such advance took place apart from Christianity.

Christianity had to settle with this “syncretism'” or final form of Hellenism. But we can see at once how inadequate it would be to describe the contrast between Christianity and “paganism” simply as the contrast between monotheism and polytheism. No doubt, any form of syncretism was perfectly capable of blending with polytheism; the one even demanded and could not but intensify the other. To explain the origin of the world and also to describe the soul's “return,” the “apparatus” of the system required æons, intermediate beings, semi-gods, and deliverers; the highest deity was not the highest or most perfect, if it stood by itself. Yet all this way of thinking was monotheistic at bottom; it elevated the highest God to the position of primal God, high above all gods, linking the soul to this primal God and to him alone (not to any subordinate deities).59 Polytheism was relegated to a lower level from the supremacy which once it had enjoyed. Further, as soon as Christianity itself began to be reflective, it took an interest in this “syncretism,” borrowing ideas from it, and using them, in fact, to promote its own development. Christianity was not originally syncretistic itself, for Jesus Christ did not belong to this circle of ideas, and it was his disciples who were responsible for the primitive shaping of Christianity. But whenever Christianity came to formulate ideas of God, Jesus, sin, redemption, and life, it drew upon the materials acquired in the general process of religious evolution, availing itself of all the forms which these had taken.

Christian preaching thus found itself confronted with the old polytheism at its height in the imperial cultus, and with this syncretism which represented the final stage of Hellenism. These constituted the inner conditions under which the young religion carried on its mission. From its opposition to polytheism it drew that power of antithesis and exclusiveness which is a force at once needed and intensified by any independent religion. In syncretism, again, i.e., in all that as a rule deserved the title of “religion” in contemporary life, it possessed unconsciously a secret ally. All it had to do with syncretism was to cleanse and simplify—and complicate —it.

CHAPTER IV.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE UNIVERSAL MISSION

It is impossible to answer the question of Jesus' relation to the universal mission, without a critical study of the evangelic records. The gospels were written in an age when the mission was already in full swing, and they consequently refer it to direct injunction of Jesus. But they enable us, for all that, to recognise the actual state of matters.

Jesus addressed his gospel—his message of God's imminent kingdom and of judgment, of God's fatherly providence, of repentance, holiness, and love—to his fellow-countrymen. He preached only to Jews. Not a syllable shows that he detached this message from its national soil, or set aside the traditional religion as of no value. Upon the contrary, his preaching could be taken as the most powerful corroboration of that religion. He did not attach himself to any of the numerous “liberal” or syncretistic Jewish conventicles or schools. He did not accept their ideas. Rather he took his stand upon the soil of Jewish rights, i.e., of the piety maintained by Pharisaism. But he showed that while the Pharisees preserved what was good in religion, they were perverting it none the less, and that the perversion amounted to the most heinous of sins. Jesus waged war against the selfish, self-righteous temper in which many of the Pharisees fulfilled and practised their piety—a temper, at bottom, both loveless and godless. This protest already involved a break with the national religion, for the Pharisaic position passed for that of the nation; indeed, it represented the national religion. But Jesus went further. He traversed the claim that the descendants of Abraham, in virtue of their descent, were sure of salvation, and based the idea of divine sonship exclusively upon repentance, humility, faith, and love. In so doing, he disentangled religion from its national setting. Men, not Jews, were to be its adherents. Then, as it became plainer than ever that the Jewish people as a whole, and through their representatives, were spurning his message, he announced with increasing emphasis that a judgment was coming upon “the children of the kingdom” and prophesied, as his forerunner had done already, that the table of his Father would not lack for guests, but that a crowd would pour in, morning, noon, and night, from the highways and the hedges. Finally, he predicted the rejection of the nation and the overthrow of the temple, but these were not to involve the downfall of his work; on the contrary, he saw in them, as in his own passion, the condition of his work's completion.

Such is the “universalism” of the preaching of Jesus. No other kind of universalism can be proved for him, and consequently he cannot have given any command upon the mission to the wide world. The gospels contain such a command, but it is easy to show that it is neither genuine nor a part of the primitive tradition. It would introduce an entirely strange feature into the preaching of Jesus, and at the same time render many of his genuine sayings unintelligible or empty. One might even argue that the universal mission was an inevitable issue of the religion and spirit of Jesus, and that its origin, not only apart from any direct word of Jesus, but in verbal contradiction to several of his sayings, is really a stronger testimony to the method, the strength, and the spirit of his preaching than if it were the outcome of a deliberate command. By the fruit we know the tree; but we must not look for the fruit in the root. With regard to the way in which he worked and gathered disciples, the distinctiveness of his person and his preaching comes out very clearly. He sought to found no sect or school. He laid down no rules for outward adhesion to himself. His aim was to bring men to God and to prepare them for God's kingdom. He chose disciples, indeed, giving them special instruction and a share in his work; but even here there were no regulations. There were an inner circle of three, an outer circle of twelve,

and beyond that a few dozen men and women who accompanied him. In addition to that, he had intimate friends who remained in their homes and at their work. Wherever he went, he wakened or found children of God throughout the country. No rule or regulation bound them together. They simply sought and shared the supreme boon which came home to each and all, viz., the kingdom of their Father and of the individual soul. In the practice of this kind of mission Jesus has had but one follower, and he did not arise till a thousand years afterwards. He was St Francis of Assisi.

If we leave out of account the words put by our first evangelist into the lips of the risen Jesus (Matt. xxviii. 19 f.), with the similar expressions which occur in the unauthentic appendix to the second gospel (Mark xvi. 15, 20), and if we further set aside the story of the wise men from the East, as well as one or two Old Testament quotations which our first evangelist has woven into his tale (cp. Matt. iv. 13 f., xii. 18), we must admit that Mark and Matthew have almost consistently withstood the temptation to introduce the Gentile mission into the words and deeds of Jesus. Jesus called sinners to himself, ate with tax-gatherers, attacked the Pharisees and their legal observance, made everything turn upon mercy and justice, and predicted the downfall of the temple—such is the universalism of Mark and Matthew. The very choice and commission of the twelve is described without any mention of a mission to the world (Mark iii. 13 f., vi. 7 f., and Matt. x. 1 f.). In fact, Matthew expressly limits their mission to Palestine. “Go not on the road of the Gentiles, and enter no city of the Samaritans; rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel “ (Matt. x. 5, 6). And so in x. 23: “Ye shall not have covered the cities of Israel, before the Son of man comes.”60 The story of the Syro-Phœnician woman is almost of greater significance. Neither evangelist leaves it open to question that this incident represented an exceptional case for Jesus;61 and the exception proves the rule.

In Mark this section on the Syro-Phœnician woman is the only passage where the missionary efforts of Jesus appear positively restricted to the Jewish people in Palestine. Matthew, however, contains not merely the address on the disciples' mission, but a further saying (xix. 28), to the effect that the twelve are one day to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. No word here of the Gentile mission.62

Only twice does Mark make Jesus allude to the gospel being preached in future throughout the world: in the eschatological address (xiii. 10, “The gospel must first be preached to all the nations,” i.e., before the end arrives), and in the story of the anointing at Bethany (xiv. 9), where we read: “Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, what this woman hath done shall be also told, in memory of her.” The former passage puts into the life of Jesus an historical theologoumenon, which is hardly original. The latter excites strong suspicion, not with regard to what precedes it, but in connection with the saying of Jesus in verses 8-9. It is a hysteron proteron, and moreover the solemn assurance is striking. Some obscure controversy must underlie the words—a controversy which turned upon the preceding scene not only when it happened, but at a still later date. Was it ever suspected?63

These two sayings are also given in Matthew64 (xxiv. 14, xxvi. 13), who preserves a further saying which has the Gentile world in view, yet whose prophetic manner arouses no suspicion of its authenticity. In viii. 11 we read: “I tell you, many shall come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out.” Why should not Jesus have said this? Even among the words of John the Baptist (iii. 9) do we not read: “Think not to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father; for I tell you, God is able to raise up children for Abraham out of these stones”?

We conclude, then, that both evangelists refrain from inserting any allusion to the Gentile

mission into the framework of the public preaching of Jesus, apart from the eschatological address and the somewhat venturesome expression which occurs in the story of the anointing at Bethany. But while Matthew delimits the activity of Jesus positively and precisely, Mark adopts what we may term a neutral position, though for all that he does not suppress the story of the Syro-Phœnician woman.

All this throws into more brilliant relief than ever the words of the risen Jesus in Matt. xxviii. 19 f. Matthew must have been fully conscious of the disparity between these words and the earlier words of Jesus; nay, more, he must have deliberately chosen to give expression to that disparity.65 At the time when our gospels were written, a Lord and Saviour who had confined his preaching to the Jewish people without even issuing a single command to prosecute the universal mission, was an utter impossibility. If no such command had been issued before his death, it must have been imparted by him as the glorified One.

The conclusion, therefore, must be that Jesus never issued such a command at all, but that this version of his life was due to the historical developments of a later age, the words being appropriately put into the mouth of the risen Lord. Paul, too, knew nothing of such a general command.66

Luke's standpoint, as a reporter of the words of Jesus, does not differ from that of the two previous evangelists, a fact which is perhaps most significant of all. He has delicately coloured the introductory history with universalism,67 while at the close, like Matthew, he makes the risen Jesus issue the command to preach the gospel to all nations.68 But in his treatment of the intervening material he follows Mark; that is, he preserves no sayings which expressly confine the activity of Jesus to the Jewish nation,69 but, on the other hand, he gives neither word nor incident which describes that activity as universal,70and at no point does he deliberately correct the existing tradition.71

In this connection the fourth gospel need not be considered at all. After the Gentile mission, which had been undertaken with such ample results during the first two Christian generations, the fourth gospel expands the horizon of Christ's preaching and even of John the Baptist's; corresponding to this, it makes the Jews a reprobate people from the very outset, despite the historical remark in iv. 22. Even setting aside the prologue, we at once come upon (i. 29) the words put into the mouth of the Baptist, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” And, as a whole, the gospel is saturated with statements of a directly universalistic character. Jesus is the Saviour of the world, and God so loved the world that he sent him. We may add passages like those upon the “other sheep” and the one flock (x. l6). But the most significant thing of all is that this gospel makes Greeks ask after Jesus (xii. 20 f.), the latter furnishing a formal explanation of the reasons why he could not satisfy the Greeks as yet. He must first of all die. It is as the exalted One that he will first succeed in drawing all men to himself. We can feel here the pressure of a serious problem.

It would be misleading to introduce here any sketch of the preaching of Jesus, or even of its essential principles,72 for it never became the missionary preaching of the later period even to the Jews. It was the basis of that preaching, for the gospels were written down in order to serve as a means of evangelization; but the mission preaching was occupied with the messiahship of Jesus, his speedy return, and his establishment of God's kingdom (if Jews were to be met), or with the unity of God, creation, the Son of God, and judgment (if Gentiles were to be reached). Alongside of this the words of Jesus of course exercised a silent and effective mission of their own, whilst the historical picture furnished by the gospels, together with faith in the exalted Christ, exerted a powerful influence over catechumens and believers.

Rightly and wisely, people no longer noticed the local and temporal traits either in this historical sketch or in these sayings. They found there a vital love of God and men, which may be described as implicit universalism; a discounting of everything external (position, personality, sex, outward worship, etc.), which made irresistibly for inwardness of character; and a protest against the entire doctrines of "the ancients," which gradually rendered antiquity valueless.73 One of the greatest revolutions in the history of religion was initiated in this way–initiated and effected, moreover, without any revolution! All that Jesus Christ promulgated was the overthrow of the temple, and the judgment impending upon the nation and its leaders. He shattered Judaism, and brought out the kernel of the religion of Israel. Thereby–i.e., by his preaching of God as the Father, and by his own death–he founded the universal religion, which at the same time was the religion of the Son.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRANSITION FROM THE JEWISH TO THE GENTILE MISSION

"CHRISTI mors potentior erat quam vita." The death of Christ was more effective than his life; it failed to shatter faith in him as one sent by God, and hence the conviction of his resurrection arose. He was still the Messiah, his disciples held—for there was no alternative now between this and the rejection of his claims. As Messiah, he could not be held of death. He must be alive; he must soon return in glory. The disciples became chosen members of his kingdom, witnesses and apostles. They testified not only to his preaching and his death, but to his resurrection, for they had seen him and received his spirit. They became new men. A current of divine life seized them, and a new fire was burning in their hearts. Fear, doubt, cowardice—all this was swept away. The duty and the right of preaching this Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ pressed upon them with irresistible power. How could they keep silence when they knew that the new age of the world was come, and that God had already begun the redemption of his people? An old tradition (Acts i.-ii.) relates that the preaching of the disciples began in Jerusalem on the fifty-first day after the crucifixion. We have no reason to doubt so definite a statement. They must have returned from Galilee to Jerusalem and gathered together there—a change which suggests that they wished to work openly, in the very midst of the Jewish community. They remained there for some years74—for a period of twelve years indeed, according to one early account 75 ignored by the book of Acts (cp., however, xii. 17)—they would undertake mission tours in the vicinity; the choice of James, who did not belong to the twelve, as president of the church at Jerusalem,76 tells in favour of this conclusion, whilst the evidence for it lies in Acts, and above all in 1 Cor. ix. 5.

The gospel was at first preached to the Jews exclusively. The church of Jerusalem was founded; presently churches in Judæa (1 Thess. ii. 14, αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ αἱ οὖσαι ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ: Gal. i. 22, ἤμην ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ), Galilee, Samaria (Acts i. 8, viii. 1 f., ix. 31, xv. 3), and on the sea-coast (Acts ix. 32 f.) followed.77 The initial relationship of these churches to Judaism is not quite clear. As a matter of fact, so far from being clear, it is full of inconsistencies. On the one hand, the narrative of Acts (see iii. f.), which describes the Jerusalem church as exposed to spasmodic persecutions almost from the start, is corroborated by the evidence of Paul (1 Thess. ii. 14, ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν, καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ [i.e. the churches in Judæa] ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων), so that it seems untenable to hold with some Jewish scholars that originally, and indeed for whole decades, peace reigned between the Christians and the Jews.78 On the other hand, it is certain that peace and toleration also prevailed, that the churches remained unmolested for a considerable length of time (Acts ix. 31, ἡ ἐκκλησία καθ᾽ ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Γαλιλαίας καὶ Σαμαρίας εἶχεν εἰρήνην), and that several Christians were highly thought of by their Jewish brethren.79 By their strict observance of the law and their devoted attachment to the temple,80 they fulfilled a Jew's principal duty, and since it was in the future that they expected Jesus as their Messiah—his first advent having been no more than a preliminary step—this feature might be overlooked, as an idiosyncrasy, by those who were inclined to think well of them for their strict observance of the law.81 At least this is the only way in which we can picture to ourselves the state of matters. The more zealous of their Jewish compatriots can have had really nothing but praise for the general Christian hope of the Messiah's sure and speedy advent. Doubtless it was in their view a grievous error for Christians to believe that they already knew the person of the future Messiah. But the crucifixion seemed to have torn up this belief by the roots, so that every zealous Jew could anticipate the speedy collapse of "the

offence," while the Messianic ardour would survive. As for the Jewish authorities, they could afford to watch the progress of events, contenting themselves with a general surveillance. Meantime, however, the whole movement was confined to the lower classes.82

But no sooner did the Gentile mission, with its lack of restrictions (from the Jewish point of view) or laxity of restrictions, become an open fact, than this period of toleration, or of spasmodic and not very violent reactions on the part of Judaism, had to cease. Severe reprisals followed. Yet the Gentile mission at first drove a wedge into the little company of Christians themselves; it prompted those who disapproved of it to retire closer to their non-Christian brethren. The apostle Paul had to complain of and to contend with a double opposition. He was persecuted by Jewish Christians who were zealous for the law, no less than by the Jews (so 1 Thess. ii. 15 f., ἐκδιώξαντες ἡμᾶς . . . . κωλύοντες ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι, ἵνα σωθῶσιν); the latter had really nothing whatever to do with the Gentile mission, but evidently they did not by any means look on with folded arms.

It is not quite clear how the Gentile mission arose. Certainly Paul was not the first missionary to the Gentiles.83 But a priori considerations and the details of the evidence alike may justify us in concluding that while the transition to the Gentile mission was gradual, it was carried out with irresistible energy. Here, too, the whole ground had been prepared already, by the inner condition of Judaism, i.e., by the process of decomposition within Judaism which made for universalism, as well as by the graduated system of the proselytes. To this we have already alluded in the first chapter.

According to Acts vi. 7 f.,84 the primitive Christian community in Jerusalem was composed of two elements, one consisting of Palestinian Hebrews, and the other of Jews from the dispersion (Ἑλληνισταί).85 A cleavage occurred between both at an early stage, which led to the appointment of seven guardians of the poor, belonging to the second of these groups and bearing Greek names. Within this group of men, whom we may consider on the whole to have been fairly enlightened, i.e., less strict than others in literal observance of the law,86 Stephen rose to special prominence. The charge brought against him before the Sanhedrim was to the effect that he went on uttering blasphemous language against "the holy place" and the law, by affirming that Jesus was to destroy the temple and alter the customs enjoined by Moses. This charge Acts describes as false; but, as the speech of Stephen proves, it was well founded so far as it went, the falsehood consisting merely in the conscious purpose attributed to the words in question. Stephen did not attack the temple and the law in order to dispute their divine origin, but he did affirm the limited period of these institutions. In this way he did set himself in opposition to the popular Judaism of his time, but hardly in opposition to all that was Jewish. It is beyond doubt that within Judaism itself, especially throughout the Diaspora, tendencies were already abroad by which the temple-cultus,87 and primarily its element of bloody sacrifices, was regarded as unessential and even of doubtful validity. Besides, it is equally certain that in many a Jewish circle, for external and internal reasons, the outward observance of the law was not considered of any great value; it was more or less eclipsed by the moral law. Consequently it is quite conceivable, historically and psychologically, that a Jew of the Diaspora who had been won over to Christianity should associate the supreme and exclusive moral considerations urged by the new faith88 with the feelings he had already learned to cherish, viz., that the temple and the ceremonial law were relatively useless; it is also conceivable that he should draw the natural inference—Jesus the Messiah will abolish the temple-cultus and alter the ceremonial law. Observe the future tense. Acts seems here to give an extremely literal report. Stephen did not urge any changes—these were to be effected by Jesus, when he returned as Messiah. All Stephen did was to announce them by way of prophecy, thus implying that the

existing arrangements wore valueless. He did not urge the Gentile mission; but by his words and death he helped to set it up.

When Stephen was stoned, he died, like Huss, for a cause whose issues he probably did not foresee. It is not surprising that he was stoned, for orthodox Judaism could least afford to tolerate this kind of believer in Jesus. His adherents were also persecuted—the grave peril of the little company of Christians being thus revealed in a flash. All except the apostles (Acts viii. 1) had to leave Jerusalem. Evidently the latter had not yet declared themselves as a body on the side of Stephen in the matter of his indictment.89 The scattered Christians went abroad throughout Judæa and Samaria; nolens volens they acted as missionaries, i.e., as apostles (Acts viii. 4). The most important of them was Philip, the guardian of the poor, who preached in Samaria and along the sea-board; there is a long account of how he convinced and baptized an Ethiopian officer, a eunuch (Acts viii. 26 f.). This is perfectly intelligible. The man was not a Jew. He belonged to the "God-fearing class'" (φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν). Besides, even if he had been circumcised, he could not have become a Jew. Thus, when this semi-proselyte, this eunuch, was brought into the Christian church, it meant that one stout barrier had fallen.

Still, a single case is not decisive, and even the second case of this kind, that of Peter baptizing the "God-fearing" ((fsofSov/Jievos) Cornelius at Caesarea, cannot have had at that early period the palmary importance which the author of Acts attaches to it.90So long as it was a question of proselytes, even of proselytes in the widest sense of the term, there was always one standpoint from which the strictest Jewish Christian himself could reconcile his mind to their admission: he could regard the proselytes thus admitted as adherents of the Christian community in the wider sense of the term, i.e., as proselytes still.

The next step, a much more decisive one, was taken at Antioch, again upon the initiative of the scattered adherents of Stephen (Acts xi. 19 f.), who had reached Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch on their missionary wanderings. The majority of them confined themselves strictly to the Jewish mission. But some, who were natives of Cyprus and Crete,91 preached also to the Greeks 92 in Antioch with excellent results. They were the first missionaries to the heathen; they founded the first Gentile church, that of Antioch. In this work they were joined by Barnabas and Paul (Acts xi. 28 f.), who soon became the real leading spirits in the movement.93

The converted Greeks in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (to which Barnabas and Paul presently extended their mission), during this initial period were by no means drawn wholly from those who had been "God-fearing" (φοβούμενοι) already, although this may have been the origin of a large number.94 At any rate a church was founded at Antioch which consisted for the most part of uncircumcised persons, and which now undertook the mission to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 1 f.). For this church the designation of Χριστιανοί ("Christians," Acts xi. 26) came into vogue, a name coined by their heathen opponents. This title is itself a proof that the new community in Antioch stood out in bold relief from Judaism.95

The Gentile Christian churches of Syria and Cilicia did not observe the law, yet they were conscious of being the people of God in the fullest sense of the term, and were mindful to keep in touch with the mother church of Jerusalem, as well as to be recognized by her.96 The majority of these cosmopolitan converts were quite content with the assurance that God had already moved the prophets to proclaim the uselessness of sacrifice,97 so that all the ceremonial part of the law was to be allegorically interpreted and understood in some moral sense.98 This was also the view originally held by the other Gentile Christian communities which, like that of Rome, were founded by unknown missionaries.

The apostle Paul, however, could not settle his position towards the law with such simplicity. For him no part of the law had been depreciated in value by any noiseless, disintegrating influence of time or circumstances; on the contrary, the law remained valid and operative in all its provisions. It could not be abrogated save by him who had ordained it—i.e., by God himself. Nor could even God abolish it save by affirming at the same time its rights—i.e., he must abolish it just by providing for its fulfilment. And this was what actually took place. By the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Son, upon the cross, the law was at once fulfilled and abolished. Whether all this reflection and speculation was secondary and derivative (resulting from the possession of the Spirit and the new life which the apostle felt within himself), or primary (resulting from the assurance that his sins were forgiven), or whether these two sources coalesced, is a question which need not occupy us here. The point is, that Paul was convinced that the death and resurrection of Christ had inaugurated the new age. “The future is already present, the Spirit reigns.” Hereby he firmly and unhesitatingly recognized the gospel to be the new level of religion, just as he also felt himself to be a new creature. The new religious level was the level of the Spirit and regeneration, of grace and faith, of peace and liberty; below and behind it lay everything old, including all the earlier revelations of God, since these were religions pertaining to the state of sin. This it was which enabled Paul, Jew and Pharisee as he was, to venture upon the great conception with which he laid the basis of any sound philosophy of religion and of the whole science of comparative religion, viz., the collocation of the “natural” knowledge of God possessed by man (i.e., all that had developed in man under the sway of conscience) with the law of the chosen people (Rom. 1 f.). Both, Paul held, were revelations of God, though in different ways and of different values; both represented what had been hitherto the supreme possession of mankind. Yet both had proved inadequate; they had aggravated sin, and had ended in death.

Now a new religion was in force. This meant that the Gentile mission was not a possibility but a duty, whilst freedom from the law was not a concession but the distinctive and blissful form which the gospel assumed for men. Its essence consisted in the fact that it was not law in any sense of the term, but grace and a free gift. The Christian who had been born a Jew might have himself circumcised and keep the law—which would imply that he considered the Jewish nation had still some valid part to play99 in the world-wide plan of God. But even so, there was nothing in the law to secure the bliss of the Jewish Christian; and as for the Gentile Christian, he was not allowed either to practice circumcision or to keep the law. In his case, such conduct would have meant that Christ had died in vain.

Thus it was that Paul preached the crucified Christ to the Gentiles, and not only established the principle of the Gentile mission, but made it a reality. The work of his predecessors, when measured by his convictions, was loose and questionable; it seemed to reach the same end as he did, but it was not entirely just to the law or to the gospel. Paul wrecked the religion of Israel on the cross of Christ, in the very endeavour to comprehend it with a greater reverence and stricter obedience than his predecessors. The day of Israel, he declared, had now expired. He honoured the Jewish Christian community at Jerusalem, the source of so much antagonism to himself, with a respect which is almost inconceivable; but he made it perfectly clear that “the times of the Gentiles” had arrived, and that if any Jewish Christian churches did not unite with the Gentile Christian churches to form the one “church of God,” they forfeited by this exclusiveness their very right to existence. Paul's conception of religion and of religious history was extremely simple, if one looks at its kernel, for it was based upon one fact. It cannot be reduced to a brief formula without being distorted into a platitude. It is never vital except in the shape of a paradox. In place of the particular forms of expression which Paul introduced, and by means of which he made the conception valid and secure for himself, it was possible that others

might arise, as was the case in the very next generation with the author of Hebrews and with the anonymous genius who composed the Johannine writings. From that time onwards many other teachers came forward to find fresh bases for the Pauline gospel (e.g., Marcion and Clement of Alexandria, to name a couple of very different writers from the second century). But what they transformed was not the fruit and kernel of Paulinism. Essentially they were quite at one with the apostle. For it is the great prerogative of the historian in a later age to be able to recognize an essential unity where argument and proofs are widely different.

Historically, Paul the Pharisee dethroned the people and the religion of Israel;100 he tore the gospel from its Jewish soil and rooted it in the soil of humanity.101 No wonder that the full reaction of Judaism against the gospel now commenced—a reaction on the part of Jews and Jewish Christians alike. The hostility of the Jews appears on every page of Acts, from chap. xii. onwards, and it can be traced by the aid even of the evangelic narratives,102 whose sources go back to the period preceding A.D. 65. The Jews now sought to extirpate the Palestinian churches and to silence the Christian missionaries. They hampered every step of Paul's work among the Gentiles; they cursed Christians and Christ in their synagogues; they stirred up the masses and the authorities in every country against him; systematically and officially they scattered broadcast horrible charges against the Christians, which played an important part (ὑμεῖς τῆς κατὰ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ ἡμῶν τῶν ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου κακῆς προλήψεως αἴτιοι) in the persecutions as early as the reign of Trajan; they started calumnies against Jesus; 103 they provided heathen opponents of Christianity with literary ammunition; unless the evidence is misleading, they instigated the Neronic outburst against the Christians; and as a rule, whenever bloody persecutions are afoot in later days, the Jews are either in the background or the foreground (the synagogues being dubbed by Tertullian “fontes persecutionum”). By a sort of instinct they felt that Gentile Christianity, though apparently it was no concern of theirs, was their peculiar foe. This course of action on the part of the Jews was inevitable. They merely accelerated a process which implied the complete liberation of the new religion from the old, and which prevented Judaism from solving the problem which she had already faced, the problem of her metamorphosis into a religion for the world. In this sense there was something satisfactory about the Jewish opposition. It helped both religions to make the mutual breach complete, whilst it also deepened in the minds of Gentile Christians—at a time when this still needed to be deepened—the assurance that their religion did represent a new creation, and that they were no mere class of people admitted into some lower rank, but were themselves the new People of God, who had succeeded to the old.104

But the Jewish Christians also entered the arena. They issued from Jerusalem a demand that the church at Antioch should be circumcised, and the result of this demand was the so-called apostolic council. We possess two accounts of this (Gal. ii. and Acts xv.). Each leaves much to be desired, and it is hardly possible to harmonize them both. Paul's account is not so much written down as flung down pell-mell; such is the vigour with which it seeks to emphasize the final result, that its abrupt sentences render the various intermediate stages either invisible or indistinct. The other account, unless we are deceived, has thrown the ultimate issue of the council into utter confusion by the irrelevant introduction of what transpired at a later period. Even for other reasons, this account excites suspicion. Still we can see plainly that Peter, John, and James recognized the work of Paul, that they gave him no injunctions as to his missionary labours, and that they chose still to confine themselves to the Jewish mission. Paul did not at once succeed in uniting Jewish and Gentile Christians in a single fellowship of life and worship; it was merely the principle of this fellowship that gained the day, and even this principle —an agreement which in itself was naturally unstable and shortlived—could be ignored by wide circles of Jewish Christians. Nevertheless much ground had been won. The stipulation itself

ensured that, as did even more the developments to which it led. The Jewish Christians split up. How they could still continue to hold together (in Jerusalem and elsewhere) for years to come, is an insoluble riddle. One section persisted in doing everything they could to persecute Paul and his work with ardent enmity: to crush him was their aim. In this they certainly were actuated by some honest convictions, which Paul was naturally incapable of understanding. To the very last, indeed, he made concessions to these "zealots for the law" within the boundaries of Palestine; but outside Palestine he repudiated them so soon as they tried to win over Gentiles to their own form of Christianity. The other section, including Peter and probably the rest of the primitive apostles, commenced before long to advance beyond the agreement, though in a somewhat hesitating and tentative fashion: outside Palestine they began to hold intercourse with the Gentile Christians, and to lead the Jewish Christians also in this direction. These tentative endeavours culminated in a new agreement, which now made a real fellowship possible for both parties. The condition was that the Gentile Christians were to abstain from flesh offered to idols, from tasting blood and things strangled, and from fornication. Henceforth Peter, probably with one or two others of the primitive apostles, took part in the Gentile mission. The last barrier had collapsed.105 If we marvel at the greatness of Paul, we should not marvel less at the primitive apostles, who for the gospel's sake entered on a career which the Lord and Master, with whom they had eaten. and drunk, had never taught them.

By adopting an intercourse with Gentile Christians, this Jewish Christianity did away with itself, and in the second period of his labours Peter ceased to be a "Jewish Christian."106He became a Greek. Still, two Jewish Christian parties continued to exist. One of these held by the agreement of the apostolic council; it gave the Gentile Christians its blessing, but held aloof from them in actual life. The other persisted in fighting the Gentile Church as a false church. Neither party counts in the subsequent history of the church, owing to their numerical weakness. According to Justin (Apol., I. liii.), who must have known the facts, Jesus was rejected by the Jewish nation "with few exceptions" (πλὴν ὀλίγων τινῶν). In the Diaspora, apart from Syria and Egypt, Jewish Christians were hardly to be met with;107 there the Gentile Christians felt themselves supreme, in fact they were almost masters of the field.108 This did not last, however, beyond 180 A.D., when the Catholic church put Jewish Christians upon her roll of heretics. They were thus paid back in their own coin by Gentile Christianity; the heretics turned their former judges into heretics.

Before long the relations of Jewish Christians to their kinsmen the Jews also took a turn for the worse—that is, so far as actual relations existed between them at all. It was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple which seems to have provoked the final crisis, and led to a complete breach between the two parties.109 No Christian, even supposing he were a simple Jewish Christian, could view the catastrophe which befell the Jewish state, with its capital and sanctuary, as anything else than the just punishment of the nation for having crucified the Messiah. Strictly speaking, he ceased from that moment to be a Jew; for a Jew who accepted the downfall of his state and temple as a divine dispensation, thereby committed national suicide. Undoubtedly the catastrophe decimated the exclusive Jewish Christianity of Palestine and drove a considerable number either back into Judaism or forward into the Catholic church. Yet how illogical human feelings can be, when they are linked to a powerful tradition! There were Jewish Christians still, who remained after the fall of Jerusalem just where they had stood before; evidently they bewailed the fall of the temple, and yet they saw in its fall a merited punishment. Did they, we ask, or did they not, venture to desire the rebuilding of the temple? We can easily understand how such people proved a double offence to their fellow-countrymen, the genuine Jews. Indeed they were always falling between two fires, for the Jews persecuted them with bitter hatred,110 while the Gentile church censured them as heretics—i.e., as non-

Christians. They are dubbed indifferently by Jerome, who knew them personally,111 “semi-Judaei” and “semi-Christiani.'” And Jerome was right. They were really “semis”; they were “half” this or that, although they followed the course of life which Jesus had himself observed. Crushed by the letter of Jesus, they died a lingering death.

There is hardly any fact which deserves to be turned over and thought over so much as this, that the religion of Jesus has never been able to root itself in Jewish or even Semitic soil112. Certainly there must have been, and certainly there must be still, some element in this religion which is allied to the greater freedom of the Greek spirit. In one sense Christianity has really remained Greek down to the present day. The forms it acquired on Greek soil have been modified, but they have never been laid aside within the church at large, not even within Protestantism itself. And what an ordeal this religion underwent in the tender days of its childhood! “Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation.” Islam rose in Arabia and has remained upon the whole an Arabic religion; the strength of its youth was also the strength of its manhood. Christianity, almost immediately after it arose, was dislodged from the nation to which it belonged; and thus from the very outset it was forced to learn how to distinguish between the kernel and the husk.113

Paul is only responsible in part for the sharp anti-Judaism which developed within the very earliest phases of Gentile Christianity. Though he held that the day of the Jews (πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων, 1 Thess. ii. 15) was past and gone, yet he neither could nor would believe in a final repudiation of God's people; on that point his last word is said in Rom. xi. 25, 29:—οὐ θελω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ὅτι πώρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρις οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ, καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται . . . ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλῆσις τοῦ θεοῦ. In this sense Paul remained a Jewish Christian to the end. The duality of mankind (Jews and “nations'") remained, in a way, intact, despite the one church of God which embraced them both. This church did not abrogate the special promises made to the Jews.

But this standpoint remained a Pauline idiosyncrasy. When people had recourse, as the large majority of Christians had, simply to the allegorical method in order to emancipate themselves from the letter, and even from the contents, of Old Testament religion, the Pauline view had no attraction for them; in fact it was quite inadmissible, since the legitimacy of the allegorical conception, and inferentially the legitimacy of the Gentile church in general, was called in question, if the Pauline view held good at any single point.114 If the people of Israel retained a single privilege, if a single special promise still had any meaning whatsoever, if even one letter had still to remain in force—how could the whole of the Old Testament be spiritualized? How could it all be transferred to another people? The result of this mental attitude was the conviction that the Jewish people was now rejected: it was Ishmael, not Isaac; Esau, not Jacob. Yet even this verdict did not go far enough. If the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament is the correct one, and the literal false, then (it was argued) the former was correct from the very first, since what was false yesterday cannot be true today. Now the Jewish people from the first persisted in adhering to the literal interpretation, practicing circumcision, offering bloody sacrifices, and observing the regulations concerning food; consequently they were always in error, an error which shows that they never were the chosen people. The chosen people throughout was the Christian people, which always existed in a sort of latent condition (the younger brother being really the elder), though it only came to light at first with Christ. From the outset the Jewish people had lost the promise; indeed it was a question whether it had ever been meant for them at all. In any case the literal interpretation of God's revealed will proved

that the people had been forsaken by God and had fallen under the sway of the devil. As this was quite clear, the final step had now to be taken, the final sentence had now to be pronounced: the Old Testament, from cover to cover, has nothing whatever to do with the Jews. Illegally and insolently the Jews had seized upon it; they had confiscated it, and tried to claim it as their own property. They had falsified it by their expositions and even by corrections and omissions. Every Christian must therefore deny them the possession of the Old Testament. It would be a sin for Christians to say, “This book belongs to us and to the Jews." No; the book belonged from the outset, as it belongs now and evermore, to none but Christians,115 whilst Jews are the worst, the most godless and God-forsaken, of all nations upon earth,116 the devil's own people, Satan's synagogue, a fellowship of hypocrites.117 They are stamped by their crucifixion of the Lord.118 God has now brought them to an open ruin, before the eyes of all the world; their temple is burnt, their city destroyed, their commonwealth shattered, their people scattered—never again is Jerusalem to be frequented.119 It may be questioned, therefore, whether God still desires this people to be converted at all, and whether he who essays to win a single Jew is not thereby interfering unlawfully with his punishment. But the fact is, this people will not move; so that by their obstinacy and hostility to Christ, they relieve Christians from having to answer such a question.

This was the attitude consistently adopted by the Gentile church towards Judaism. Their instinct of self-preservation and their method of justifying their own appropriation of the Old Testament, chimed in with the ancient antipathy felt by the Greeks and Romans to the Jews. Still,120 it was not everyone who ventured to draw the final conclusions of the epistle of Barnabas (iv. 6. f., xiv. 1 f.). Most people admitted vaguely that in earlier days a special relation existed between God and his people, though at the same time all the Old Testament promises were referred even by them to Christian people. While Barnabas held the literal observance of the law to prove a seduction of the devil to which the Jewish people had succumbed,121the majority regarded circumcision as a sign appointed by God;122 they recognized that the literal observance of the law was designed and enjoined by God for the time being, although they held that no righteousness ever emanated from it. Still even they held that the spiritual sense was the one true meaning, which by a fault of their own the Jews had misunderstood; they considered that the burden of the ceremonial law was an educational necessity, to meet the stubbornness and idolatrous tendencies of the nation (being, in fact, a safeguard of monotheism); and, finally, they interpreted the sign of circumcision in such a way that it appeared no longer as a favour, but rather as a mark of the judgment to be executed on Israel.123

Israel thus became literally a church which had been at all times the inferior or the Satanic church. Even in point of time the “older” people really did not precede the “younger,” for the latter was more ancient, and the “new” law was the original law. Nor had the patriarchs, prophets, and men of God, who had been counted worthy to receive God's word, anything in common inwardly with the Jewish people; they were God's elect who distinguished themselves by a holy conduct corresponding to their election, and they must be regarded as the fathers and forerunners of the latent Christian people.124 No satisfactory answer is given by any of these early Christian writings to the question, How is it that, if these men must not on any account be regarded as Jews, they nevertheless appeared entirely or almost entirely within the Jewish nation? Possibly the idea was that God in his mercy meant to bring this wickedest of the nations to the knowledge of the truth by employing the most effective agencies at his command; but even this suggestion comes to nothing.

Such an injustice as that done by the Gentile church to Judaism is almost unprecedented in

the annals of history. The Gentile church stripped it of everything; she took away its sacred book; herself but a transformation of Judaism, she cut off all connection with the parent religion. The daughter first robbed her mother, and then repudiated her! But, one may ask, is this view really correct? Undoubtedly it is, to some extent, and it is perhaps impossible to force anyone to give it up. But viewed from a higher standpoint, the facts acquire a different complexion. By their rejection of Jesus, the Jewish people disowned their calling and dealt the death-blow to their own existence; their place was taken by Christians as the new People, who appropriated the whole tradition of Judaism, giving a fresh interpretation to any unserviceable materials in it, or else allowing them to drop. As a matter of fact, the settlement was not even sudden or unexpected; what was unexpected was simply the particular form which the settlement assumed. All that Gentile Christianity did was to complete a process which had in fact commenced long ago within Judaism itself, viz., the process by which the Jewish religion was being inwardly emancipated and transformed into a religion for the world.

About 140 A.D. the transition of Christianity to the "Gentiles," with its emancipation from Judaism, was complete.125 It was only learned opponents among the Greeks and the Jews themselves, who still reminded Christians that, strictly speaking, they must be Jews. After the fall of Jerusalem there was no longer any Jewish counter-mission, apart from a few local efforts;126 on the contrary, Christians established themselves in the strongholds hitherto held by Jewish propaganda and Jewish proselytes. Japhet occupied the tents of Shem,127 and Shem had to retire.

One thing, however, remained an enigma. Why had Jesus appeared among the Jews, instead of among the "nations"?128This was a vexing problem. The Fourth Gospel (see above, p. 42), it is important to observe, describes certain Greeks as longing to see Jesus (xii. 20 f.), and the words put into the mouth of Jesus on that occasion129 are intended to explain why the Saviour did not undertake the Gentile mission. The same evangelist makes Jesus say with the utmost explicitness (x. 16), "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." He himself is to bring them. The mission which his disciples carry out, is thus his mission; it is just as if he drew them himself.130 Indeed his own power is still to work in them, as he is to send them the Holy Spirit to lead them into all the truth, communicating to them a wisdom which had hitherto lain unrevealed.

One consequence of this attitude of mind was that the twelve were regarded as a sort of personal multiplication of Christ himself, while the Kerugma (or outline and essence of Christian preaching) came to include the dispatch of the twelve into all the world—i.e., to include the Gentile mission as a command of Jesus himself. Compare the Apology of Aristides (ii.); Just., Apol., I. xxxix.; Ascens. Isaiae, iii. 13 f. (where the coming of the twelve disciples belongs to the fundamental facts of the gospel); Iren., Fragm. 29;131 Tertull., Apol. xxi., adv. Marc. III. xxii. (habes et apostolorum opus praedicatum); Hippol., de Antichr. 61; Orig., c. Cels., III. xxviii.; Acta Joh. (ed. Zahn, p. 246: "the God who chose us to be apostles of the heathen, who sent us out into the world, who showed himself by the apostles"); Serapion in Eus., H.E., vi. 12.132 Details on this conception of the primitive apostles will be found in Book III.

CHAPTER VI.

RESULTS OF THE MISSION OF PAUL AND OF THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

1. BEFORE his last journey to Jerusalem Paul wrote from Corinth to Rome (Rom. xv. 19 f.): "From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation. Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you; but now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, I will come whenever I go to Spain. For I hope to see you on my journey and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company."

The preaching of the gospel within the Greek world is now complete (for this is what the words "even unto Illyria" imply); the Latin world now begins.133 Paul thus identifies his own missionary preaching along a narrow line from Jerusalem to Illyria with the preaching of the gospel to the entire Eastern hemisphere—a conception which is only intelligible upon the supposition that the certainty of the world's near end made no other kind of mission possible than one which thus hastily covered the world's area. The fundamental idea is that the gospel has to be preached everywhere during the short remaining space of the present world-age,134 while at the same time this is only feasible by means of mission-tours across the world. The fire it is assumed, will spread right and left spontaneously from the line of flame.135

This idea, that the world must be traversed, was apparently conceived by the apostle on his so-called "second'" missionary tour.136 Naturally he viewed it as a divine injunction, for it is in this sense that we must interpret the difficult passage in Acts xvi. 6-8. If Paul had undertaken this second tour with the aim of reaching the Hellenistic districts on the coast of Asia Minor, and if he had become conscious in the course of his work that he was also called to be an apostle to the Greeks, then on the western border of Phrygia this consciousness passed into the sense of a still higher duty. He is not merely the apostle of the barbarians (Syrians, Cilicians, Lycaonians), not merely the apostle even of barbarians and Greeks, but the apostle of the world. He is commissioned to bear the gospel right to the western limits of the Roman empire; that is, he must fill up the gaps left by the missionaries in their efforts to cover the whole ground. Hence he turns aside on the frontier of Phrygia, neither westwards (to Asia) nor northward (to Bithynia), as one might expect and as he originally planned to do, but northwest. Even Mysia he only hurries through. The decision to pass by Asia and Bithynia meant that he was undertaking a mission to Macedonia, Achaia, and beyond that to the West.

Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Athens, Corinth—or, to put it more accurately, from Paul's standpoint, Macedonia and Achaia—heard the gospel. But why did he remain for eighteen months in Corinth? Why did he not travel on at once to Rome, and thence to the far West? Why did he interpolate a fresh tour, at this point, to Asia Minor, residing no less than three years at Ephesus? The answer is obvious. While he had Rome and the West in his mind, the first time he reached Corinth (Rom. i. 13), circumstances fortunately proved too strong for any attempt to realize this ambitious scheme. If I understand the situation aright, there were three considerations which had to be borne in mind. First of all, Paul neither would nor could lose touch with the two mother-churches in Jerusalem and Antioch. This made him return upon his tracks on two occasions. In the second place, he felt irresistibly bound to build up the churches which he had founded, instead of leaving them in the lurch after a few weeks. The duty of organizing and of working on a small scale prevailed over the visionary and alleged duty of

hurrying over the world with the gospel; the latter duty might well have lurking in it a grain of personal ambition. Finally, it was plain that no one had raised the standard of the gospel in the great province which he had been obliged to pass by, i.e., in Western Asia Minor, the kernel of the Hellenic world. Paul had certainly assumed that other agents would preach the word of God here. But his hope was disappointed. On his first return journey (from Corinth to Jerusalem) he was content to leave behind him at Ephesus the distinguished missionary Prisca with her husband Aquila; but when he came back on his so-called "third'" journey, he found not only the small beginnings of a Christian community, but disciples of John, whose mission he could not afford to ignore. The local sphere proved so rich and fertile that he felt obliged to take up residence at Ephesus. Here it was that he pursued the task of that spiritual settlement between Hellenism and Christianity which he had begun at Corinth. The first epistle to the Corinthians is evidence of this relationship. At Antioch no such adjustment was possible, for Antioch was simply a large Greek colony; it was Greek only in the sense in which Calcutta is English.

Paul, however, had not abandoned his scheme for covering the world with the gospel. The realization of it was only deferred in the sense in which the return of Christ was deferred. Probably he would have remained still longer at Ephesus (in the neighborhood of which, as well as throughout the district, new churches had sprung up) and come into closer touch with Hellenism, had he not been disturbed by news from Corinth and finally driven out of the city by a small riot.

Paul's labours made Ephesus the third capital of Christianity, its distinctively Greek capital. For a while it looked as if Ephesus was actually destined to be the final headquarters of the faith. But already a rival was emerging in the far West, which was to eclipse the Asiatic metropolis. This was Rome, the fourth city of Christianity, destined ere long to be the first.

When he left Ephesus to journey through Macedonia and Achaia, he again became the itinerant apostle, and once more the unforgotten idea of traversing the wide world got possession of his mind. From Corinth he wrote to Rome the words with which this chapter opened—words which lose something of their hyperbolic air when we think of the extraordinary success already won by the apostle in Macedonia and Achaia, in Asia and Phrygia. He had the feeling that, despite the poor results in Athens, he had conquered the Hellenic world. Conscious of this religious and intellectual triumph, he deemed his task within that sphere already done.

Nor did God need him now in Rome or throughout Italy. There the gospel had been already preached, and a great church had been organized by unknown missionaries. The faith of this church was "heard of through the whole world." Spain alone remained, for the adjacent Gaul and Africa could be reached along this line of work. Spain is selected, instead of Gaul or Africa, because the apostle's idea was to run a transversal line right across the empire. So Clement of Rome rightly understood him (i. 5), in words which almost sound like those of the apostle himself: "Seven times imprisoned, exiled, stoned, having preached in the east and in the west, a teacher of righteousness to the whole world even to the furthest limit of the west."

Did he manage this? Not in the first instance, at any rate. He had again to return to the far East, and the gloomy forebodings with which he travelled to Jerusalem were realized. When he did reach Rome, a year or two later, it was as a prisoner. But if he could no longer work as he desired to do, his activities were undiminished, in the shape of preaching at Rome, writing letters to churches far away, and holding intercourse with friends from the East.

When he was beheaded in the summer of 64 A.D., he had fully discharged his obligations to the peoples of the world. He was the apostle κατ᾽ ἐξοχήν. To barbarians, Greeks, and Latins he

had brought the gospel. But his greatness does not lie in the mere fact that he penetrated as a missionary to Illyria, Rome, and probably Spain as well; it "lies in the manner in which he trained his fellow-workers and organized, as well as created, his churches. Though all that was profoundly Hellenic remained obscure to him, yet he rooted Christianity permanently in Hellenic soil. He was not the only one to do so, but it was his ideas alone which proved anew ferment within Hellenism, as the gnostics, Irenæus, Origen, and Augustine especially show. So far as there ever was an original Christian Hellenism, it was under Pauline influences. Paul lived on in his epistles. They are not merely records of his personality and work—though even in this light few writings in the world are to be compared to them—but, as the profound outcome of a vital personal religion and an unheard-of inner conflict, they are also perennial springs of religious power. Every age has understood them in its own way. None has yet exhausted them. Even in their periods of depreciation they have been singularly influential.

Of the four centres of Christianity during the first century—Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Rome—one alone was the work of Paul, and even Ephesus did not remain as loyal to its founder as might have been expected. As the "father'" of his churches he fell into the background everywhere; in fact he was displaced, and displaced by the development of mediocrity, of that "natural" piety which gets on quite well by itself. Neither his strength nor his weakness was transmitted to his churches. In this sense Paul remained an isolated personality, but he always was the teacher of Christendom, and this he became more than ever as the years went by.

2. His legacy, apart from his epistles, was his churches. He designated them indeed as his "epistles." Neither his vocation (as a restless, pioneering missionary), nor his temperament, nor his religious genius (as an ecstatic enthusiast and a somewhat exclusive theologian) seemed to fit him for the work of organization; nevertheless he knew better than anyone else how to found and build up churches (cp. Weinel, Paulus als kirchlicher Organisator, 1899). Recognizing the supreme fruits of the Spirit in faith, love, hope, and all the allied virtues, bringing the outbursts of enthusiasm into the service of edification, subordinating the individual to the larger organism, claiming the natural conditions of social life, for all their defects and worldliness, as divine arrangements, he overcame the dangers of fanaticism and created churches which could live in the world without being of the world. But organization never became for Paul an end in itself or a means to worldly aggrandizement. Such was by no means his intention. "The aims of his ecclesiastical labours were unity in brotherly love and the reign of God in the heart of man, not the rule of savants or priests over the laity." In his theology and in his controversy with the Judaists he seems often to be like an inquisitor or a fanatical scribe, and he has been accused of inoculating the church with the virus of theological narrowness and heresy-mongering. But in reality the only confession he recognised, besides that of the living God, was the confession of "Christ the Lord," and towards the close of his life he testified that he would tolerate any doctrine which occupied that ground. The spirit of Christ, liberty, love—to these supreme levels, in spite of his temperament and education, he won his own way, and it was on these high levels that he sought to place his churches.

3. There was a great disparity between him and his coadjutors. Among the more independent, Barnabas, Silas (Silvanus), Prisca and Aquila, and Apollos deserve mention. Of Barnabas we have already spoken (pp. 52 f.). Silas, the prophet of the Jerusalemite church, took his place beside Paul, and held a position during the so-called "second" missionary tour like that of Barnabas during the "first." Perhaps the fact that Paul took him as a companion was a fresh assurance for the church of Jerusalem. But, so far as we can see (cp. 2 Cor. i. 19), no discord marred their intercourse. Silas shared with him the work of founding the churches in Macedonia and Achaia. There after he disappears entirely from the life of Paul and the Acts of

the Apostles, to reappear, we are surprised to find, as an author at the conclusion of the epistle to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, which was inspired by Peter (for such is in all probability the meaning of v. 12: διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι᾽ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα. This abrupt reference to him, which stands quite by itself, must remain an enigma. Prisca and Aquila, the wife and husband (or rather, Prisca the missionary, with her husband Aquila), who were exiled from Rome to Corinth during the reign of Claudius, had the closest relation to Paul of all the independent workers in the mission. They co-operated with him at Corinth; they prepared the way for him at Ephesus, where Prisca showed her Christian intelligence by winning over Apollos, the Alexandrian disciple of John, to Christ; they once saved the apostle's life; and, on returning to Rome, they carried on the work upon Paul's lines (cp. my study in the Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie, Jan. 11, 1900). There is much to be said for the hypothesis that Hebrews was their composition, whether from the pen of Prisca or of Aquila (cp. my essay in the Zeitschrift für die neutest. Wissenschaft, vol. i. pp. 1 f., 1900). Apollos, the Alexandrian, worked independently in the field which Paul had planted at Corinth. Paul only refers to him in First Corinthians, but invariably with respect and affection; he was well aware that the Corinthians attributed a certain rivalry and coolness to himself and Apollos. At the same time it may be questioned whether the work of this able colleague, whom he had not personally chosen, was thoroughly congenial to him. The abrupt reference in Tit. iii. 18 unfortunately does not tell us anything beyond the fact that their subsequent intercourse was unimpaired.

Among the missionaries whom Paul himself secured or trained, Timothy occupies the foremost place. We learn a good deal about him, and his personality was so important even to the author of Acts that his origin and selection for this office are described (xvi. 1). Still, we cannot form any clear idea of this, the most loyal of Paul's younger coadjutors, probably because he leant so heavily on the apostle. After Paul's death at Rome he carried on his work there, having been with him in the capital, and thus came into touch with the local church. He was for a time in prison, and survived to the reign of Domitian (Heb. xiii. 23).—Mark, who belonged to the primitive church of Jerusalem, Titus, and Luke the physician, are to be singled out among the other missionaries of the second class. With regard to Mark, whom Paul did not take with him on his so-called “second'” tour, but who later on is found in his company (Philemon 24, Col. iv. 10, 2 Tim. iv. 11), it is just possible (though, in my judgment, it is not likely) that tradition has made one figure out of two. He it is who, according to the presbyter John, made notes of the gospel story. Titus, of whom little is known, was a full-blooded pagan (Gal. ii. 1 f.), and laboured for some time in Crete. Luke, who came across Paul at Troas on the latter's second tour, belonged to the church of Antioch. Like Titus, he was a Gentile Christian. He furnished primitive Christianity with its most intelligent, though not its greatest, author. Paul does not appear, however, to have fully recognised the importance of this “beloved physician” (Col. iv. 15), his “fellow-worker” (Philemon 24). The last reference to his fellow-workers indeed is not enthusiastic. The epistle to the Philippians breathes an air of isolation, and in 2 Tim. iv. 9 f. we read: “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is gone to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me [rather a mediocre consolation, it would seem!]. Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering. Tychicus I sent to Ephesus. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me.” It would be unfair, however, to judge Paul's coadjutors by these expressions of dissatisfaction. Evidently they had not done as Paul wished, but we are quite in the dark upon the reasons for their action.

4. The first epistle of Peter is a very dubious piece of evidence for the idea that Peter, either

with or after Paul, took part in the mission to Asia Minor; but there is no doubt that some prominent Palestinian Christians came to Asia and Phrygia, perhaps after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that they displayed remarkable activity in the district. At their head was a man who came to Ephesus and died there, at a ripe age, during the first year of the reign of Trajan. This was John "the Presbyter," as he called himself, and as he was called by his own circle. He worked in the Pauline churches of Asia, both in person and by means of letters; he added to their number, organized them internally, and maintained an extraordinarily sharp opposition to heretics. He retained the oversight of the churches, and exercised it by means of itinerant emissaries. His influence was apostolic or equivalent to that of an apostolic authority, but towards the end of his life several churches, conscious of their independence, endeavoured, in conjunction with their bishops, to throw off his supervision. When he died, there was an end of the mission organisation, which had latterly survived in his own person: the independent, local authority came to the front on all hands. When Ignatius reached Asia, twelve or fifteen years afterwards, the former had entirely disappeared, and even the memory of this John had given place to that of Paul. The Johannine circle must therefore have been rather limited during its latter phase. Even John must have been pretty isolated.137 The second and third epistles of John certainly belong to him, and we may therefore ascribe to him, with much probability, the Fourth gospel and the first epistle of John also—in fact, we may go a step further and claim for him the Apocalypse with its seven letters and its Christian revision of one or more Jewish apocalypses. This hypothesis is the simplest which can be framed: it meets the data of tradition better than any other, and it encounters no fatal objections. All that can be said of the personality of this John within the limits of reasonable probability, is that he was not the son of Zebedee, but a Jerusalemite of priestly origin, otherwise unknown to us, and a disciple of the Lord;138 furthermore, as the gospel indicates, he must at one time have been specially connected with John the son of Zebedee.139 If his authority collapsed towards the end of his life, or was confined to a small circle, that circle ("of presbyters") certainly succeeded in restoring and extending his authority by editing his writings and disseminating them throughout the churches. In all likelihood, too, they purposely identified the "apostle,'" presbyter, and disciple of the Lord with the son of Zebedee; or, at least, they did not oppose this erroneous tendency.

Apart from this John we can name the evangelist Philip and his four prophetic daughters, Aristion the disciple of the Lord, and probably the apostle Andrew as among those who came to Asia Minor. As for Philip (already confused in the second century with his namesake the apostle) and his daughters, we have clear evidence for his activity in Phrygian Hierapolis. Papias mentions Aristion together with John as primitive witnesses, and an Armenian manuscript ascribes the unauthentic ending of Mark's gospel to him—an ending which is connected with Luke and the Fourth gospel, and perhaps originated in Asia Minor. We may conjecture, from the old legends preserved in the Muratorian fragment, that Andrew came to Asia Minor, and this is confirmed by the tradition (late, but not entirely worthless) that he died in Greece.140

At the close of the first century Asia and Phrygia were the only two provinces in which Palestinian traditions survived in the person of individual representatives. At the same time, probably, in no other part of the empire were there so many closely allied churches as here and in Pontus and Bithynia. This must have lent them, and especially the church at Ephesus, a high repute. When Clement of Alexandria was in search of early traditions, he turned to Asia; and even in Rome people were well aware of the significance with which the Asiatic churches were invested owing to their traditions, though Rome was never willing to take the second place. About 50 A.D. Christianity was an ellipse whose foci were Jerusalem and Antioch; fifty years

later these foci were Ephesus and Rome. The change implied in this proves the greatness of Paul's work and of the work done by the first Christian missionaries.

BOOK II

THE MISSION—PREACHING IN WORD AND DEED

THE unity and the variety which characterized the preaching of Christianity from the very first constituted the secret of its fascination and a vital condition of its success. On the one hand, it was so “simple that it could be summed up in a few brief sentences and understood in a single crisis of the inner life; on the other hand, it was so versatile and rich, that it vivified all thought and stimulated every emotion. It was capable, almost from the outset, of vying with every noble and worthy enterprise, with any speculation, or with any cult of the mysteries. It was both new and old; it was alike present and future. Clear and transparent, it was also profound and full of mystery. It had statutes, and yet rose superior to any law. It was a doctrine and yet no doctrine, a philosophy and yet something different from philosophy. Western Catholicism, when surveyed as a whole, has been described as a complexio oppositorum, but this was also true of the Christian propaganda in its earliest stages. Consequently, to exhibit the preaching and labors of the Christian mission with the object of explaining the amazing success of Christianity, we must try to get a uniform grasp of all its component factors.

We shall proceed then to describe:—

1. The religious characteristics of the mission-preaching.

2. The gospel of salvation and of the Saviour.

3. The gospel of love and charity.

4. The religion of the Spirit and power, of moral earnestness and holiness.

5. The religion of authority and of reason, of mysteries and transcendentalism.

6. The message of a new People and of a Third race (or the historical and political consciousness of Christendom).

7. The religion of a Book, and of a historical realization.

8. The conflict with polytheism and idolatry.

In the course of these chapters we hope to do justice to the wealth of the religion, without impairing or obscuring the power of its simplicity. One point must be left out, of course: that is, the task of following the development of Christian doctrine into the dogmas of the church's catechism, as well as into the Christian philosophy of religion propounded by Origen and his school. Doctrine, in both of these forms, was unquestionably of great moment to the mission of Christianity, particularly after the date of its earliest definition (relatively speaking) about the middle of the third century. But such a subject would require a book to itself. I have endeavored, in the first volume of my History of Dogma (third edition) to deal with it, and to that work I must refer any who may desire to see how the unavoidable gaps of the present volume are to be filled up.

CHAPTER 1

RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MISSION-PREACHING

"Missionary Preaching" is a term which may be taken in a double sense. Its broader meaning covers all the forces of influence, attraction, and persuasion which the gospel had at its command, all the materials that it collected and endowed with life and power as it developed into a syncretistic religion during the first three centuries. The narrower sense of the term embraces simply the crucial message of faith and the ethical requirements of the gospel. Taking it in the latter sense, we shall devote the present chapter to a description of the fundamental principles of the missionary preaching. The broader conception has a wide range. The Old Testament and the new literature of Christianity, healing and redemption, gnosis and apologetic, myth and sacrament, the conquest of demons, forms of social organization and charity—all these played their part in the mission-preaching and helped to render it impressive and convincing. Even in the narrower sense of the term, our description of the mission-preaching must be kept within bounds, for the conception of the crucial message of faith and its ethical requirements is bound up naturally with the development of dogma, and the latter (as I have already remarked) cannot be exhibited without over-stepping the precincts of the present volume. At the same time, these limitations are not very serious, since, to the best of our knowledge, mission-preaching (in the narrower sense of the term) was fairly extinct after the close of the second century. Its place was taken by the instruction of catechumens, by the training of the household in and for the Christian faith, and by the worship of the church. Finally, we must eschew the error of imagining that everyone who came over to Christianity was won by a missionary propaganda of dogmatic completeness. So far as our sources throw light on this point, they reveal a very different state of things, and this applies even to the entire period preceding Constantine. In countless instances, it was but one ray of light that wrought the change. One person would be brought over by means of the Old Testament, another by the exorcising of demons, a third by the purity of Christian life; others, again, by the monotheism of Christianity, above all by the prospect of complete expiation, or by the prospect which it held out of immortality, or by the profundity of its speculations, or by the social standing which it conferred. In the great majority of cases, so long as Christianity did not yet propagate itself naturally, one believer may well have produced another, just as one prophet anointed his successor; example (not confined to the case of the martyrs) and the personal manifestation of the Christian life led to imitation. A complete knowledge of Christian doctrine, which was still a plant of very tender growth in the second century, was certainly the attainment of a small minority. "Idiotae, quorum semper maior pars est," says Tertullian ("The uneducated are always in a majority with us"). Hippolytus bewails the ignorance even of a Roman bishop. Even the knowledge of the Scriptures, though they were read in private, remained of necessity the privilege of an individual here and there, owing to their extensiveness and the difficulty of understanding them.143

The earliest mission-preaching to Jews ran thus: "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent."144 The Jews thought they knew what was the meaning of the kingdom of heaven and of its advent; but they had to be told the meaning of the repentance that secured the higher righteousness, so that "God's kingdom" also acquired a new meaning.

The second stage in the mission-preaching to Jews was determined by this tenet: "The risen145 Jesus is the Messiah [cp. Matt. x. 32], and will return from heaven to establish his kingdom."

The third stage was marked by the interpretation of the Old Testament as a whole (i.e., the law and the prophets) from the standpoint of its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, along with the accompanying need of securing and formulating that inwardness of disposition and moral principle which members of the Messianic church, who were called and kept by the Holy Spirit, knew to be their duty.146 This must have made them realize that the observance of the law, which had hitherto prevailed, was inadequate either to cancel sin or to gain righteousness; also that Jesus the Messiah had died that sins might be forgiven (γνωστὸν ἔστω ὑμῖν, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι).147

"You know that when you were pagans you were led away to dumb idols" (1 Cor. xii. 2). "You turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 9-10). Here we have the mission-preaching to pagans in a nutshell. The "living and true God" is the first and final thing; the second is Jesus, the Son of God, the judge, who secures us against the wrath to come, and who is therefore "Jesus the Lord." To the living God, now preached to all men, we owe faith and devoted service; to God's Son as Lord, our due is faith and hope.148

The contents of this brief message—objective and subjective, positive and negative—are inexhaustible. Yet the message itself is thoroughly compact and complete. It is objective and positive as the message which tells of the only God, who is spiritual, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, the creator of heaven and earth, the Lord and Father of men, and the great disposer of human history;149 furthermore, it is the message which tells of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came from heaven, made known the Father, died for sins, rose, sent the Spirit hither, and from his seat at God's right hand will return for the judgment;150 finally, it is the message of salvation brought by Jesus the Saviour, that is, freedom from the tyranny of demons, sin, and death, together with the gift of life eternal.

Then it is objective and negative, since it announces the vanity of all other gods, and forms a protest against idols of gold and silver and wood, as well as against blind fate and atheism.

Finally, it is subjective, as it declares the uselessness of all sacrifice, all temples, and all worship of man's devising, and opposes to these the worship of God in spirit and in truth, assurance of faith, holiness and self-control, love and brotherliness, and lastly the solid certainty of the resurrection and of life eternal, implying the futility of the present life, which lies exposed to future judgment.

This new kind of preaching excited extraordinary fears and hopes: fears of the imminent end of the world and of the great reckoning, at which even the just could hardly pass muster; hopes of a glorious reign on earth, after the dénouement, and of a paradise which was to be filled with precious delights and overflowing with comfort and bliss. Probably no religion had ever proclaimed openly to men such terrors and such happiness.

To wide circles this message of the one and almighty God no longer came as a surprise. It was the reverse of a surprise. What they had vaguely divined, seemed now to be firmly and gloriously realized. At the same time, as "Jesus and the Resurrection" were taken for new dæmons in Athens (according to Acts xvii. 18), and considered to be utterly strange, this doctrine must have been regarded at first as paradoxical wherever it was preached. This, however, is not a question into which we have here to enter. What is certain is, that "the one living God, as creator," "Jesus the Saviour,"151 "the Resurrection" (ἡ ἀνάστασις), and ascetic

“self-control” (ἡ ἐγκρατεία) formed the most conspicuous articles of the new propaganda. Along with this the story of Jesus must have been briefly communicated (in the statements of Christology), the resurrection was generally defined as the resurrection of the flesh, and self-control primarily identified with sexual purity, and then extended to include renunciation of the world and mortification of the flesh.152

The most overwhelming element in the new preaching was the resurrection of the flesh, the complete “restitutio in integrum,” and the kingdom of glory. Creation and resurrection were the beginning and the end of the new doctrine. The hope of resurrection which it aroused gave rise to a fresh estimate of the individual value, and at the same time to quite inferior and sensuous desires. Faith in the resurrection of the body and in the millennium soon appeared to pagans to be the distinguishing feature of this silly religion. And the pagans were right. It was the distinguishing feature of Christianity at this period. Justin explains that all orthodox Christians held this doctrine and this hope. “Fiducia christianorum resurrectio mortuorum, illa credentes sumus,” Tertullian writes (de Resurr. i.), adding (in ch. xxi.) that this must not be taken allegorically, as the heretics allege, since “verisimile non est, ut ea species sacramenti, in quam fides tota committitur, in quam disciplina tota conititur, ambigue annuntiata et obscura proposita videatur” (the gospel is too important to be stated ambiguously; see further what follows). The earliest essays of a technical character by the teachers of the Catholic church were upon the resurrection of the flesh. It was a hope, too, which gave vent to the ardent desires of the oppressed, the poor, the slaves, and the disappointed upon earth: “We want to serve no longer, our wish is to reign soon” (Tert., de Orat. 5). “Though the times of this hope have been determined by the sacred pen, lest it should be fixed previous, I think, to the return of Christ, yet our prayers pant for the close of this age, for the passing of this world to the great day of the Lord, for the day of wrath and retribution” (Cum et tempora totius spei fida sunt sacrosancto stilo, ne liceat eam ante constitui quam in adventum, opinor, Christi, vota nostra suspirant in saeculi huius occasum, in transitum mundi quoque ad diem domini magnum, diem irae et retributionis.—Tert., de Resurr. xxii.). “May grace come and this world pass away! The Lord comes!” is the prayer of Christians at the Lord's Supper (Did. x.). In many circles this mood lasted even after the beginning of the third century, but it reached its height during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.153

From the outset “wisdom,” “intelligence,” “understanding,” and “intellect” had a very wide scope. Indeed, there was hardly mission propaganda of any volume which did not overflow into the “gnostic” spirit, i.e., the spirit of Greek philosophy. The play of imagination was at once unfettered and urged to its highest flights by the settled conviction (for we need not notice here the circles where a different view prevailed) that Jesus, the Saviour, had come down from heaven. It was, after all, jejune to be informed, “We are the offspring of God” (Acts xvii. 28); but to be told that God became man and was incarnate in order that men might be divine—this was the apex and climax of all knowledge. It was bound up with the speculative idea (i) that, as the incarnation was a cosmic and divine event, it must therefore involve a reviving and heightened significance for the whole creation; and (ii) that the soul of man, hitherto divided from its primal source in God by forces and barriers of various degrees, now found the way open for its return to God, while every one of those very forces which had formerly barred the path was also liberated and transformed into a step and intermediate stage on the way back. Speculations upon God, the world, and the soul were inevitable, and they extended to the nature of the church. Here, too, the earthly and historical was raised to the level of the cosmic and transcendental.

At first the contrast between a “sound” gnosis and a heretical only emerged by degrees in

the propaganda, although from the very outset it was felt that certain speculations seemed to imperil the preaching of the gospel itself.154 The extravagances of the “gnosis” which penetrated all the syncretistic religion of the age, and issued in dualism and docetism, were corrected primarily by a “sound” gnosis, then by the doctrine of Christian freedom, by a sober, rational theology and ethics, by the realism of the saving facts in the history of Jesus, by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, but ultimately and most effectively by the church prohibiting all “innovations” and fixing her tradition. From this standpoint Origen's definition of gospel preaching (Hom. in Joh. xxxii. 9) is extremely instructive. After quoting Hermas, Mand. i. (the one God, the Creator), he adds: “It is also necessary to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to believe all the truth concerning his deity and humanity, also to believe in the Holy Spirit, and that as free agents we are punished for our sins and rewarded for our good actions.”

By the second century Christianity was being preached in very different ways. The evangelists of the Catholic church preached in one way throughout the East, and in another throughout the West, though their fundamental position was identical; the Gnostics and Marcionites, again, preached in yet another way. Still Tertullian was probably not altogether wrong in saying that missions to the heathen were not actively promoted by the latter; the Gnostics and the Marcionites, as a rule, confined their operations to those who were already Christians. After the gnostic controversy, the anti-gnostic rule of faith gradually became the one basis of the church's preaching. The ethical and impetuous element retreated behind the dogmatic, although the emphasis upon self-control and asceticism never lost its vogue.

At the transition from the second to the third century, theology had extended widely, but the mission-preaching had then as ever to remain comparatively limited. For the “idiotæ” it was enough, and more than enough, to hold the four points which we have already mentioned. Scenes like those described in Acts (viii. 26-38) were constantly being repeated, mutatis mutandis, especially during the days of persecution, when individual Christians suffered martyrdom joyfully; and this, although an orthodox doctrine of considerable range was in existence, which (in theory, at any rate) was essential. For many the sum of knowledge amounted to nothing more than the confession of the one God, who created the world, of Jesus the Lord, of the judgment, and of the resurrection; on the other hand, some of the chief arguments in the proof from prophecy, which played so prominent a part in all preaching to Jews and pagans (see Chapter VIII.), were disseminated far and wide; and as the apologists are always pointing in triumph to the fact that “among us,” “tradesmen, slaves, and old women know how to give some account of God, and do not believe without evidence,”155 the principles of the Christian conception of God must have been familiar to a very large number of people.

These four points, then—the one living God, Jesus our Saviour and Judge, the resurrection of the flesh, and self-control—combined to form the new religion. It stood out in bold relief from the old religions, and above all from the Jewish; yet in spite of its hard struggle with polytheism, it was organically related to the process of evolution which was at work throughout all religion, upon the eastern and the central coasts of the Mediterranean. The atmosphere from which those four principles drew their vitality was the conception of recompense—i.e., the absolute supremacy of the moral element in life on the one hand, and the redeeming cross of Christ upon the other. No account of the principles underlying the mission-preaching of Christianity is accurate, if it does not view everything from the standpoint of this conception: the sovereignty of morality, and the assurance of redemption by the forgiveness of sins, based on the cross of Christ.156 “Grace,” i.e., forgiveness, did play a leading role, but grace never displaced recompense. From the very first, morality was inculcated within the Christian churches in two ways: by the Spirit of Christ and by the conception of judgment and of recompense. Yet both

were marked by a decided bent to the future, for the Christ of both was “he who was to return.” To the mind of primitive Christianity the “present” and the “future” were sharply opposed to each other,157 and it was this opposition which furnished the principle of self-control with its most powerful motive. It became, indeed, with many people a sort of glowing passion. The church which prayed at every service, “May grace come and this world pass away: maranatha,” was the church which gave directions like those which we read in the opening parable of Hermas.158 “From the lips of all Christians this word is to be heard: The world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Celsus, cited by Origen, V. lxiv.).159

This resolute renunciation of the world was really the first thing which made the church competent and strong to tell upon the world. Then, if ever, was the saying true: “He who would do anything for the world must have nothing to do with it.” Primitive Christianity has been upbraided for being too un-worldly and ascetic. But revolutions are not effected with rosewater, and it was a veritable revolution to overthrow polytheism and establish the majesty of God and goodness in the world—for those who believed in them, and also for those who did not. This could never have happened, in the first instance, had not men asserted the vanity of the present world, and practically severed themselves from it. The rigor of this attitude, however, hardly checked the mission-preaching; on the contrary, it intensified it, since instead of being isolated it was set side by side with the message of the Saviour and of salvation, of love and charity. And we must add, that for all its trenchant forms and the strong bias it imparted to the minds of men towards the future, the idea of recompense was saved from harshness and inertia by its juxtaposition with a feeling of perfect confidence that God was present, and a conviction of his care and of his providence. No mode of thought was more alien to early Christianity than what we call deism. The early Christians knew the Father in heaven; they knew that God was near them and guiding them; the more thoughtful were conscious that he reigned in their life with a might of his own. This was the God they proclaimed. And thus, in their preaching, the future became already present; hard and fast recompense seemed to disappear entirely, for what further “recompense” was needed by people who were living in God's presence, conscious in every faculty of the soul, aye, and in every sense of the wisdom, power, and goodness of their God? Moods of assured possession and of yearning, experiences of grace and phases of impassioned hope, came and went in many a man besides the apostle Paul. He yearned for the prospect of release from the body, and thus felt a touching sympathy for everything in bondage, for the whole creation in its groans. But it was no harassing or uncertain hope that engrossed all his heart and being; it was hope fixed upon a strong and secure basis in his filial relationship to God and his possession of God's Spirit.160

It is hardly necessary to point out that, by proclaiming repentance and strict morals on the one hand, and offering the removal of sins and redemption on the other hand, the Christian propaganda involved an inner cleavage which individual Christians must have realized in very different ways. If this removal of sins and redemption was bound up with the sacrament or specifically with the sacrament of baptism, then it came to this, that thousands were eager for this sacrament and nothing more, satisfied with belief in its immediate and magical efficacy, and devoid of any serious attention to the moral law. Upon the other hand, the moral demand could weigh so heavily on the conscience that redemption came to be no more than the reward and prize of a holy life. Between these two extremes a variety of standpoints was possible. The propaganda of the church made a sincere effort to assign equal weight to both elements of its message; but sacraments are generally more welcome than moral counsels, and that age was particularly afflicted with the sacramental mania. It added to the mysteries the requisite quality of naïvete, and at the same time the equally requisite note of subtlety.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOSPEL OF THE SAVIOR AND OF SALVATION

THE gospel, as preached by Jesus; is a religion of redemption, but it is a religion of redemption in a secret sense. Jesus proclaimed a new message (the near approach of God's kingdom, God as the Father, as his Father), and also a new law, but he did his work as a Saviour or healer, and it was amid work of this kind that he was crucified. Paul, too, preached the gospel as a religion of redemption.

Jesus appeared among his people as a physician. “The healthy need not a physician, but the sick” (Mark ii. 17, Luke v. 31). The first three gospels depict him as the physician of soul and body, as the Saviour or healer of men. Jesus says very little about sickness; he cures it. He does not explain that sickness is health; he calls it by its proper name, and is sorry for the sick person. There is nothing sentimental or subtle about Jesus; he draws no fine distinctions, he utters no sophistries about healthy people being really sick and sick people really healthy. He sees himself surrounded by crowds of sick folk; he attracts them, and his one impulse is to help them. Jesus does not distinguish rigidly between sicknesses of the body and of the soul; he takes them both as different expressions of the one supreme ailment in humanity. But he knows their sources. He knows it is easier to say, “Rise up and walk,” than to say, “Thy sins are forgiven thee” (Mark ii. 9).162And he acts accordingly. No sickness of the soul repels him—he is constantly surrounded by sinful women and tax-gatherers. Nor is any bodily disease too loathsome for Jesus. In this world of wailing, misery, filth, and profligacy, which pressed upon him every day, he kept himself invariably vital, pure, and busy.

In this way he won men and women to be his disciples. The circle by which he was surrounded was a circle of people who had been healed.163 They were healed because they had believed on him, i.e., because they had gained health from his character and words. To know God meant a sound soul. This was the rock on which Jesus had rescued them from the shipwreck of their life. They knew they were healed, just because they had recognized God as the Father in his Son. Henceforth they drew health and real life as from a never-failing stream.

“Ye will say unto me this parable: Physician, heal thyself” (Luke iv. 23). He who helped so many people, seemed himself to be always helpless. Harassed, calumniated, threatened with death by the authorities of his nation, and persecuted in the name of the very God whom he proclaimed, Jesus went to his cross. But even the cross only displayed for the first time the full depth and energy of his saving power. It put the copestone on his mission, by showing men that the sufferings of the just are the saving force in human history.

“Surely he hath borne our sickness and carried our sorrows; by his stripes we are healed.”164 This was the new truth that issued from the cross of Jesus. It flowed out, like a stream of fresh water, on the arid souls of men and on their dry morality. The morality of outward acts and regulations gave way to the conception of a life which was personal, pure, and divine, which spent itself in the service of the brethren, and gave itself up ungrudgingly to death. This conception was the new principle of life. It uprooted the old life swaying to and fro between sin and virtue; it also planted a new life whose aim was nothing short of being a disciple of Christ, and whose strength was drawn from the life of Christ himself. The disciples went forth to preach the tidings of “God the Saviour,”165 of that Saviour and physician whose person, deeds, and sufferings were man's salvation. Paul was giving vent to no sudden or extravagant emotion, but expressing with quiet confidence what he was fully conscious of at every moment, when he

wrote to the Galatians (ii. 20), “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. For the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave up himself for me.” Conscious of this, the primitive Christian missionaries were ready to die daily. And that was just the reason why their cause did not collapse.

In the world to which the apostles preached their new message, religion had not been intended originally for the sick, but for the sound. The Deity sought the pure and sound to be his worshippers. The sick and sinful, it was held, are a prey to the powers of darkness; let them see to the recovery of health by some means or another, health for soul and body—for until then they are not pleasing to the gods. It is interesting to observe how this conception is still dominant at the close of the second century, in Celsus, the enemy of Christendom (Orig., c. Cels. III. lix. f.). “Those who invite people to participate in other solemnities, make the following proclamation: ‘He who hath clean hands and sensible speech (is to draw near)'; or again, ‘He who is pure from all stain, conscious of no sin in his soul, and living an honorable and just life (may approach).' Such is the cry of those who promise purification from sins.166 But let us now hear what sort of people these Christians invite. ‘Anyone who is a sinner,' they say, ‘or foolish, or simple-minded—in short, any unfortunate will be accepted by the kingdom of God.' By ‘sinner' is meant an unjust person, a thief, a burglar, a poisoner, a sacrilegious man, or a robber of corpses. Why, if you wanted an assembly of robbers, these are just the sort of people you would summon!”167 Here Celsus has stated, as lucidly as one could desire, the cardinal difference between Christianity and ancient religion.168

But, as we have already seen (Book I, Chapter III.), the religious temper which Christianity encountered, and which developed and diffused itself very rapidly in the second and third centuries, was no longer what we should term “ancient.” Here again we see that the new religion made its appearance “when the time was fulfilled.” The cheerful, naïve spirit of the old religion, so far as it still survived, lay a-dying, and its place was occupied by fresh religious needs. Philosophy had set the individual free, and had discovered a human being in the common citizen. By the blending of states and nations, which coalesced to form a universal empire, cosmopolitanism had now become a reality. But there was always a reverse side to cosmopolitanism, viz., individualism. The refinements of material civilization and mental culture made people more sensitive to the element of pain in life, and this increase of sensitiveness showed itself also in the sphere of morals, where more than one Oriental religion came forward to satisfy its demand. The Socratic philosophy, with its fine ethical ideas, issued from the heights of the thinker to spread across the lowlands of the common people. The Stoics, in particular, paid unwearied attention to the “health and diseases of the soul,” moulding their practical philosophy upon this type of thought. There was a real demand for purity, consolation, expiation, and healing, and as these could not be found elsewhere, they began to be sought in religion. In order to secure them, people were on the look-out for new sacred rites. The evidence for this change which passed over the religious temper lies in the writings of Seneca, Epictetus, and many others; but a further testimony of much greater weight is afforded by the revival which attended the cult of Æsculapius during the Imperial age.169 As far back as 290 B.C., Æsculapius of Epidaurus had been summoned to Rome on the advice of the Sibylline books. He had his sanctuary on the island in the Tiber, and close to it, just as at the numerous shrines of Asclepius in Greece, there stood a sanatorium in which sick persons waited for the injunctions which the god imparted during sleep. Greek physicians followed the god to Rome, but it took a long time for either the god or the Greek doctors to become popular. The latter do riot seem at first to have recommended themselves by their skill. “In 219 B.C. the first Greek surgeon became domiciled in Rome. He actually received the franchise, and was presented by the State with a shop ‘in compito Acilio.' But this doctor made such unmerciful havoc among his

patients by cutting and cauterizing, that the name of surgeon became a synonym for that of a butcher."170 Things were different under the Cæsars. Though the Romans themselves still eschewed the art of medicine, considering it a kind of divination, skilled Greek doctors were in demand at Rome itself, and the cult of that "deus clinicus," Æsculapius, was in full vogue. From Rome his cult spread over all the West, fusing itself here and there with the cult of Serapis or some other deity, and accompanied by the subordinate cult of Hygeia and Salus, Telesphorus and Somnus. Furthermore, the sphere of influence belonging to this god of healing widened steadily; he became "saviour" pure and simple, the god who aids in all distress, the "friend of man" (φιλανθρωπότατος).171 The more men sought deliverance and healing in religion, the greater grew this god's repute. He belonged to the old gods who held out longest against Christianity, and therefore he is often to be met with in the course of early Christian literature. The cult of Æsculapius was one of those which were most widely diffused throughout the second half of the second century, and also during the third century. People traveled to the famous sanatoria of the god, as they travel today to baths. He was appealed to in diseases of the body and of the soul; people slept in his temples, to be cured; the costliest gifts were brought him as the ΘΕΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ("God the Saviour"); and people consecrated their lives to him, as innumerable inscriptions and statues testify. In the case of other gods as well, healing virtue now became a central feature. Zeus himself and Apollo (cp., e.g., Tatian, Orat. 8) appeared in a new light. They, too, became "saviours." No one could be a god any longer, unless he was also a saviour.172 Glance over Origen's great reply to Celsus, and you soon discover that one point hotly disputed by these two remarkable men was the question whether Jesus or Æsculapius was the true Saviour. Celsus champions the one with as much energy and credulity as Origen the other. The combination of crass superstition and sensible criticism presented by both men is an enigma to us at this time of day. We moderns can hardly form any clear idea of their mental bearings. In III. iii Origen observes: "Miracles occurred in all lands, or at least in many places. Celsus himself admits in his book that, Æsculapius healed diseases and revealed the future in all cities that were devoted to him, such as Tricca, Epidaurus, Cos, and Pergamum." According to III. xxii. Celsus charged the Christians with being unable to make up their minds to call Æsculapius a god, simply because he had been first a man. Origen's retort is that the Greek tradition made Zeus slay Æsculapius with a thunderbolt. Celsus (III. xxiv.) declared it to be an authentic fact that a great number of Greeks and barbarians had seen, and still saw, no mere wraith of Æsculapius, but the god himself engaged in healing and helping man, whereas the disciples of Jesus had merely seen a phantom. Origen is very indignant at this, but his counter-assertions are weak. Does Celsus also appeal to the great number of Greeks and barbarians who believe in Æsculapius? Origen, too, can point to the great number of Christians, to the truth of their scriptures, and to their successful cures in the name of Jesus. But then he suddenly alters his defense, and proceeds (III. xxv.) to make the following extremely shrewd observation: "Even were I going to admit that a demon named Æsculapius had the power of healing bodily diseases, I might still remark to those who are amazed at such cures or at the prophecies of Apollo, that such curative power is of itself neither good nor bad, but within reach of godless as well as of honest folk; while in the same way it does not follow that he who can foretell the future is on that account an honest and upright man. One is not in a position to prove the virtuous character of those who heal diseases and foretell the future. Many instances may be adduced of people being healed who did not deserve to live, people who were so corrupt and led a life of such wickedness that no sensible physician would have troubled to cure them. . . . . The power of healing diseases is no evidence of anything specially divine." From all these remarks of Origen, we can see how high the cult of Æsculapius was ranked, and how keenly the men of that age were on the lookout for "salvation."

Into this world of craving for salvation the preaching of Christianity made its way. Long before it had achieved its final triumph by dint of an impressive philosophy of religion, its success was already assured by the fact that it promised and offered salvation—a feature in which it surpassed all other religions and cults. It did more than set up the actual Jesus against the imaginary Æsculapius of dreamland. Deliberately and consciously it assumed the form of "the religion of salvation or healing,"173 or "the medicine of soul and body," and at the same time it recognized that one of its chief duties was to care assiduously for the sick in body. We shall now select one or two examples out of the immense wealth of material, to throw light upon both of these points.

Take, first of all, the theory. Christianity never lost hold of its innate principle; it was, and it remained, a religion for the sick. Accordingly it assumed that no one, or at least hardly any one, was in normal health, but that men were always in a state of disability. This reading of human nature was not confined to Paul, who looked on all men outside of Christ as dying, dying in their sins; a similar, though simpler, view was taught by the numerous unknown missionaries of primitive Christianity. The soul of man is sick, they said, a prey to death from the moment of his birth. The whole race lies a-dying. But now "the goodness and the human kindness of God the Saviour" have appeared to restore the sick soul.174 Baptism was therefore conceived as a bath for regaining the soul's health, or for "the recovery of life";175 the Lord's Supper was valued as "the potion of immortality,"176 and penitence was termed "vera de satisfactione medicina" (the true medicine derived from the atonement, Cypr., de Lapsis xv.). At the celebration of the sacrament, thanks were offered for the "life" therein bestowed (Did. ix.-x.). The conception of "life" acquired a new and deeper meaning. Jesus had already spoken of a "life" beyond the reach of death, to be obtained by the sacrifice of a man's earthly life. The idea and the term were taken up by Paul and by the fourth evangelist, who summed up in them the entire blessings of religion. With the tidings of immortality, the new religion confronted sorrow, misery, sin, and death. So much, at least, the world of paganism could understand. It could understand the promise of bliss and immortality resembling that of the blessed gods. And not a few pagans understood the justice of the accompanying condition that one had to submit to the regime of the religion, that the soul had to be pure and holy before it could become immortal. Thus they grasped the message of a great Physician who preaches "abstinence" and bestows the gift of "life."177Anyone who had felt a single ray of the power and glory of the new life reckoned his previous life to have been blindness, disease, and death178—a view attested by both the apostolic fathers and the apologists. "He bestowed on us the light, he spoke to us as a father to his sons, he saved us in our lost estate. . . . . Blind were we in our understanding, worshipping stones and wood and gold and silver and brass, nor was our whole life aught but death."179 The mortal will put on, nay, has already put on, immortality, the perishable will be robed in the imperishable: such was the glad cry of the early Christians, who took up arms against a sea of troubles, and turned the terror of life's last moment into a triumph. "Those miserable people," says Lucian in the Proteus Peregrinus, "have got it into their heads that they are perfectly immortal." He would certainly have made a jest upon it had any occurred to his mind; but whenever this nimble scoffer is depicting the faith of Christians, there is a remarkable absence of anything like jesting.

While the soul's health or the new life is a gift, however, it is a gift which must be appropriated from within. There was a great risk of this truth being overlooked by those who were accustomed to leave any one of the mysteries with the sense of being consecrated and of bearing with them super mundane blessings as if they were so many articles. It would be easy also to show how rapidly the sacramental system of the church lapsed into the spirit of the pagan mysteries. But once the moral demand, i.e., the purity of the soul, was driven home, it

proved such a powerful factor that it held its own within the Catholic church, even alongside of the inferior sacramental system. The salvation of the soul and the lore of that salvation never died away; in fact, the ancient church arranged all the details of her worship and her dogma with this end in view. She consistently presented herself as the great infirmary or the hospital of humanity: pagans, sinners, and heretics are her patients, ecclesiastical doctrines and observances are her medicines, while the bishops and pastors are the physicians, but only as servants of Christ, who is himself the physician of all souls.180 Let me give one or two instances of this. "As the good of the body is health, so the good of the soul is the knowledge of God," says Justin.181 "While we have time to be healed, let us put ourselves into the hands of God the healer, paying him recompense. And what recompense? What but repentance from a sincere heart" (2 Clem., ad Cor. ix.). "Like some excellent physician, in order to cure the sick, Jesus examines what is repulsive, handles sores, and reaps pain himself from the sufferings of others; he has himself saved us from the very jaws of death—us who were not merely diseased and suffering from terrible ulcers and wounds already mortified, but were also lying already among the dead . . . .; he who is the giver of life and of light, our great physician,182 king and lord, the Christ of God."183 "The physician cannot introduce any salutary medicines into the body that needs to be cured, without having previously eradicated the trouble seated in the body or averted the approaching trouble. Even so the teacher of the truth cannot convince anyone by an address on truth, so long as some error still lurks in the soul of the hearer, which forms an obstacle to his arguments" (Athenagoras, de resurr. i.). "Were we to draw from the axiom that 'disease is diagnosed by means of medical knowledge,' the inference that medical knowledge is the cause of disease, we should be making a preposterous statement. And as it is beyond doubt that the knowledge of salvation is a good thing, because it teaches men to know their sickness, so also is the law a good thing, inasmuch as sin is discovered thereby."184

As early as 2 Tim. ii. 17, the word of heretics is said to eat "like a gangrene." This expression recurs very frequently, and is elaborated in detail. "Their talk is infectious as a plague" (Cyprian, de Lapsis, xxxiv.). "Heretics are hard to cure," says Ignatius (ad Ephes., vii., δυσθεράπευτος); ". . . . there is but one physician, Jesus Christ our Lord." In the pastoral epistles the orthodox doctrine is already called "sound teaching" as opposed to the errors of the heretics.

Most frequently, however, bodily recovery is compared to penitence. It is Ignatius again who declares that "not every wound is cured by the same salve. Allay sharp pains by soothing fomentations."185 "The cure of evil passions," says Clement at the opening of his Paedagogus, "is effected by the Logos through admonitions; he strengthens the soul with benign precepts like soothing medicines,186 and directs the sick to the full knowledge of the truth." "Let us follow the practice of physicians (in the exercise of moral discipline), says Origen,187 "and only use the knife when all other means have failed, when application of oil and salves and soothing poultices leave the swelling still hard." An objection was raised by Christians who disliked repentance, to the effect that the public confession of sin which accompanied the penitential discipline was at once an injury to their self-respect and a misery. To which Tertullian replies (de Poen., x.): "Nay, it is evil that ends in misery. Where repentance is undertaken, misery ceases, because it is turned into what is salutary. It is indeed a misery to be cut, and cauterized, and racked by some pungent powder; but the excuse for the offensiveness of means of healing that may be unpleasant, is the cure they work." This is exactly Cyprian's point, when he writes188 that "the priest of the Lord must employ salutary remedies.189 He is an unskilled physician who handles tenderly the swollen edges of a wound and allows the poison lodged in the inward part to be aggraved by simply leaving it alone. The wound must be opened and lanced; recourse must be had to the strong remedy of cutting out the corrupting parts. Though the patient scream out in pain, and wail or weep, because he cannot bear it—afterwards he will

be grateful, when he feels that he is cured." But the most elaborate comparison of a bishop to a surgeon occurs in the Apostolic Constitutions (ii. 41). "Heal thou, O bishop, like a pitiful physician, all who have sinned, and employ methods that promote saving health. Confine not thyself to cutting or cauterizing or the use of corrosives, but employ bandages and lint, use mild and healing drugs, and sprinkle words of comfort as a soothing balm. If the wound be deep and gashed, lay a plaster on it that it may fill up and be once more like the rest of the sound flesh. If it be dirty, cleanse it with corrosive powder, i.e., with words of censure. If it has proud flesh, reduce it with sharp plasters, i.e., with threats of punishment. If it spreads further, sear it, and cut off the putrid flesh—mortify the man with fastings. And if after all this treatment thou findest that no soothing poultice, neither oil nor bandage, can be applied from head to foot of the patient, but that the disease is spreading and defying all cures, like some gangrene that corrupts the entire member; then, after great consideration and consultation with other skilled physicians, cut off the putrified member, lest the whole body of the church be corrupted. So be not hasty to cut it off, nor rashly resort to the saw of many a tooth, but first use the lancet to lay open the abscess, that the body may be kept free from pain by the removal of the deep-seated cause of the disease. But if thou seest anyone past repentance and (inwardly) past feeling, then cut him off as an incurable with sorrow and lamentation."190

It must be frankly admitted that this constant preoccupation with the "diseases" of sin had results which were less favorable. The ordinary moral sense, no less than the aesthetic,191 was deadened. If people are ever to be made better, they must be directed to that honorable activity which means moral health; whereas endless talk about sin and forgiveness exercises, on the contrary, a narcotic influence. To say the least of it, ethical education must move to and fro between reflection on the past (with its faults and moral bondage) and the prospect of a future (with its goal of aspiration and the exertion of all one's powers). The theologians of the Alexandrian school had some sense of the latter, but in depicting the perfect Christian or true gnostic they assigned a disproportionate space to knowledge and correct opinions. They were not entirely emancipated from the Socratic fallacy that the man of knowledge will be invariably a good man. They certainly did surmount the "educated" man's intellectual pride on the field of religion and morality.192 In Origen's treatise against Celsus, whole sections of great excellence are devoted to the duty and possibility of even the uneducated person acquiring health of soul, and to the supreme necessity of salvation from sin and weakness.193 Origen hits the nail upon the head when he remarks (VII. lx.) that "Plato and the other wise men of Greece, with their fine sayings, are like the physicians who confine their attention to the better classes and despise the common man, whilst the disciples of Jesus carefully study to make provision for the great mass of men."194 Still, Origen's idea is that, as a means of salvation, religion merely forms a stage for those who aspire to higher levels. His conviction is that when the development of religion has reached its highest level, anything historical or positive becomes of as little value as the ideal of redemption and salvation itself. On this level the spirit, filled by God, no longer needs a Saviour or any Christ of history at all. "Happy," he exclaims (Comm. in Joh., i. 22; Lomm., i. p. 43), "happy are they who need no longer now God's Son as the physician of the sick or as the shepherd, people who now need not any redemption, but wisdom, reason, and righteousness alone." In his treatise against Celsus (III. lxi. f.) he draws a sharp distinction between two aims and boons in the Christian religion, one higher and the other lower. "To no mystery, to no participation in wisdom 'hidden in a mystery,' do we call the wicked man, the thief, the burglar, etc., but to healing or salvation. For our doctrine has a twofold appeal. It provides means of healing for the sick, as is meant by the text, 'The whole need not a physician, but the sick.' But it also unveils to those who are pure in soul and body 'that mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest by the Scriptures of the prophets and the appearing

of our Lord Jesus Christ.' . . . . God the Word was indeed sent as a physician for the sick, but also as a teacher of divine mysteries to those who are already pure and sin no more."195

Origen unites the early Christian and the philosophic conceptions of religion. He is thus superior to the pessimistic fancies which seriously threatened the latter view. But only among the cultured could he gain any following. The Christian people held fast to Jesus as the Saviour.

No one has yet been able to show that the figure of Christ which emerges in the fifth century, probably as early as the fourth, and which subsequently became the prevailing type in all pictorial representations, was modeled upon the figure of Æsculapius. The two types are certainly similar; the qualities predicated of both are identical in part; and no one has hitherto explained satisfactorily why the original image of the youthful Christ was displaced by the later. Nevertheless, we have no means of deriving the origin of the Callixtine Christ from Æsculapius as a prototype, so that in the meantime we must regard such a derivation as a hypothesis, which, however interesting, is based upon inadequate evidence. There would be one piece of positive evidence forthcoming, if the statue which passed for a likeness of Jesus in the city of Paneas (Cæsarea Philippi) during the fourth century was a statue of Æsculapius. Eusebius (H.E., vi. 18) tells how he had seen there, in the house of the woman whom Jesus had cured of an issue of blood, a work of art which she had caused to be erected out of gratitude to Jesus. "On a high pedestal beside the gates of her house there stands the brazen image of a woman kneeling down with her hands outstretched as if in prayer. Opposite this stands another brazen image of a man standing up, modestly attired in a cloak wrapped twice round his body, and stretching out his hand to the woman. At his feet, upon the pedestal itself, a strange plant is growing up as high as the hem of his brazen cloak, which is a remedy for all sorts of disease. This statue is said to be an image of Jesus. Nor is it strange that the Gentiles of that age, who had received benefit from the Lord, should express their gratitude in this fashion." For various reasons it is unlikely that this piece of art was intended to represent Jesus, or that it was erected by the woman with an issue of blood;196 on the contrary, the probability is that the statuary was thus interpreted by the Christian population of Paneas, probably at an early period. If the statue originally represented Æsculapius, as the curative plant would suggest, we should have here at least one step between "Æsculapius the Saviour" and "Christ the Saviour." But this interpretation of a pagan saviour or healer is insecure; and even were it quite secure, it would not justify any general conclusion being drawn as yet upon the matter. At any rate we are undervaluing the repugnance felt even by Christians of the fourth century for the gods of paganism, if we consider ourselves entitled to think of any conscious transformation of the figure of Æsculapius into that of Christ.197

Hitherto we have been considering the development of Christianity as the religion of "healing," as expressed in parables, ideas, doctrine, and penitential discipline. It now remains for us to show that this character was also stamped upon its arrangements for the care of bodily sickness.

"I was sick and ye visited me. . . . . As ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In these words the founder of Christianity set the love that tends the sick in the center of his religion, laying it on the hearts of all his disciples. Primitive Christianity carried it in her heart; she also carried it out in practice.198 Even from the fragments of our extant literature, although that literature was not written with any such intention, we can still recognize the careful attention paid to works of mercy. At the outset we meet with directions everywhere to care for sick people. "Encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak," writes the apostle Paul to the church of Thessalonica (1 Thess. v. 14), which in its excitement was

overlooking the duties lying close at hand. In the prayer of the church, preserved in the first epistle of Clement, supplications are expressly offered for those who are sick in soul and body.199 “Is any man sick? Let him call for the elders of the church,” says Jas. v. 14—a clear proof that all aid in cases of sickness was looked upon as a concern of the church.200 This comes out very plainly also in the epistle of Polycarp (vi. 1), where the obligations of the elders are displayed as follows: “They must reclaim the erring, care for all the infirm, and neglect no widow, orphan, or poor person.” Particulars of this duty are given by Justin, who, in his Apology (ch. lxvii.), informs us that every Sunday the Christians brought free-will offerings to their worship; these were deposited with the president (or bishop), “who dispenses them to orphans and widows, and to any who, from sickness or some other cause, are in want.” A similar account is given by Tertullian in his Apology (ch. xxxix.), where special stress is laid on the church's care for old people who are no longer fit for work. Justin is also our authority for the existence of deacons whose business it was to attend the sick.

Not later than the close of the third century, the veneration of the saints and the rise of chapels in honor of martyrs and saints led to a full-blown imitation of the Æsculapius-cult within the church. Cures of sickness and infirmities were sought. Even the practice of incubation must have begun by this time, if not earlier; otherwise it could not not have been so widely diffused in the fourth century. The teachers of the church had previously repudiated it as heathenish; but, as often happens in similar circumstances, it crept in, though with some alteration of its ceremonies.

In its early days the church formed a permanent establishment for the relief of sickness and poverty, a function which it continued to discharge for several generations. It was based on the broad foundation of the Christian congregation; it acquired a sanctity from the worship of the congregation; and its operations were strictly centralized. The bishop was the superintendent (Apost. Constit., iii. 4), and in many cases, especially in Syria and Palestine, he may have actually been a physician himself.201 His executive or agents were the deacons and the order of “widows.” The latter were at the same time to be secured against want, by being taken into the service of the church (cp. 1 Tim. v. 16). Thus, in one instruction dating from the second century,202 we read that, “In every congregation at least one widow is to be appointed to take care of sick women;203 she is to be obliging and sober, she is to report cases of need to the elders, she is not to be greedy or addicted to drink, in order that she may be able to keep sober for calls to service during the night.” She is to “report cases of need to the elders,” i.e., she is to remain an assistant (cp. Syr. Didasc. xv. 79 f.). Tertullian happens to remark (de Præscr. 41) in a censure of women belonging to the heretical associations, that “they venture to teach, to debate, to exorcise, to promise cures, probably even to baptize.” In the Eastern Church the order of widows seems to have passed on into that of “deaconesses” at a pretty early date, but unfortunately we know nothing about this transition or about the origin of these “deaconesses.”204

In the primitive church female assistants were quite thrown into the shadow by the men. The deacons were the real agents of charity. Their office was onerous; it was exposed to grave peril, especially in a time of persecution, and deacons furnished no inconsiderable proportion of the martyrs. “Doers of good works, looking after all by day and night”—such is their description (Texte u. Unters. ii. 5, p. 24), one of their main duties being to look after the poor and sick.205 How much they had to do and how much they did, may be ascertained from Cyprian's epistles206 and the genuine Acts of the Martyrs. Nor were the laity to be exempted from the duty of tending the sick, merely because special officials existed for that purpose. “The sick are not to be overlooked, nor is anyone to say that he has not been trained to this mode of service.

No one is to plead a comfortable life, or the unwonted character of the duty, as a pretext for not being helpful to other people"—so runs a letter of pseudo-Justin (c. xvii.) to Zenas and Serenus. The author of the pseudo-Clementine epistle "de virginitate" brings out with special clearness the fact that to imitate Christ is to minister to the sick, a duty frequently conjoined with that of "visiting orphans and widows" (visitare pupillos et viduas). Eusebius (de mart. Pal. xi. 22) bears this testimony to the character of Seleucus, that like a father and guardian he had shown himself a bishop and patron of orphans and destitute widows, of the poor and of the sick. Many similar cases are on record. In a time of pestilence especially, the passion of tender mercy was kindled in the heart of many a Christian. Often had Tertullian (Apolog. xxxix.) heard on pagan lips the remark, corroborated by Lucian, "Look how they love one another!"207

As regards therapeutic methods, the case stood as it stands today. The more Christians renounced and hated the world, the more skeptical and severe they were against ordinary means of healing (cp.,e.g., Tatian's Oratio xvii.-xviii.). There was a therapeutic "Christian science," compounded of old and new superstitions, and directed against more than the "dæmonic" cures (see the following section). Compare, by way of proof, Tertullian's Scorp. i: "We Christians make the sign of the cross at once over a bitten foot, say a word of exorcism, and rub it with the blood of the crushed animal." Evidently the sign of the cross and the formula of exorcism were not sufficient by themselves.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONFLICT WITH DEMONS

DURING the early centuries a belief in demons, and in the power they exercised throughout the world, was current far and wide. There was also a corresponding belief in demon possession, in consequence of which insanity frequently took the form of a conviction, on the part of the patients, that they were possessed by one or more evil spirits. Though this form of insanity still occurs at the present day, cases of it are rare, owing to the fact that wide circles of people have lost all belief in the existence and activity of demons. But the forms and phases in which insanity manifests itself always depend upon the general state of culture and the ideas current in the social environment, so that whenever the religious life is in a state of agitation, and a firm belief prevails in the sinister activity of evil spirits, "demon possession" still breaks out sporadically. Recent instances have even shown that a convinced exorcist, especially if he is a religious man, is able to produce the phenomena of "possession" in a company of people against their will, in order subsequently to cure them. "Possession" is also infectious. Supposing that one case of this kind occurs in a church, and that it is connected by the sufferer himself, or even by the priest, with sin in general or with some special form of sin; supposing that he preaches upon it, addressing the church in stirring language, and declaring that this is really devil's play, then the first case will soon be followed by a second and by a third.209 The most astounding phenomena occur, many of whose details are still inexplicable. Everything is doubled—the consciousness of the sufferer, his will, his sphere of action. With perfect sincerity on his own part (although it is always easy for frauds to creep in here), the man is at once conscious of himself and also of another being who constrains and controls him from within. He thinks and feels and acts, now as the one, now as the other; and under the conviction that he is a double being, he confirms himself and his neighbors in this belief by means of actions which are at once the product of reflection and of an inward compulsion. Inevitable self-deception, cunning actions, and the most abject passivity form a sinister combination. But they complete our idea of a psychical disease which usually betrays extreme susceptibility to "suggestion," and, therefore, for the time being often defies any scientific analysis, leaving it open to anyone to think of special and mysterious forces in operation. In this region there are facts which we cannot deny, but which we are unable to explain.210 Furthermore, there are "diseases" in this region which only attack superhuman individuals, who draw from this "disease" a new life hitherto undreamt of, an energy which triumphs over every obstacle, and a prophetic or apostolic zeal. We do not speak here of this kind of "possession"; it exists merely for faith— or unbelief.

In the case of ordinary people, when disease emerges in connection with religion, no unfavorable issue need be anticipated. As a general rule, the religion which brings the disease to a head has also the power of curing it, and this power resides in Christianity above all other religions. Wherever an empty or a sinful life, which has almost parted with its vitality, is suddenly aroused by the preaching of the Christian religion, so that dread of evil and its bondage passes into the idea of actual "possession," the soul again is freed from the latter bondage by the message of the grace of God which has appeared in Jesus Christ. Evidence of this lies on the pages of church history, from the very beginning down to the present day. During the first three centuries the description of such cases flowed over into the margin of the page, whereas nowadays they are dismissed in a line or two. But the reason for this change is to be found in the less frequent occurrence, not of the cure, but of the disease.

The mere message or preaching of Christianity was not of course enough to cure the sick. It had to be backed by a convinced belief or by some person who was sustained by this belief. The cure was wrought by the praying man and not by prayer, by the Spirit and not by the formula, by the exorcist and not by exorcism. Conventional means were of no use except in cases where the disease became an epidemic and almost general, or in fact a conventional thing itself, as we must assume it often to have been during the second century. The exorcist then became a mesmerist, probably also a deluded impostor. But wherever a strong individuality was victimized by the demon of fear, wherever the soul was literally convulsed by the grip of that power of darkness from which it was now fain to flee, the will could only be freed from its bondage by some strong, holy, outside will. Here and there cases occur of what modern observers, in their perplexity, term "suggestion." But "suggestion" was one thing to a prophet, and another thing to a professional exorcist.

In the form in which we meet it throughout the later books of the Septuagint, or in the New Testament, or in the Jewish literature of the Imperial age, belief in the activity of demons was a comparatively late development in Judaism. But during that period it was in full bloom.211 And it was about this time that it also began to spread apace among the Greeks and Romans. How the latter came by it, is a question to which no answer has yet been given. It is impossible to refer the form of belief in demons which was current throughout the empire, in and after the second century, solely to Jewish or even to Christian sources. But the naturalizing of this belief, or, more correctly, the development along quite definite lines of that early Greek belief in spirits, which even the subsequent philosophers (e.g., Plato) had supported – all this was a process to which Judaism and Christianity may have contributed, no less than other Oriental religions, including especially the Egyptian,212 whose priests had been at all times famous for exorcism. In the second century a regular class of exorcists existed, just as at the present day in Germany there are "Naturärzte," or Nature physicians, side by side with skilled doctors. Still, sensible people remained skeptical, while the great jurist Ulpian refused (at a time when, as now, this was a burning question) to recognize such practitioners as members of the order of physicians. He was even doubtful, of course, whether "specialists" were physicians in the legal sense of the term.213

The characteristic features of belief in demons214 during the second century were as follows. In the first place, the belief made its way upwards from the obscurity of the lower classes into the upper classes of society, and became far more important than it had hitherto been; in the second place, it was no longer accompanied by a vigorous, naïve, and open religion which kept it within bounds; furthermore, the power of the demons, which had hitherto been regarded as morally indifferent, now came to represent their wickedness; and finally, when the new belief was applied to the life of individuals, its consequences embraced psychical diseases as well as physical. In view of all these considerations, the extraordinary spread of belief in demons, and the numerous outbursts of demonic disease, are to be referred to the combined influence of such well-known factors as the dwindling of faith in the old religions, which characterized the Imperial age, together with the rise of a feeling on the part of the individual that he was free and independent, and therefore flung upon his inmost nature and his own responsibility. Free now from any control or restraint of tradition, the individual wandered here and there amid the lifeless, fragmentary, and chaotic debris of traditions belonging to a world in process of dissolution; now he would pick up this, now that, only to discover, himself at last driven, often by fear and hope, to find a deceptive support or a new disease in the absurdest of them all.215

Such was the situation of affairs encountered by the gospel. It has been scoffingly remarked

that the gospel produced the very diseases which it professed itself able to cure. The scoff is justified in certain cases, but in the main it recoils upon the scoffer. The gospel did bring to a head the diseases which it proceeded to cure. It found them already in existence, and intensified them in the course of its mission. But it also cured them, and no flight of the imagination can form any idea of what would have come over the ancient world or the Roman empire during the third century, had it not been for the church. Professors like Libanius or his colleagues in the academy at Athens, are of course among the immortals; people like that could maintain themselves without any serious change from century to century. But no nation thrives upon the food of rhetoricians and philosophers. At the close of the fourth century Rome had only one Symmachus, and the East had only one Synesius. But then, Synesius was a Christian.

In what follows I propose to set down, without note or comment, one or two important notices of demon-possession and its cure from the early history of the church. In the case of one passage I shall sketch the spread and shape of belief in demons. This Tertullian has described, and it is a mistake to pass Tertullian by.—In order to estimate the significance of exorcism for primitive Christianity, one must remember that according to the belief of Christians the Son of God came into the world to combat Satan and his kingdom. The evangelists, especially Luke, have depicted the life of Jesus from the temptation onwards as an uninterrupted conflict with the devil; what he came for was to destroy the works of the devil. In Mark (i. 32) we read how many that were possessed were brought to Jesus, and healed by him, as he cast out the demons (i. 34). “He suffered not the demons to speak, for they knew him” (see also Luke iv. 34, 41). In i. 39 there is the general statement: “He preached throughout all Galilee in the synagogues and cast out the demons.” When he sent forth the twelve disciples, he conferred on them the power of exorcising (iii. 15), a power which they forthwith proceeded to exercise (vi. 13; for the Seventy, see Luke x. 17); whilst the scribes at Jerusalem declared he had Beelzebub,216 and that he cast out demons with the aid of their prince.217 The tale of the “unclean spirits” who entered a herd of swine is quite familiar (v. 2), forming, as it does, one of the most curious fragments of the sacred story, which has vainly taxed the powers of believing and of rationalistic criticism. Another story which more immediately concerns our present purpose is that of the Canaanite woman and her possessed daughter (vii. 25 f.). Matt. vii. 15 f. (Luke ix. 38) shows that epileptic fits, as well as other nervous disorders (e.g., dumbness, Matt. xii. 22, Luke xi. 14), were also included under demon-possession. It is further remarkable that even during the lifetime of Jesus exorcists who were not authorized by him exorcised devils in his name. This gave rise to a significant conversation between Jesus and John (Mark ix. 38). John said to Jesus, “Master, we saw a man casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him, because he did not follow us.” But Jesus answered, “Forbid him not. No one shall work a deed of might in my name and then deny me presently; for he who is not against us, is for us.” On the other hand, another saying of our Lord numbers people who have never known him (Matt. vii. 22) among those who cast out devils in his name. From one woman among his followers Jesus was known afterwards to have cast out “seven demons” (Mark xvi. 9, Luke viii. 2), and among the mighty deeds of which all believers were to be made capable, the unauthentic conclusion of Mark's gospel enumerates exorcism (xvi. 17).218

It was as exorcisers that Christians went out into the great world, and exorcism formed one very powerful method of their mission and propaganda. It was a question not simply of exorcising and vanquishing the demons that dwelt in individuals, but also of purifying all public life from them. For the age was ruled by the black one and his hordes (Barnabas); it “lieth in the evil one,” κεῖται ἐν πονηρῷ (John). Nor was this mere theory; it was a most vital conception of existence. The whole world and the circumambient atmosphere were filled with devils; not merely idolatry, but every phase and form of life was ruled by them. They sat on thrones, they

hovered around cradles. The earth was literally a hell, though it was and continued to be a creation of God. To encounter this hell and all its devils, Christians had command of weapons that were invincible. Besides the evidence drawn from the age of their holy scriptures, they pointed to the power of exorcism committed to them, which routed evil spirits, and even forced them to bear witness to the truth of Christianity. “We,” says Tertullian towards the close of his Apology (ch. xlvi.), “we have stated our case fully, as well as the evidence for the correctness of our statement– that is, the trustworthiness and antiquity of our sacred writings, and also the testimony borne by the demonic powers themselves (in our favor).” Such was the stress laid on the activity of the exorcists.219

In Paul's epistles,220 in Pliny's letter, and in the Didachê, they are never mentioned.221 But from Justin downwards, Christian literature is crowded with allusions to exorcisms, and every large church at any rate had exorcists. Originally these men were honored as persons endowed with special grace, but afterwards they constituted a class by themselves, in the lower hierarchy, like lectors and sub-deacons. By this change they lost their pristine standing.222 The church sharply distinguished between exorcists who employed the name of Christ, and pagan sorcerers, magicians, etc.;223 but she could not protect herself adequately against mercenary impostors, and several of her exorcists were just as dubious characters as her “prophets.” The hotbed of religious frauds was in Egypt, as we learn from Lucian's Peregrinus Proteus, from Celsus, and from Hadrian's letter to Servian.224 At a very early period pagan exorcists appropriated the names of the patriarchs (cp. Orig., c. Cels. I. xxii.), of Solomon, and even of Jesus Christ, in their magical formulæ; even Jewish exorcists soon began to introduce the name of Jesus in their incantations.225 The church, on the contrary, had to warn her own exorcists not to imitate the heathen. In the pseudo-Clementine de Virginitate we read (i. 12): “For those who are brethren in Christ it is fitting and right and comely to visit people who are vexed with evil spirits, and to pray and utter exorcisms over them, in the rational language of prayer acceptable to God, not with a host of fine words neatly arranged and studied in order to win the reputation among men of being eloquent and possessed of a good memory. Such folk are just like a sounding pipe, or a tinkling cymbal, of not the least use to those over whom they pronounce their exorcisms. They simply utter terrible words and scare people with them, but never act according to a true faith such as that enjoined by the Lord when he taught that ‘this kind goeth not out save by fasting and prayer offered unceasingly, and by a mind earnestly bent (on God).' Let then make holy requests and entreaties to God, cheerfully, circumspectly, and purely, without hatred or malice. For such is the manner in which we are to visit a sick (possessed) brother or a sister . . . . without guile or covetousness or noise or talkativeness or pride or any behavior alien to piety, but with the meek and lowly spirit of Christ. Let them exorcise the sick with fasting and with prayer; instead of using elegant phrases, neatly arranged and ordered, let them act frankly like men who have received the gift of healing from God, to God's glory. By your fastings and prayers and constant watching, together with all the rest of your good works, mortify the works of the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit. He who acts thus is a temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Let him cast out demons, and God will aid him therein. . . . The Lord has given the command to ‘cast out demons' and also enjoined the duty of healing in other ways, adding, ‘Freely ye have received, freely give.' A great reward from God awaits those who serve their brethren with the gifts which God has bestowed upon themselves.” Justin writes (Apol. II. vi.): “The Son of God became man in order to destroy the demons. This you can now learn from what transpires under your own eyes. For many of our Christian people have healed a large number of demoniacs throughout the whole world, and also in your own city, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; yet all other exorcists, magicians, and dealers in drugs failed to heal such people. Yea, and such Christians

continue still to heal them, by rendering the demons impotent and expelling them from the men whom they possessed." In his dialogue against the Jews (lxxxv.), Justin also writes: "Every demon exorcised in the name of the Son of God, the First-born of all creatures, who was born of a virgin and endured human suffering, who was crucified by your nation under Pontius Pilate, who died and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven—every demon exorcised in this name is mastered and subdued. Whereas if you exorcise in the name of any king or righteous man, or prophet, or patriarch, who has been one of yourselves, no demon will be subject to you. . . . Your exorcists, I have already said, are like the Gentiles in using special arts, employing fumigation and magic incantations." From this passage we infer that the Christian formulae of exorcism contained the leading facts of the story of Christ.226 And Origen says as much, quite unmistakably, in his reply to Celsus (I. vi.): "The power of exorcism lies in the name of Jesus, which is uttered as the stories of his life are being narrated."227

Naturally one feels very skeptical in reading how various parties in Christianity denied each other the power of exorcism, explaining cures as due either to mistakes or to deception. So Irenæus (II. xxxi. 2): "The adherents of Simon and Carpocrates and the other so-called workers of miracles were convicted of acting as they acted, not by the power of God, nor in truth, nor for the good of men, but to destroy and deceive men by means of magical illusions and universal deceit. They do more injury than good to those who believe in them, inasmuch as they are deceivers. For neither can they give sight to the blind or hearing to the deaf, nor can they rout any demons save those sent by themselves—if they can do even that."228 With regard to his own church, Irenæus (cp. below, ch. iv.) was convinced that the very dead were brought back to life by its members. In this, he maintains, there was neither feint, nor error, nor deception, but astounding fact, as in the case of our Lord himself. "In the name of Jesus, his true disciples, who have received grace from him, do fulfill a healing ministry in aid of other men, even as each has received the free gift of grace from him. Some surely and certainly drive out demons, so that it frequently happens that those thus purged from demons also believe and become members of the church.229 Others again, possess a fore-knowledge of the future, with visions and prophetic utterances. . . . . And what shall I more say? For it is impossible to enumerate the spiritual gifts and blessings which, all over the world, the church has received from God in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exercises day by day for the healing of the pagan world, without deceiving or taking money from any person. For as she has freely received them from God, so also does she freely give" (ἰατροὶ ἀνάργυροι).

The popular notion prevalent among the early Christians, as among the later Jews, was that, apart from the innumerable hosts of demons who disported themselves unabashed throughout history and nature, every individual had beside him a good angel who watched over him, and an evil spirit who lay in wait for him (cp., e.g., the "Shepherd" of Hermas). If he allowed himself to be controlled by the latter, he was thereby "possessed," in the strict sense of the word; i.e., sin itself was possession. This brings out admirably the slavish dependence to which any man is reduced who abandons himself to his own impulses, though the explanation is naively simple. In the belief in demons, as that belief dominated the Christian world in the second and third centuries, it is easy to detect features which stamp it as a reactionary movement hostile to contemporary culture. Yet it must not be forgotten that the heart of it enshrined a moral and consequently a spiritual advance,. viz., in a quickened sense of evil, as well as in a recognition of the power of sin and of its dominion in the world. Hence it was that a mind of such high culture as Tertullian's could abandon itself to this belief in demons. It is interesting to notice how the Greek and Roman elements are bound up with the Jewish Christian in his detailed statement of the belief (in the Apology), and I shall now quote this passage in full. It occurs in connection with the statement that while demons are ensconced behind the dead gods of wood

and stone, they are forced by Christians to confess what they are, viz., not gods at all, but unclean spirits. At several points we catch even here the tone of irony and sarcasm over these "poor devils" which grew so loud in the Middle Ages, and yet never shook belief in theist. But, on the whole, the description is extremely serious. People who fancy at this time of day that they would possess primitive Christianity if they only enforced certain primitive rules of faith, may perhaps discover from what follows the sort of coefficients with which that Christianity was burdened.230

"We Christians," says Tertullian (ch. xxii. f.), "affirm the existence of certain spiritual beings. Nor is their name new. The philosophers recognize demons; Socrates himself waited on a demon's impulse, and no wonder—for a demon is said to have been his companion from childhood, detaching his mind, I have no doubt, from what was good! The poets, too, recognize demons, and even the ignorant masses use them often in their oaths. In fact, they appeal in their curses to Satan, the prince of this evil gang, with a sort of instinctive knowledge of him in their very souls. Plato himself does not deny the existence of angels, and even the magicians attest both kinds of spiritual beings. But it is our sacred scriptures which record how certain angels, who fell of their own free will, produced a still more fallen race of demons, who were condemned by God together with their progenitors and with that prince to whom we have already alluded. Here we cannot do more than merely describe their doings. The ruin of man was their sole aim. From the outset man's overthrow was essayed by these spirits in their wickedness. Accordingly they proceed to inflict diseases and evil accidents of all kinds on our bodies, while by means of violent assaults they produce sudden and extraordinary excesses of the soul. Both to soul and to body they have access by their subtle and extremely fine substance. Invisible and intangible, those spirits are not visible in the act; it is in their effects that they are frequently observed, as when, for example, some mysterious poison in the breeze blights the blossom of fruit trees and the grain, or nips them in the bud, or destroys the ripened fruit, the poisoned atmosphere exhaling, as it were, some noxious breath. With like obscurity, the breath of demons and of angels stirs up many a corruption in the soul by furious passions, vile excesses, or cruel lusts accompanied by varied errors, the worst of which is that these deities commend themselves to the ensnared and deluded souls of men,231 in order to get their favorite food of flesh—fumes and of blood offered up to the images and statues of the gods. And what more exquisite food could be theirs than to divert then from the thought of the true God by means of false illusions? How these illusions are managed, I shall now explain. Every spirit is winged; angel and demon alike. Hence in an instant they are everywhere. The whole world is just one place to them. 'Tis as easy for them to know as to announce any occurrence; and as people are ignorant of their nature, their velocity is taken for divinity. Thus they would have themselves sometimes thought to be the authors of the events which they merely report—and authors, indeed, they are, not of good, but occasionally of evil events. The purposes of Divine providence were also caught up by them of old from the lips of the prophets, and at present from the public reading of their works. So picking up in this way a partial knowledge of the future, they set up a rival divinity for themselves by purloining prophecy. But well do your Crœsuses and Pyrrhuses know the clever ambiguity with which these oracles were framed in view of the future. . . . . As they dwell in the air, close to the stars, and in touch with the clouds, they can discern the preliminary processes in the sky, and thus are able to promise the rain whose coming they already feel. Truly they are most kind in their concern for health! First of all, they make you ill; then, to produce the impression of a miracle, they enjoin the use of remedies which are either unheard of or have quite an opposite effect; lastly, by withdrawing their injurious influence, they get the credit of having worked a cure. Why, then, should I speak further of their other tricks or even of their powers of deception as spirits—of the Castor

apparitions, of water carried in a sieve, of a ship towed by a girdle, of a beard reddened at a touch—things done to get men to believe in stones as gods, instead of seeking after the true God?

"Moreover, if magicians call up ghosts and even bring forward the souls of the dead, if they strangle boys in order to make the oracle speak, if they pretend to perform many a miracle by means of their quackery and juggling, if they even send dreams by aid of those angels and demons whose power they have invoked (and, thanks to them, it has become quite a common thing for the very goats and tables to divine), how much more keen will be this evil power in employing all its energies to do, of its own accord and for its own ends, what serves another's purpose? Or, if the deeds of angels and demons are exactly the same as those of your gods, where is the pre-eminence of the latter, which must surely be reckoned superior in might to all else? Is it not a more worthy conception that the former make themselves gods by exhibiting the very credentials of the gods, than that the gods are on a level with angels and demons? Locality, I suppose you will say, locality makes a difference; in a temple you consider beings to be gods whom elsewhere you would not recognize as such! . . . .

"But hitherto it has been merely a question of words. Now for facts, now for a proof that 'gods' and 'demons' are but different statues for one and the same substance. Place before your tribunals any one plainly possessed by a demon. Bidden speak by any Christian whatsoever, that spirit will confess he is a demon, just as frankly elsewhere he will falsely pretend to be a god.232 Or, if you like, bring forward any one of those who are supposed to be divinely possessed, who conceive divinity from the fumes which they inhale bending over an altar, and ("ructando curantur") are delivered of it by retching, giving vent to it in gasps. Let the heavenly virgin herself, who promises rain, let that teacher o£ healing arts, Æsculapius, ever ready to prolong the life of those who are on the point of death, with Socordium, Tenatium (?), and Asclepiadotum—let them then and there shed the blood of that daring Christian, if—in terror of lying to a Christian—they fail to admit they are demons. Could any action be more plain? Any proof more cogent? Truth in its simplicity stands here before your eyes; its own worth supports it; suspicion there can be none. Say you, it is a piece of magic or a trick of some sort? . . . . What objection can be brought against something exhibited in its bare reality? If, on the one hand, they (the demons) are really gods, why do they pretend (at our challenge) to be demons? From fear of us? Then your so-called 'Godhead' is subordinated to us, and surely no divinity can be attributed to what lies under the control of men. . . . . So that 'Godhead' of yours proves to be no godhead at all; for if it were, demons would not pretend to it, nor would gods deny it. . . . . Acknowledge that there is but one species of such beings, namely, demons, and that the gods are nothing else. Look out, then, for gods! For now you find that those whom you formerly took for such, are demons."

In what follows, Tertullian declares that the demons, on being questioned by Christians, not only confess they are themselves demons, but also confess the Christian's God as the true God. "Fearing God in Christ, and Christ in God, they become subject to the servants of God and Christ. Thus at our touch and breath, overpowered by the consideration and contemplation of the (future) fire, they leave human bodies at our command, reluctantly and sadly, and—in your presence—shamefacedly. You believe their lies; they believe them when they tell the truth about themselves. When anyone lies, it is not to disgrace but to glorify himself. . . . . Such testimonies from your so-called deities usually result in a making people Christians."

In ch. xxvii. Tertullian meets the obvious retort that if demons were actually subject to Christians, the latter could not possibly succumb helplessly to the persecutions directed against

them. Tertullian contradicts this. The demons, he declares, are certainly like slaves under the control of the Christians, but like good-for-nothing slaves they sometimes blend fear and contumacy, eager to injure those of whom they stand in awe. “At a distance they oppose us, but at close quarters they beg for mercy. Hence, like slaves that have broken loose from workhouses, or prisons, or mines, or any form of penal servitude, they break out against us, though they are in our power, well aware of their impotence, and yet rendered the more abandoned thereby. We resist this horde unwillingly, the same as if they were still unvanquished, stoutly maintaining the very position which they attack, nor is our triumph over them ever more complete than when we are condemned for our persistent faith.”

In ch. xxxvii. Tertullian once more sums up the service which Christians render to pagans by means of their exorcists. “Were it not for us, who would free you from those hidden foes that are ever making havoc of your health in soul and body—from those raids of the demons, I mean, which we repel from you without reward or hire?” He says the same thing in his address to the magistrate Scapula (ii.): “We do more than repudiate the demons: we overcome them, we expose then daily to contempt, and exorcise them from their victims, as is well known to many people.”233 This endowment of Christians must therefore have been really acknowledged far and wide, and in a number of passages Tertullian speaks as if every Christian possessed it.234 It would be interesting if we could only ascertain how far these cures of psychical diseases were permanent. Unfortunately, nothing is known upon the point, and yet this is a province where nothing is more common than a merely temporary success.

Like Tertullian, Minucius Felix in his “Octavius” has also treated this subject, partly in the same words as Tertullian (ch. xxvii.).235 The apologist Theophilus (ad Autolyc. ii. 8) writes: “The Greek poet spoke under the inspiration, not of a pure, but of a lying spirit, as is quite obvious from the fact that even in our own day possessed people are sometimes still exorcised in the name of the true God, whereupon their lying spirits themselves confess that they are demons, the actual demons who formerly were at work in the poets.” This leads us to assume that the possessed frequently cried out the name of “Apollo” or of the Muses at the moment of exorcising. As late as the middle of the third century Cyprian also speaks, like earlier authors, of demonic cures wrought by Christians (ad Demetr. xv.): “O if thou wouldst but hear and see the demons when they are adjured by us, tormented by spiritual scourges, and driven from the possessed bodies by racking words; when howling and groaning with human voices (!), and feeling by the power of God the stripes and blows, they have to confess the judgment to come! Come and see that what we say is true. And forasmuch as thou sayest thou dost worship the gods, then believe even those whom thou dost worship. Thou wilt see how those whom thou implorest implore us; how those of whom thou art in awe stand in awe of us. Thou wilt see how they stand bound under our hands, trembling like prisoners—they to whom thou dost look up with veneration as thy lords. Verily thou wilt be made ashamed in these errors of thine, when thou seest and hearest how thy gods, when cross-questioned by us, at once yield up the secret of their being, unable, even before you, to conceal those tricks and frauds of theirs.”236 Similarly in the treatise To Donatus (ch. v.): “In Christianity there is conferred (upon pure chastity, upon a pure mind, upon pure speech) the gift of healing the sick by rendering poisonous potions harmless, by restoring the deranged to health, and thus purifying them from ignominious pains, by commanding peace for the hostile, rest for the violent, and gentleness for the unruly, by forcing—under stress of threats and invective—a confession from unclean and roving spirits who have come to dwell within mankind, by roughly ordering them out, and stretching them out with struggles, howls, and groans, as their sufferings on the rack increase, by lashing them with scourges, and burning them with fire. This is what goes on, though no one sees it; the punishments are hidden, but the penalty is open. Thus what we have already begun

to be, that is, the Spirit we have received, comes into its kingdom." The Christian already rules with regal power over the entire host of his raging adversary.237

Most interesting of all are the discussions between Celsus and Origen on demons and possessed persons, since the debate here is between two men who occupied the highest level of contemporary culture.238 Celsus declared that Christians owed the power they seemed to possess to their invocation and adjuration of certain demons.239 Origen retorted that the power of banishing demons was actually vested in the name of Jesus and the witness of his life, and that the name of Jesus was so powerful that it operated by itself even when uttered by immoral persons (c. Cels. I. vi.). Both Origen and Celsus, then, believed in demons; and elsewhere (e.g., I. xxiv. f.) Origen adduces the old idea of the power exercised by the utterance of certain "names"; in fact, he indicates a secret "science of names"240 which confers power on the initiated, although of course one had to be very careful to recite the names in the proper language. "When recited in the Egyptian tongue, the one class is specially efficacious in the case of certain spirits whose power does not extend beyond such things and such a sphere, whilst the other class is effective with some spirits if recited in Persian, and so forth." "The name of Jesus also comes under this science of names, as it has already expelled numerous spirits from the souls and bodies of mankind and shown its power over those who have thus been freed from possession."241 Origen several times cites the fact of successful exorcism (I. xlvi., xlvii.), and the fact is not denied by Celsus, who admits even the "miracles" of Jesus. Only, his explanation was very different (lxviii.). "The magicians," he said, "undertake still greater marvels, and men trained in the schools of Egypt profess like exploits, people who for a few pence will sell their reverend arts in the open market-place, expelling demons from people, blowing diseases away with their breath, calling up the spirits of the heroes, exhibiting expensive viands, with tables, cakes, and dainties, which are really non-existent, and setting inanimate things in motion as if they really possessed life, whereas they have but the semblance of animals. If any juggler is able to perform feats of this kind, must we on that account regard him as 'God's son'? Must we not rather declare that such accomplishments are merely the contrivances of knaves possessed by evil demons?" Christians are jugglers or sorcerers or both; Christ also was a master of demonic arts—such was the real opinion of Celsus.242 Origen was at great pains to controvert this very grievous charge (see, e.g., I. lxviii.). And he succeeded. He could appeal to the unquestionable fact that all Christ's works were wrought with the object of benefiting men.243 Was it so with magicians? Still, in this reproach of Celsus there lay a serious monition for the church and for the Christians, a monition which more than Celsus canvassed. As early as the middle of the second century a Christian preacher had declared, "The name of the true God is blasphemed among the heathen by reason of us Christians; for if we fulfill not the commands of God, but lead an unworthy life, they turn away and blaspheme, saying that our teaching is merely a fresh myth and error."244 From the middle of the second century onwards the cry was often raised against Christians, that they were jugglers and necromancers, and not a few of them were certainly to blame for such a charge.245 Cures of demon-possession practised by unspiritual men as a profession must have produced a repellent impression on more serious people, despite the attractive power which they did exercise (Tert., Apol. xxiii., "Christianos facere consuerunt"). Besides, frivolous or ignorant Christians must often have excused themselves for their sins by pleading that a demon had seduced them, or that it was not they who did the wrong but the demon.246 But there was hardly any chance of the matter being cleared up in the third century. Christians and pagans alike were getting more and more entangled in the belief in demons. In their dogmas and their philosophy of religion, polytheists certainly became more and more attenuated as a sublime monotheism was evolved; but in practical life they plunged more helplessly than ever into the abysses of an imaginary world of

spirits. The protests made by sensible physicians247 were all in vain.

CHAPTER 4

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE AND CHARITY

"I was hungry, and ye fed me; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came to me. In as much as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

These words of Jesus have shone so brilliantly for many generations in his church, and exerted so powerful an influence, that one may further describe the Christian preaching as the preaching of love and charity. From this standpoint, in fact, the proclamation of the Saviour and of healing would seem to be merely subordinate, inasmuch as the words "I was sick, and ye visited me" form but one link in the larger chain.

Among the extant words and parables of Jesus, those which inculcate love and charity are especially numerous, and with them we must rank many a story of his life.249 Yet, apart altogether from the number of such sayings, it is plain that whenever he had in view the relations of mankind, the gist of his preaching was to enforce brotherliness and ministering love, and the surest part of the impression he left behind him was that in his own life and labors he displayed both of these very qualities. "One is your Master, and ye are all brethren"; "Whoso would be first among you shall be servant of all; for the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It is in this sense that we are to understand the commandment to love one's neighbor. How unqualified it is, becomes evident from the saying, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you;250 that ye may be sons of your Father in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." "Blessed are the merciful"—that is the keynote of all that Jesus proclaimed, and as this merciful spirit is to extend from great things to trifles, from the inward to the outward, the saying which does not pass over even a cup of cold water (Matt. x. 42) lies side by side with that other comprehensive saying, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Brotherliness is love on a footing of equality; ministering love means to give and to forgive, and no limit is to be recognized. Besides, ministering love is the practical expression of love to God.

While Jesus himself was exhibiting this love, and making it a life and a power, his disciples were learning the highest and holiest thing that can be learned in all religion, namely, to believe in the love of God. To them the Being who had made heaven and earth was "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort"—a point on which there is no longer any dubiety in the testimony of the apostolic and post-apostolic ages. Now, for the first tine, that testimony rose among men, which cannot ever be surpassed, the testimony that God is Love. The first great statement of the new religion, into which the fourth evangelist condensed its central principle, was based entirely and exclusively on love: "We love, because He first loved us," "God so loved the world," "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." And the greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote is the hymn commencing with the words: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." The new language on the lids of Christians was the language of love.

But it was more than a language, it was a thing of power and action. The Christians really considered themselves brothers and sisters, and their actions corresponded to this belief. On this point we possess two unexceptionable testimonies from pagan writers. Says Lucian of the

Christians: “Their original lawgiver had taught them that they were all brethren, one of another. . . . They become incredibly alert when anything of this kind occurs, that affects their common interests. On such occasions no expense is grudged.” And Tertullian (Apolog. xxxix.) observes: “It is our care for the helpless, our practice of loving kindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. ‘Only look,' they say, ‘look how they love one another!' (they themselves being given to mutual hatred). ‘Look how they are prepared to die for one another!'251 (they themselves being readier to kill each other).” Thus had this saying became a fact: “Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

The gospel thus became a social message. The preaching which laid hold of the outer man, detaching him from the world, and uniting him to his God, was also a preaching of solidarity and brotherliness. The gospel, it has been truly said, is at bottom both individualistic and socialistic. Its tendency towards mutual association, so far from being an accidental phenomenon in its history, is inherent in its character. It spiritualizes the irresistible impulse which draws one man to another, and it raises the social connection of human beings from the sphere of a convention to that of a moral obligation. In this way it serves to heighten the worth of man, and essays to recast contemporary society, to transform the socialism which involves a conflict of interests into the socialism which rests upon the consciousness of a spiritual unity and a common goal. This was ever present to the mind of the great apostle to the Gentiles. In his little churches, where each person bore his neighbor's burden, Paul's spirit already saw the dawning of a new humanity, and in the epistle to the Ephesians he has voiced this feeling with a thrill of exultation. Far in the background of these churches—i.e., when they were what they were meant to be—like some unsubstantial semblance, lay the division “between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, great and small, rich and poor. For a new humanity had now appeared, and the apostle viewed it as Christ's body, in which every member served the rest and each was indispensable in his own place. Looking at these churches, with all their troubles and infirmities, he anticipated, in his exalted moments of enthusiasm, what was the development of many centuries.252

We cannot undertake to collect from the literature of the first three centuries all the passages where love and charity are enjoined. This would lead us too far afield, although we should come across much valuable material in making such a survey. We would notice the reiteration of the summons to unconditional giving, which occurs among the sayings of Jesus, whilst on the contrary we would be astonished to find that passages enforcing the law of love are not more numerous, and that they are so frequently overshadowed by ascetic counsels; we would also take umbrage at the spirit of a number of passages in which the undisguised desire of being rewarded for benevolence stands out in bold relief.253 Still, this craving for reward is not in every case immoral, and no conclusion can be drawn from the number of times when it occurs. The important thing is to determine what actually took place within the sphere of Christian charity and active love, and this we shall endeavor to ascertain.

Three passages may be brought forward to show the general activities which were afoot.

In the official writing sent by the Roman to the Corinthian church c. 96 A.D., there is a description of the first-rate condition of the latter up till a short time previously (1 Clem. i., ii.), a description which furnishes the pattern of what a Christian church should be, and the approximate realization of this ideal at Corinth. “Who that had stayed with you did not approve your most virtuous and steadfast faith? Who did not admire your sober and forbearing Christian piety? Who did not proclaim the splendid style of your hospitality? Who did not congratulate you on your perfect and assured knowledge? For you did everything without respect of persons; you

walked by the ordinances of God, submitting to your rulers and rendering due honor to your senior men. Young persons also you charged to have a modest and grave mind; women you instructed to discharge all their tasks with a blameless, grave, and pure conscience, and to cherish a proper affection for their husbands, teaching them further to look after their households decorously, with perfect discretion. You were all lowly in mind, free from vainglory, yielding rather than claiming submission, more ready to give than to take; content with the supplies provided by God and holding by them, you carefully laid up His words in your hearts, and His sufferings were ever present to your minds. Thus a profound and unsullied peace was bestowed on all, with an insatiable craving for beneficence. . . . . Day and night you agonized for all the brotherhood, that by means of compassion and care the number of God's elect might be saved. You were sincere, guileless, and void of malice among yourselves. Every sedition and every schism was an abomination to you. You lamented the transgressions of your neighbors and judged their shortcomings to be your own. You never rued an act of kindness, but were ready for every good work."

Then Justin concludes the description of Christian worship in his Apology (c. lxvii.) thus: "Those who are well-to-do and willing, give as they choose, each as he himself purposes; the collection is then deposited with the president, who succours orphans, widows, those who are in want owing to sickness or any other cause, those who are in prison, and strangers who are on a journey."

Finally, Tertullian (Apolog. xxxix.) observes: "Even if there does exist a sort of common fund, it is not made up of fees, as though we contracted for our worship. Each of us puts in a small amount one day a month, or whenever he pleases; but only if he pleases and if he is able, for there is no compulsion in the matter, everyone contributing of his own free will. These monies are, as it were, the deposits of piety. They are expended upon no banquets or drinking-bouts or thankless eating-houses, but on feeding and burying poor people, on behalf of boys and girls who have neither parents nor money, in support of old folk unable now to go about, as well as for people who are shipwrecked, or who may be in the mines or exiled in islands or in prison—so long as their distress is for the sake of God's fellowship—themselves the nurslings of their confession."

In what follows we shall discuss, so far as may be relevant to our immediate purpose:—

1. Alms in general, and their connection with the cultus and officials of the church.

2. The support of teachers and officials.

3. The support of widows and orphans.

4. The support of the sick, the infirm, and the disabled.

5. The care of prisoners and people languishing in the mines.

6. The care of poor people needing burial, and of the dead in general.

7. The care of slaves.

8. The care of those visited by great calamities.

9. The churches furnishing work, and insisting upon work.

10. The care of brethren on a journey (hospitality), and of churches in poverty or any peril.

1. Alms in general and in connection with the cultus.—Liberality was steadily enjoined upon Christians; indeed, the headquarters of this virtue were to lie within the household, and its proof was to be shown in daily life. From the apostolic counsels down to Cyprian's great work de Opere et Eleemosynis, there stretches one long line of injunctions, in the course of which ever-increasing stress is laid upon the importance of alms to the religious position of the donor, and upon the prospect of a future recompense. These points are already prominent in Hermas, and in 2 Clem. we are told that "almsgiving is good as a repentance from sin; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving is better than either" (καλὸν ἐλεεμοσύνη ὡς μετάνοια ἁμαρτίας, κρείσσων νηστεία προσευχῆς, ἐλεεμοσύνη δὲ ἀμφοτέρων). Cyprian develops alms254 into a formal means of grace, the only one indeed which remains to a Christian after baptism; in fact he goes still further, representing alms as a spectacle which the Christian offers to God.255

It is not our business to follow up this aspect of almsgiving, or to discuss the amount of injury thus inflicted on a practice which was meant to flow from a pure love to men. The point is that a great deal, a very great deal, of alms was given away privately throughout the Christian churches.256 As we have already seen, this was well known to the heathen world.257

But so far from being satisfied with private almsgiving,258 early Christianity instituted, apparently from the first, a church fund (Tertullian's arca), and associated charity very closely with the cultus and officials of the church. From the ample materials at our disposal, the following outline may be sketched:—Every Sunday (cp. already 1 Cor. xvi. 2), or once a month (Tertullian), or whenever one chose, gifts in money or kind (stips) were brought to the service and entrusted to the president, by whom they were laid on the Lord's table and so consecrated to God.259 Hence the recipient obtained them from the hand of God. "Tis God's grace and philanthropy that support you," wrote bishop Cornelius (Eus., H.E. vi. 43). The president decided who were to be the recipients, and how much was to be allocated to each, a business in which he had the advice of the deacons, who were expected to be as familiar as possible with the circumstances of each member, and who had the further task of distributing the various donations, partly at the close of worship, partly in the homes of the indigent. In addition to regular voluntary assessments—for, as the principle of liberty of choice was strictly maintained, we cannot otherwise describe these offerings—there were also extraordinary gifts, such as the present of 200,000 sesterces brought by Marcion when, as a Christian from Asia, he entered the Roman church about the year 139.260

Among these methods of maintenance we must also include the love-feasts, or agapæ, with which the Lord's Supper was originally associated, but which persisted into a later age. The idea of the love-feast was that the poor got food and drink, since a common meal, to which each contributed as he was able, would unite rich and poor alike. Abuses naturally had to be corrected at an early stage (cp. 1 Cor. xi. 18 f.), and the whole affair (which was hardly a copy of the pagan feasts at the Thiasoi) never seems to have acquired any particular importance upon the whole.261

From the very first, the president appears to have had practically an absolute control over the donations;262 but the deacons had also to handle them as executive agents. The responsibility was heavy, as was the temptation to avarice and dishonesty; hence the repeated counsel, that bishops (and deacons) were to be ἀφιλάργυροι, "no lovers of money." It was not until a later age that certain principles came to be laid down with regard to the distribution of donations as a whole, from which no divergence was permissible.

This system of organized charity in the churches worked side by side with private benevolence—as is quite evident from the letters and writings of Cyprian. But it was inevitable

that the former should gradually handicap the latter, since it wore a superior lustre of religious sacredness, and therefore, people were convinced, was more acceptable to God. Yet, in special cases, private liberality was still appealed to. One splendid instance is cited by Cyprian (Epist. lxii.), who describes how the Carthaginian churches speedily raised 100,000 sesterces (between £850 and £1000).263

In 250 A.D. the Roman church had to support about 100 clergy and 1500 poor persons. Taking the yearly cost of supporting one man at £7, 10s. (which was approximately the upkeep of one slave), we get an annual sum of £12,000. If, however (like Uhlhorn, op. cit., p. 153; Eng. trans., p. 159), we allow sixty Roman bushels of wheat per head a year at 7s. 6d., we get a total of about £4300. It is safe to say, then, that about 250 A.D. the Roman church had to expend from half a million to a million sesterces (i.e., from £5000 to £10,000) by way of relief.

The demands made upon the church funds were heavy, as will appear in the course of the following classification and discussion.

2. The support of teachers and officials.—The Pauline principle264 that the rule about a "laborer being worthy of his hire" applied also to missionaries and teachers, was observed without break or hesitation throughout the Christian churches. The conclusion drawn was that teachers could lay claim to a plain livelihood, and that this claim must always have precedence of any other demand upon the funds. When a church had chosen permanent officials for itself, these also assumed the right of being allowed to claim a livelihood, but only so far as their official duties made inroads upon their civil occupations.265 Here, too, the bishop had discretionary power; he could appropriate and hand over to the presbyters and deacons whatever he thought suitable and fair, but he was bound to provide the teachers (i.e., missionaries and prophets) with enough to live on day by day. Obviously, this could not fail to give rise to abuses. From the Didachê and Lucian we learn that such abuses did arise, and that privileges were misemployed.266

3. The support of widows and orphans.267—Wherever the early Christian records mention poor persons who require support, widows and orphans are invariably in the foreground. This corresponds, on the one hand, with the special distress of their position in the ancient world, and on the other hand with the ethical injunctions which had passed over into Christianity from Judaism. As it was, widows and orphans formed the poor κατ' ἐξοχήν The church had them always with her. "The Roman church," wrote bishop Cornelius, "supports 1500 widows and poor persons" (Eus., H.E. vi. 43). Only widows, we note, are mentioned side by side with the general category of recipients of relief. Inside the churches, widows had a special title of honor, viz., "God's altar,"268 and even Lucian the pagan was aware that Christians attended first and foremost to orphans and to widows (Peregrin. xii.). The true worship, James had already urged (i. 27), is to visit widows and orphans in their distress, and Hermas (Mand. viii. 10) opens his catalogue of virtues with the words: χήραις ὑπηρετεῖν, ὀρφανοὺς καὶ ὑστερουμένους ἐπισκέπτεσθαι ("to serve widows and visit the forlorn and orphans").269 It is beyond question that the early church made an important contribution to the amelioration of social conditions among the lower classes, by her support of widows.270 We need not dwell on the fact, illustrated as early as the epistles to Timothy, that abuses crept into this department. Such abuses are constantly liable to occur wherever human beings are relieved, in whole or in part, of the duty of caring for themselves.271

4. The support of the sick, the infirm, the poor, and the disabled.—Mention has already been made of the cure of sick people; but where a cure was impossible the church was bound to support the patient by consolation (for they were remembered in the prayers of the church from

the very first; cp. 1 Clem. lix. 4), visitation,272 and charitable gifts (usually in kind). Next to the sick came those in trouble (ἐν θλίψει) and people sick in soul (κάμνοντες τῇ ψυχῇ, Herm. Mand. viii. 10) as a rule, then the helpless and disabled (Tertullian singles out expressly senes domestici), finally the poor in general. To quote passages would be superfluous, for the duty is repeatedly inculcated; besides, concrete examples are fairly plentiful, although our records only mention such cases incidentally and quite accidentally.273 Deacons, "widows," and deaconesses (though the last-named were apparently confined to the East) were set apart for this work. It is said of deacons in the Apostolic Constitutions (see Texte u. Unters. ii. 5. 8 f.): "They are to be doers of good works, exercising a general supervision day and night, neither scorning the poor nor respecting the person of the rich; they must ascertain who are in distress and not exclude them from a share in the church funds, compelling also the well-to-do, to put money aside for good works." Of "widows" it is remarked, in the same passage, that they should render aid to women afflicted by disease, and the trait of φιλόπτωχος (a lover of the poor) is expected among the other qualities of a bishop.274 In an old legend dating from the Decian persecution, there is a story of the deacon Laurentius in Rome, who, when desired to hand over the treasures of the church, indicated the poor as its only treasures. This was audacious, but it was not incorrect; from the very first, any possessions of the church were steadily characterized as poor funds; and this remained true during the early centuries.275 The excellence of the church's charitable system, the deep impression made by it, and the numbers that it won over to the faith, find their best voucher in the action of Julian the Apostate, who attempted an exact reproduction of it in that artificial creation of his, the pagan State-church, in order to deprive the Christians of this very weapon. The imitation, of course, had no success.276

Julian attests not only the excellence of the church's system of relief, but its extension to non-Christians. He wrote to Arsacius (Sozom. v. 16): "These godless Galileans feed not only their own poor but ours; our poor lack our care." This testimony is all the more weighty inasmuch as our Christian sources yield no satisfactory data on this point. Cp., however, under (8), and Paul's injunction in Gal. vi. 10: "Let us do good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of the faith." "True charity," says Tertullian (Apol. xlii.), "disburses more money in the streets than your religion in the temples." The church-funds were indeed for the use of the brethren alone, but private beneficence did not restrict itself to the household of faith. In a great calamity, as we learn from reliable evidence (see below), Christians did extend their aid to non-Christians, even exciting the admiration of the latter.

5. Care for prisoners and for people languishing in the mines.—The third point in the catalogue of virtues given by Hermas is: ἐξ ἀναγκῶν λυτροῦσθαι τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ("Redeem the servants of God from their bonds"). Prisoners might be innocent for various reasons, but above all there were people incarcerated for their faith or imprisoned for debt, and both classes had to be reached by charity. In the first instance, they had to be visited and consoled, and their plight alleviated by gifts of food.277 Visiting prisoners was the regular work of the deacons, who had thus to run frequent risks; but ordinary Christians were also expected to discharge this duty. If the prisoners had been arrested for their faith, and if they were rather distinguished teachers, there was no hardship in obeying the command; in fact, many moved heaven and earth to get access to prisoners,278 since it was considered that there was something sanctifying about intercourse with a confessor. In order to gain admission they would even go the length of bribing the gaolers,279 and thus manage to smuggle in decent meals and crave a blessing from the saints. The records of the martyrs are full of such tales. Even Lucian knew of the practice, and pointed out the improprieties to which it gave rise. Christian records, particularly those of a later date,280 corroborate this, and as early as the Montanist controversy it was a burning question whether or no any prominent confessor was really an impostor, if,

after being imprisoned for misdemeanors, he made out as if he had been imprisoned on account of the Christian faith. Such abuses, however, were inevitable, and upon the whole their number was not large. The keepers, secretly impressed by the behavior of the Christians, often consented of their own accord to let them communicate with their friends (Acta Perpet. ix.: "Pudens miles optio, præpositus carceris, nos magnificare coepit, intelligens magnam virtutem esse in nobis; qui multos ad nos admittebat, ut et nos et illi invicem refrigeraremus" ("Pudens, a military subordinate in charge of the prison, began to have a high opinion of us, since he recognized there was some great power of God in us. He let many people in to see us, that we and they might refresh one another").

If any Christian brethren were sentenced to the mines, they were still looked after, even there.281 Their names were carefully noted; attempts were made to keep in touch with them; efforts were concocted to procure their release,282 and brethren were sent to ease their lot, to edify and to encourage them.283 The care shown by Christians for prisoners was so notorious that (according to Eusebius, H.E. v. 8) Licinius, the last emperor before Constantine who persecuted the Christians, passed a law to the effect that "no one was to show kindness to sufferers in prison by supplying them with food, and that no one was to show mercy to those who were starving in prison." "In addition to this," Eusebius proceeds to relate, "a penalty was attached, to the effect that those who showed compassion were to share the fate of the objects of their charity, and that those who were humane to the unfortunate were to be flung into bonds and imprisonment and endure the same suffering as the others." This law, which was directly aimed at Christians, shows, more clearly than anything else could do, the care lavished by Christians upon their captive brethren, although much may have crept in connection with this which the State could not tolerate.

But they did more than try to merely alleviate the lot of prisoners. Their aim was to get them ransomed. Instances of this cannot have been altogether rare, but unfortunately it is difficult for us to form any judgment on this matter, since in a number of instances, when a ransom is spoken of, we cannot be sure whether prisoners or slaves are meant. Ransoming captives, at any rate, was regarded as a work which was specially noble and well-pleasing to God, but it never appears to have been undertaken by any church. To the last it remained a monopoly of private generosity and along this line individuals displayed a spirit of real heroism.284

6. Care of poor people requiring burial, and of the dead in general.—We may begin here with the words of Julian, in his letter to Arsacius (Soz., v. 15): "This godlessness (i.e., Christianity) is mainly furthered by its philanthropy towards strangers and its careful attention to the bestowal of the dead." Tertullian declares (see p. 153) that the burial of poor brethren was performed at the expense of the common fund, and Aristides (Apol. xv.) corroborates this, although with him it takes the form of private charity. "Whenever," says Aristides, "one of their poor passes from the world, one of them looks after him and sees to his burial, according to his means." We know the great importance attached to an honorable burial in those days, and the pain felt at the prospect of having to forego this privilege. In this respect the Christian church was meeting a sentiment which even its opponents felt to be a human duty. Christians, no doubt, were expected to feel themselves superior to any earthly ignominy, but even they felt it was a ghastly thing not to be buried decently. The deacons were specially charged with the task of seeing that everyone was properly interred (Const. Ap. iii. 7),285 and in certain cases they did not restrict themselves to the limits of the brotherhood. "We cannot bear," says Lactantius (Instit. 6.12), "that the image and workmanship of God should be exposed as a prey to wild beasts and birds, but we restore it to the earth from which it was taken,286 and do this office of relatives even to the body of a person whom we do not know, since in their room humanity must step in."287 At

this point also we must include the care of the dead after burial. These were still regarded in part as destitute and fit to be supported. Oblations were presented in their name and for the welfare of their souls, which served as actual intercessions on their behalf. This primitive custom was undoubtedly of immense significance to the living; it comforted many an anxious relative, and added greatly to the attractive power of Christianity.288

7. Care for slaves. — It is a mistake to suppose that any "slave question" occupied the early church. The primitive Christians looked on slavery with neither a more friendly nor a more hostile eye than they did upon the State and legal ties.289 They never dreamt of working for the abolition of the State, nor did it ever occur to them to abolish slavery for humane or other reasons — not even amongst themselves. The New Testament epistles already assume that Christian masters have slaves (not merely that pagan masters have Christian slaves), and they give no directions for any change in this relationship. On the contrary, slaves are earnestly admonished to be faithful and obedient.290

Still, it would not be true to assert that primitive Christianity was indifferent to slaves and their condition. On the contrary, the church did turn her attention to them, and effected some change in their condition. This follows from such considerations as these:—

(a) Converted slaves, male or female, were regarded in the full sense of the term as brothers and sisters from the standpoint of religion. Compared to this, their position in the world was reckoned a matter of indifference.291

(b) They shared the rights of church members to the fullest extent. Slaves could even become clergymen, and in fact bishops.292

(c) As personalities (in the moral sense) they were to be just as highly esteemed as freemen. The sex of female slaves had to be respected, nor was their modesty to be outraged. The same virtues were expected from slaves as from freemen, and consequently their virtues earned the same honor.293

(d) Masters and mistresses were strictly charged to treat all their slaves humanely,294 but, on the other hand, to remember that Christian slaves were their own brethren.295 Christian slaves, for their part, were told not to disdain their Christian masters, i.e., they were not to regard themselves as their equals.296

(e) To set a slave free was looked upon, probably from the very beginning, as a praiseworthy action;297 otherwise, no Christian slave could have had any claim to be emancipated. Although the primitive church did not admit any such claim on their part, least of all any claim of this kind on the funds of the church, there were cases in which slaves had their ransom paid for out of such funds.298 The church never condemned the rights of masters over slaves as sinful; it simply saw in them a natural relationship. In this sphere the source of reform lay, not in Christianity, but in general considerations derived from moral philosophy and in economic necessities.

From one of the canons of the Council of Elvira (c. 300 A.D.), as well as from other minor sources, we learn that even in the Christian church, during the third century in particular, cases unfortunately did occur in which slaves were treated with revolting harshness and barbarity.299 In general, one has to recollect that even as early as the second century a diminution of the great slave-establishment can be detected—a diminution which, on economic grounds, continued during the third century. The liberation of slaves was frequently a necessity; it must not be regarded, as a rule, in the light of an act prompted by compassion or brotherly feeling.

8. Care for people visited by great calamities.—As early as Hebrews x. 32 f. a church is commended for having nobly stood the test of a great persecution and calamity, thanks to sympathy and solicitous care. From that time onward, we frequently come across counsels to Christian brethren to show themselves especially active and devoted in any emergencies of distress; not counsels merely, but also actual proofs that they bore fruit. We shall not, at present, go into cases in which churches lent aid to sister churches, even at a considerable distance; these fall to be noticed under section 10. But some examples referring to calamities within a church itself may be set down at this stage of our discussion.

When the plague raged in Alexandria (about 259 A.D.), bishop Dionysius wrote (Euseb., H.E., vii. 22): "The most of our brethren did not spare themselves, so great was their brotherly affection. They held fast to each other, visited the sick without fear, ministered to them assiduously, and served them for the sake of Christ. Right gladly did they perish with them. . . . Indeed many did die, after caring for the sick and giving health to others, transplanting the death of others, as it were, into themselves. In this way the noblest of our brethren died, including some presbyters and deacons and people of the highest reputation. . . . . Quite the reverse was it with the heathen. They abandoned those who began to sicken, fled from their dearest friends, threw out the sick when half dead into the streets, and let the dead lie unburied."

A similar tale is related by Cyprian of the plague at Carthage. He exclaims to the pagan Demetrianus (x.): "Pestem et luem criminaris, cum peste ipsa et lue vel detecta sint vel aucta crimina singulorum, dum nec infirmis exhibetur misericordia et defunctis avaritia inhiat ac rapina. Idem ad pietatis obseqium timidi,300 ad impia lucra temerarii, fugientes morientium funera et adpetentes spolia mortuorum" ("You blame plague and disease, when plague and disease either swell or disclose the crimes of individuals, no mercy being shown to the weak, and avarice and rapine gaping greedily for the dead. The same people are sluggish in the discharge of the duties of affection, who rashly seek impious gains; they shun the deathbeds of the dying, but make for the spoils of the dead"). Cyprian's advice is seen in his treatise de Mortalitate. His conduct, and the way he inspired other Christians by his example, are narrated by his biographer Pontianus (Vita, ix. f.): "Adgregatam primo in loco plebem de misercordiae bonis instruit. Docet divinae lectionis exemplis . . . . tunc deinde subiungit nun esse mirabile, si nostros tantum debito caritatis obsequio foveremus; cum enim perfectum posse fieri, qui plus aliquid publicano vel ethnico fecerit, qui malum bono vincens et divinae clementiae instar exercens inimicos quoque dilexerit. . . . . Quid Christiana plebs faceret, cui de fide nomen est? distributa sunt ergo continuo pro qualitate hominum atque ordinum ministeria [organized charity, then]. Multi qui paupertatis beneficio sumptus exhibere non poterant, plus sumptibus exhibebant, compensantes proprio labore mercedem divitiis omnibus cariorem . . . . fiebat itaque exuberantium operum largitate, quod bonum est ad omnes, non ad solos domesticos fidei ("The people being assembled together, he first of all urges on them the benefits of mercy. By means of examples drawn from the sacred lessons, he teaches them. . . . Then he proceeds to add that there is nothing remarkable in cherishing merely our own people with the due attentions of love, but that one might become perfect who should do something more than heathen men or publicans, one who, overcoming evil with good, and practicing a merciful kindness like to that of God, should love his enemies as well. . . . What should a Christian people do, a people whose very name was derived from faith? The contributions are always distributed then according to the degree of the men and of their respective ranks. Many who, on the score of poverty, could not make any show of wealth, showed far more than wealth, as they made up by personal labor an offering dearer than all the riches in the world. Thus the good done was done to all men, and not merely to the household of faith, so richly did the good works overflow").

We hear exactly the same story of practical sympathy and self-denying love displayed by Christians even to outsiders, in the great plague which occurred during the reign of Maximinus Daza (Eus., H.E., ix. 8): “Then did they show themselves to the heathen in the clearest light. For the Christians were the only people who amid such terrible ills showed their fellow feeling and humanity by their actions. Day by day some would busy themselves with attending to the dead and burying them (for there were numbers to whom no one else paid any heed); others gathered in one spot all who were afflicted by hunger throughout the whole city, and gave bread to them all. When this became known, people glorified the Christians' God, and, convinced by the very facts, confessed the Christians alone were truly pious and religious.”

It may be inferred with certainty, as Eusebius himself avows, that cases of this kind made a deep impression upon those who were not Christians, and that they gave a powerful impetus to the propaganda.

9. The churches furnishing work and insisting upon work.—Christianity at the outset spread chiefly among people who had to work hard. The new religion did not teach its votaries “the dignity of labor” or “the noble pleasure invariably afforded by work” What it inculcated was just the duty of work.301 “If any will not work, neither let him eat” (2 Thess. iii. 10). Over and again it was enunciated that the duty of providing for others was conditioned by their incapacity for work. The brethren had soon to face the fact that some of their numbers were falling into restless and lazy habits, as well as the sadder fact that these very people were selfishly trying to trade upon the charity of their neighbors. This was so notorious that even in the brief compass of the Didachê there is a note of precautions which are to be taken to checkmate such attempts, while in Lucian's description of the Christians he singles out, as one of their characteristic traits, a readiness to let cunning impostors take advantage of their brotherly love.302

Christianity cannot be charged at any rate with the desire of promoting mendicancy or with underestimating the duty of work.303 Even the charge of being “infructuosi in negotiis” (of no use in practical affairs) was repudiated by Tertullian. “How so?” he asks. “How can that be when such people dwell beside you, sharing your way of life, your dress, your habits, and the same needs of life? We are no Brahmins or Indian gymnosophists, dwelling in woods and exiled from life. . . . We stay beside you in this world, making use of the forum, the provision-market, the bath, the booth, the workshop, the inn, the weekly market, and all other places of commerce. We sail with you, fight at your side, till the soil with you, and traffic with you; we likewise join our technical skill to that of others, and make our works public property for your use” (Apol., xlii.).304 Even clerics were not exempted from making a livelihood,305 and admirable sayings on the need of labor occur in Clement of Alexandria as well as in other writers. We have already observed (pp. 155 f.) that one incentive to work was found in the consideration that money could thus be gained for the purpose of supporting other people, and this idea was by no means thrown out at random. Its frequent repetition, from the epistle to the Ephesians onwards, shows that people recognized in it a powerful motive for the industrious life. It was also declared in simple and stirring language that the laborer was worthy of his hire, and a fearful judgment was prophesied for those who defrauded workmen of their wages (see especially Jas. v. 4 f.). It is indeed surprising that work was spoken of in such a sensible way, and that the duty of work was inculcated so earnestly, in a society which was so liable to fanaticism and indolence.

But we have not yet alluded to what was the really noticeable feature in this connection. We have already come across several passages which would lead us to infer that, together with the recognition that every Christian brother had the right to a bare provision for livelihood, the early Christian church also admitted its obligation to secure this minimum either by furnishing him

with work or else by maintaining him. Thus we read in the pseudo-Clementine homilies (cp. Clem., viii.): “For those able to work, provide work; and to those incapable of work, be charitable.”306 Cyprian also (Ep., ii.) assumes that if the church forbids some teacher of dramatic art to practice his profession, it must look after him, or, in the event of his being unable to do anything else, provide him with the necessaries of life.307 We were not aware, however, if this was really felt to be a duty by the church at large, till the discovery of the Didachê. This threw quite a fresh light on the situation. In the Didachê (xii.) it is ordained that no brother who is able to work is to be maintained by any church for more than two or three days. The church accordingly had the right of getting rid of such brethren. But the reverse side of this right was a duty. “If any brother has a trade, let him follow that trade and earn the bread he eats. If he has no trade, exercise your discretion in arranging for him to live among you as a Christian, but not in idleness. If he will not do this (i.e., engage in the work with which you furnish him), he is trafficking with Christ (χριστέμπορος). Beware of men like that.” It is beyond question, therefore, that a Christian brother could demand work from the church, and that the church had to furnish him with work. What bound the members together, then, was not merely the duty of supporting one another—that was simply the ultima ratio; it was the fact that they formed a guild of workers, in the sense that the churches had to provide work for a brother whenever he required it. This fact seems to me of great importance, from the social standpoint. The churches were also labor unions. The case attested by Cyprian proves that there is far more here than a merely rhetorical maxim. The Church did prove in this way a refuge for people in distress who were prepared to work. Its attractive power was consequently intensified, and from the economic standpoint we must attach very high value to a union which provided work for those who were able to work, and at the same time kept hunger from those who were unfit for any labor.

10. Care for brethren on a journey (hospitality) and for churches in poverty or peril.308—The diaconate went outside the circle of the individual church when it deliberately extended its labors to include the relief of strangers, i.e., in the first instance of Christian brethren on their travels. In our oldest account of Christian worship on Sunday (Justin, Apol., I. lxvii.; see above, p. 153), strangers on their travels are included in the list of those who receive support from the church-collections. This form of charity was thus considered part of the church's business, instead of merely being left to the goodwill of individuals; though people had recourse in many ways to the private method, while the virtue of hospitality was repeatedly inculcated on the faithful.309 In the first epistle of Clement to the Corinthian church, it is particularly noted, among the distinguishing virtues of the church, that anyone who had stayed there praised their splendid sense of hospitality.310 But during the early centuries of Christianity it was the Roman church more than any other which was distinguished by the generosity with which it practiced this virtue. In one document from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a letter of Dionysius the bishop of Corinth to the Roman church, it is acknowledged that the latter has maintained its primitive custom of showing kindness to foreign brethren. “Your worthy bishop Soter has not merely kept up this practice, but even extended it, by aiding the saints with rich supplies, which he sends from time to time, and also by addressing blessed words of comfort to brethren coming up to Rome, like a loving father to his children” (Eus., H.E., iv. 23. 10). We shall return to this later on; meanwhile it may be pointed out, in this connection, that the Roman church owed its rapid rise to supremacy in Western Christendom, not simply to its geographical position within the capital of the empire, or to the fact of its having been the seat of apostolic activity throughout the West, but also to the fact that it recognized the special obligation of caring for Christians in general, which fell to it as the church of the imperial capital. A living interest in the collective church of Christ throbbed with peculiar intensity throughout the Roman church, as we shall see, from the very outset, and the practice of hospitality was one of its manifestations. At a time when

Christianity was still a homeless religion, the occasional travels of the brethren were frequently the means of bringing churches together which otherwise would have had no common tie; while in an age when Christian captives were being dragged off, and banished to distant spots throughout the empire, and when brethren in distress sought shelter and solace, the practical proof of hospitality must have been specially telling. As early as the second century one bishop of Asia Minor even wrote a book upon this virtue.311 So highly was it prized within the churches that it was put next to faith as the genuine proof of faith. “For the sake of his faith and hospitality, Abraham had a son given him in his old age.” “For his hospitality and piety was Lot saved from Sodom.” “For the sake of her faith and hospitality was Rahab saved.” Such are the examples of which, in these very words, the Roman church reminds her sister at Corinth.312 Nor was this exercise of hospitality merely an aid in passing. The obligation of work imposed by the Christian church has been already mentioned (cp. pp. 173 f.); if any visitors wished to settle down, they had to take up some work, as is plain from the very provision made for such cases. Along roads running through waste country hospices were erected. The earliest case of this occurs in the Acta Archelai313 (fourth century).

It was easy to take advantage of a spirit so obliging and unsparing (e.g., the case of Proteus Peregrinus, and especially the churches' sad experience of so-called prophets and teachers). Heretics could creep in, and so could loafers or impostors. We note, accordingly, that definite precautions were taken against these at quite an early period. The new arrival is to be tested to see whether or not he is a Christian (cp. 2 and 3 John; Did., xii.). In the case of an itinerant prophet, his words are to be compared with his actions. No brother is to remain idle in any place for more than two days, or three at the very most; after that, he must either leave or labor (Did., xii.). Later on, any brother on a journey was required to bring with him a passport from his church at home. Things must have come to a sad pass when (as the Didachê informs us) it was decreed that any visitor must be adjudged a false prophet without further ado, if during an ecstasy he ordered a meal and then partook of it, or if in an ecstasy he asked for money. Many a traveler, however, who desired to settle down, did not come with empty hands; such persons did not ask, they gave. Thus we know (see above) that when Marcion came from Pontus and joined the Roman church, he contributed 200,000 sesterces to its funds (Tert., de Præscr., xxx.). Still, such cases were the exception; as a rule, visitors were in need of assistance.

Care lavished on brethren on a journey blossomed naturally into a sympathy and care for any distant churches in poverty or peril. The keen interest shown in a guest could not cease when he left the threshold of one's house or passed beyond the city gates. And more than this, the guest occupied the position of a representative to any church at which he arrived; he was a messenger to them from some distant circle of brethren who were probably entire strangers and were yet related to them. His account of the distress and suffering of his own church, or of its growth and spiritual gifts, was no foreign news. The primitive churches were sensible that their faith and calling bound them closely together in this world; they felt, as the apostle enjoined, that “if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, while if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. xii. 26). And there is no doubt whatever that the consciousness of this was most vigorous and vital in the very ages during which no external bond as yet united the various churches, the latter standing side by side in almost entire independence of each other. These were the ages when the primitive article of the common symbol, “I believe in one holy church,” was really nothing more than an article of faith. And of course the effect of the inward ties was all the stronger when people were participating in a common faith which found expression ere long in a brief and vigorous confession, or practicing the same love and patience and Christian discipline, or turning their hopes in common to that glorious consummation of Christ's kingdom of which they had each received the earnest and the pledge. These common

possessions stimulated brotherly love; they made strangers friends, and brought the distant near. “By secret signs and marks they manage to recognize one another, loving each other almost before they are acquainted”; such is the description of Christians given by the pagan Cæcilius (Min. Felix, ix. 3). Changes afterwards took place; but this vital sense of belonging to one brotherhood never wholly disappeared.

In the great prayers of thanksgiving and supplication offered every Sabbath by the churches, there was a fixed place assigned to intercession for the whole of Christendom throughout the earth. Before very long this kindled the consciousness that every individual member belonged to the holy unity of Christendom, just as it also kept them mindful of the services which they owed to the general body. In the epistles and documents of primitive Christianity, wherever the church-prayers emerge their ecumenical character becomes clear and conspicuous.314 Special means of intercourse were provided by epistles, circular letters, collections of epistles, the transmission of acts or of official records, or by travelers and special messengers. When matters of importance were at stake, the bishops themselves went forth to settle controversial questions or to arrange a common basis of agreement. It is not our business in these pages to describe all this varied intercourse. We shall confine ourselves to the task of gathering and explaining those passages in which one church comes to the aid of another in any case of need. Poverty, sickness, persecution, and suffering of all kinds formed one class of troubles which demanded constant help on the part of churches that were better off; while, in a different direction, assistance was required in those internal crises of doctrine and of conduct which might threaten a church and in fact endanger its very existence. Along both of these lines the brotherly love of the churches had to prove its reality.

The first case of one church supporting another occurs at the very beginning of the apostolic age. In Acts xi. 27 f. we read that Agabus in Antioch foretold a famine. On the news of this, the young church at Antioch made a collection on behalf of the poor brethren in Judæa, and dispatched the proceeds to them by the hands of Barnabas and Paul.315 It was a Gentile Christian church which was the first, so far as we are aware, to help a sister church in her distress. Shortly after this, the brotherly love felt by young Christian communities drawn from pagans in Asia and Europe is reported to have approved itself on a still wider scale. Even after the famine had passed, the mother church at Jerusalem continued poor. Why, we do not know. An explanation has been sought in the early attempt by which that church is said to have introduced a voluntary community of goods; it was the failure of this attempt, we are to believe, that left the local church impoverished. This is merely a vague conjecture. Nevertheless, the poverty at Jerusalem remains a fact. At the critical conference in Jerusalem, when the three pillar-apostles definitely recognized Paul's mission to the Gentiles, the latter pledged himself to remember the poor saints at Jerusalem in distant lands; and the epistles to the Galatians, the Corinthians, and the Romans, show how widely and faithfully the apostle discharged this obligation. His position in this matter was by no means easy. He had made himself responsible for a collection whose value depended entirely on the voluntary devotion of the churches which he founded. But he was sure he could rely on them, and in this he did not deceive himself. Paul's churches made his concerns their own, and money for the brethren far away at Jerusalem was collected in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Even when the apostle had to endure the prospect of all his work in Corinth being endangered by a severe local crisis, he did not fail to remember the business of the collection along with more important matters. The local arrangements for it had almost come to a standstill by the time he wrote, and the aim of his vigorous, affectionate, and graceful words of counsel to the church is to revive the zeal which had been allowed to cool amid their party quarrels (2 Cor. viii. 9). Not long afterwards he is able to tell the Romans that “those of Macedonia and Achaia freely chose to make a certain

contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem. They have done it willingly, and indeed it was a debt. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister to them in secular things" (Rom. xv. 26 f.). In this collection Paul saw a real duty of charity which rested on the Gentile churches, and one has only to realize the circumstances under which the money was gathered in order to understand the meaning it possessed for the donors themselves. As yet, there was no coming or going between the Gentile and the Judean Christians, though the former had to admit that the latter were one with themselves as brethren and as members of a single church. The churches in Asia and Europe were imitators of the churches of God in Judæa, (1 Thess. ii. 14), yet they had no fellowship in worship, life, or customs. This collection formed, therefore, the one visible expression of that brotherly unity which otherwise was rooted merely in their common faith. This was what lent it a significance of its own. For a considerable period this devotion of the Gentile Christians to their distressed brethren in Jerusalem was the sole manifestation, even in visible shape, of the consciousness that all Christians shared an inner fellowship. We do not know how long the contributions were kept up. The great catastrophes which occurred in Palestine after 65 A.D. had a disastrous effect at any rate upon the relations between Gentile Christians and their brethren in Jerusalem and Palestine.316—Forty years later the age of persecutions burst upon the churches, though no general persecution occurred until the middle of the third century. When some churches were in distress, their possessions seized317 and their existence imperilled, the others could not feel happy in their own undisturbed position. Succor of their persecuted brethren seemed to them a duty, and it was a duty from which they did not shrink. Justin (loc. cit.) tells us that the maintenance of imprisoned Christians was one of the regular objects to which the church collections were devoted, a piece of information which is corroborated and enlarged by the statement of Tertullian, that those who languished in the mines or were exiled to desert islands or lay in prison all received monies from the church.318 Neither statement explains if it was only members of the particular church in question who were thus supported. This, however, is inherently improbable, and there are express statements to the contrary, including one from a pagan source. Dionysius of Corinth (Eus., H.E., iv. 23. 10) writes thus to the Roman Christians about the year 170: "From the very first you have had this practice of aiding all the brethren in various ways and of sending contributions to many churches in every city, thus in one case relieving the poverty of the needy, or in another providing for brethren in the mines. By these gifts, which you have sent from the very first, you Romans keep up the hereditary customs of the Romans, a practice your bishop Soter has not merely maintained but even extended." A hundred years later Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, in writing to Stephen the bishop of Rome, has occasion to mention the churches in Syria and Arabia. Whereupon he remarks in passing, "To them you send help regularly, and you have just written them another letter" (Eus., H.E., vii. 5. 2). Basil the Great informs us that under bishop Dionysius (259-269 A.D.) the Roman church sent money to Cappadocia to purchase the freedom of some Christian captives from the barbarians, an act of kindness which was still remembered with gratitude in Cappadocia at the close of the fourth century.319 Thus Corinth, Syria, Arabia, and Cappadocia, all of them churches in the East, unite in testifying to the praise of the church at Rome; and we can understand, from the language of Dionysius of Corinth, how Ignatius could describe that church as the προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης, "the leader of love."320 Nor were other churches and their bishops behindhand in the matter. Similar stories are told of the church at Carthage and its bishop Cyprian. From a number of letters written shortly before his execution, it is quite clear that Cyprian sent money to provide for the Christians who then lay captive in Numidia (Ep. lxxvi.-lxxix.), and elsewhere in his correspondence there is similar evidence of his care for stranger Christians and foreign churches. The most memorable of his letters, in this respect, is that addressed to the bishops of Numidia in 253 A.D. The latter had informed him that wild

hordes of robbers had invaded the country and carried off many Christians of both sexes into captivity. Whereupon Cyprian instituted a collection on their behalf and forwarded the proceeds to the bishops along with the following letter (Ep. lxii.). It is the most elaborate and important document from the first three centuries bearing upon the support extended to one church by another, and for that reason we may find space for it at this point.

"Cyprian to Januarius, Maximus, Proculus, Victor, Modianus, Nemesianus, Nampulus, and Honoratus, the brethren: greeting.

"With sore anguish of soul and many a tear have I read the letter which in your loving solicitude you addressed to me, dear brethren, with regard to the imprisonment of our brothers and sisters. Who would not feel anguish over such misfortunes? Who would not make his brother's grief his own? For, says the apostle Paul: Should one member suffer, all the others suffer along with it; and should one member rejoice, the others rejoice with it also. And in another place he says: Who is weak, and I am not weak? We must therefore consider the present imprisonment of our brethren as our imprisonment, reckoning the grief of those in peril as our grief. We form a single body in our union, and we ought to be stirred and strengthened by religious duty as well as by love to redeem our members the brethren.

"For as the apostle Paul once more declares: Know ye not that ye are God's temple and that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you? Though love failed to stir us to succor the brethren, we must in this case consider that it is temples of God who are imprisoned, nor dare we by our procrastination and neglect of fellow-feeling allow temples of God to remain imprisoned for any length of time, but must put forth all our energies, and with all speed manage by mutual service to deserve the grace of Christ our Lord, our Judge, our God. For since the apostle Paul says: So many of you as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ, we must see Christ in our imprisoned brethren, redeeming from the peril of imprisonment him who redeemed us from the peril of death. He who took us from the jaws of the devil, who bought us with his blood upon the cross, who now abides and dwells in us, he is now to be redeemed by us for a sum of money from the hands of the barbarians. . . . . Will not the feeling of humanity and the sense of united love incline each father among you to look upon those prisoners as his sons, every husband to feel, with anguish for the marital tie, that his wife languishes in that imprisonment?" Then, after an account of the special dangers incurred by the consecrated "virgins"—"our church, having weighed and sorrowfully examined all those matters in accordance with your letter, has gathered donations for the brethren speedily, freely, and liberally; for while, according to its powers of faith, it is ever ready for any work of God, it has been raised to a special pitch of charity on this occasion by the thought of all this suffering. For since the Lord says in his gospel: I was sick and ye visited me, with what ampler reward for our alms will he now say I was in prison and ye redeemed me? And since again he says I was in prison and ye visited me, how much better will it be for us on the day of judgment, when we are to receive the Lord's reward, to hear him say: I was in the dungeon of imprisonment, in bonds and fetters among the barbarians, and ye rescued me from that prison of slavery! Finally, we thank you heartily for summoning us to share your trouble and your noble and necessary act of love, and for offering us a rich harvest-field wherein to scatter the seeds of our hope, in the expectation of reaping a very plentiful harvest from this heavenly and helpful action. We transmit to you a sum of a hundred thousand sesterces [close upon £1000] collected and contributed by our clergy and people here in the church over which by God's mercy we preside; this you will dispense in the proper quarter at your own discretion.

"In conclusion, we trust that nothing like this will occur in future, but that, guarded by the

power of God, our brethren may henceforth be quit of all such perils. Still, should the like occur again, for a test of love and faith, do not hesitate to write of it to us; be sure and certain that while our own church and the whole of the church pray fervently that this may not recur, they will gladly and generously contribute even if it does take place once more. In order that you may remember in prayer our brethren and sisters who have taken so prompt and liberal a share in this needful act of love, praying that they may be ever quick to aid, and in order also that by way of return you may present them in your prayers and sacrifices, I add herewith the names of all. Further, I have subjoined the names of my colleagues (the bishops) and fellow-priests, who like myself were present and made such contributions as they could afford in their own name and in the name of their people; I have also noted and forwarded their small sums along with our own total. It is your duty—faith and love alike require it—to remember all these in your prayers and supplications.

"Dearest brethren, we wish you unbroken prosperity in the Lord. Remember us."

Plainly the Carthaginian church is conscious here of having done something out of the common. But it is intensely conscious also of having thus discharged a duty of Christian love, and the religious basis of the duty is laid down in exemplary fashion. It is also obvious that so liberal a grant could not be taken from the proceeds of the ordinary church-collections.

Yet another example of Cyprian's care for a foreign church is extant. In the case (cp. above, p. 175) already mentioned of the teacher of the histrionic art who is to give up his profession and be supported by the church, if he has no other means of livelihood, Cyprian (Ep. ii.) writes that the man may come to Carthage and find maintenance in the local church if his own church is too poor to feed him.321

Lucian's satire on the death of Peregrinus, in the days of Marcus Aurelius, is a further witness to the alert and energetic temper of the interest taken in churches at the outbreak of persecution or during a period of persecution. The governor of Syria had ordered the arrest of this character, who is described by Lucian as a nefarious impostor. Lucian then describes the honor paid him, during his imprisonment, by Christians, and proceeds as follows: "In fact, people actually came from several Asiatic townships, sent by Christians, in the name of their churches, to render aid, to conduct the defence, and to encourage the man. They become incredibly alert when anything of this kind occurs that affects their common interests. On such occasions, no expense is grudged. Thus they pour out on Peregrinus, at this time, sums of money which were by no means trifling, and he drew from this source a considerable income."322 What Lucian relates in this passage cannot, therefore, have been an infrequent occurrence. Brethren arrived from afar in the name of their churches, not merely to bring donations for the support of prisoners, but also to visit them in prison, and to encourage them by evidences of love; they actually endeavored to stand beside them in the hour of trial. The seven epistles of Ignatius form, as it were, a commentary upon these observations of the pagan writer. In them we find the keen sympathy shown by the churches of Asia Minor as well as by the Roman church in the fortunes of a bishop upon whom they had never set eyes before: we also get a vivid sense of their care for the church at Antioch, which was now orphaned. Ignatius is being taken from Antioch to Rome in order to fight with beasts at the capital, and meanwhile the persecution of Christians at Antioch proceeds apace. On reaching Smyrna, he is greeted by deputies from the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles. After several days' intercourse, he entrusts them with letters to their respective churches, in which, among other things, he warmly commends to the brethren of Asia Minor his own forlorn church. "Pray for the church in Syria," he writes to the Ephesians. "Remember the church in Syria when you pray," he writes to

the Trallians; “I am not worthy to belong to it, since I am the least of its members.” And in the letter to the Magnesians he repeats this request, comparing the church at Antioch to a field scorched by the fiery heat of persecution, which needs some refreshing dew: the love of the brethren is to revive it.323 At the same time we find him turning to the Romans also. There appears to have been some brother from Ephesus who was ready to convey a letter to the Roman church, but Ignatius assumes they will learn of his fortunes before the letter reaches them. What he fears is, lest they should exert their influence at court on his behalf, or rob him of his coveted martyrdom by appealing to the Emperor. The whole of the letter is written with the object of blocking the Roman church upon this line of action.324 But all that concerns us here is the fact that a stranger bishop from abroad could assume that the Roman church would interest itself in him, whether he was thinking of a legal appeal or of the Roman Christians moving in his favor along some special channels open to themselves. A few days afterwards Ignatius found himself at Troas, accompanied by the Ephesian deacon Burrhus, and provided with contributions from the church of Smyrna.325 Thence he writes to the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna, with both of which he had become acquainted during the course of his journey, as well as to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. Messengers from Antioch cached him at Troas with news of the cessation of the persecution at the former city, and with the information that some churches in the vicinity of Antioch had already dispatched bishops or presbyters and deacons to congratulate the local church (Philad., x. 2). Whereupon, persuaded that the church of Antioch had been delivered from its persecution through the prayers of the churches in Asia Minor, Ignatius urges the latter also to send envoys to Antioch in order to unite with that church in thanking God for the deliverance. “Since I am informed,” he writes to the Philadelphians (x. 1 f.), “that, in answer to your prayers and love in Jesus Christ, the church of Antioch is now at peace, it befits you, as a church of God, to send a deacon your delegate with a message of God for that church, so that he may congratulate the assembled church and glorify the Name. Blessed in Jesus Christ is he who shall be counted worthy of such a mission; and ye shall yourselves be glorified. Now it is not impossible for you to do this for the name of God, if only you have the desire.” The same counsel is given to Smyrna. The church there is also to send a messenger with a pastoral letter to the church of Antioch (Smyrn., xi.). The unexpected suddenness of his departure from Troas prevented Ignatius from addressing the same request to the other churches of Asia Minor. He therefore begs Polycarp not only himself to despatch a messenger with all speed (Polyc., vii. 2), but to write in his name to the other churches and ask them to share the general joy of the Antiochene Christians either by messenger or by letter (Polyc., viii. 1). A few weeks later the church at Philippi wrote to Polycarp that it also had made the acquaintance of Ignatius during that interval; it requested the bishop of Smyrna, therefore, to forward its letter to the church of Antioch whenever he sent his own messenger. Polycarp undertakes to do so. In fact, he even holds out the prospect of conveying the letter himself. As desired by them, he also transmits to them such letters of Ignatius as had come to hand, and asks for reliable information upon the fate of Ignatius and his companions.326

Such, in outline, is the situation as we find it in the seven letters of Ignatius and in Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians. What a wealth of intercourse there is between the churches! What public spirit! What brotherly care for one another! Financial support retires into the background here. The foreground of the picture is filled by proofs of that personal cooperation by means of which whole churches, or again churches and their bishops, could lend mutual aid to one another, consoling and strengthening each other, and sharing their sorrows and their joys. Here we step into a whole world of sympathy and love.

From other sources we also learn that after weathering a persecution the churches would send a detailed report of it to other churches. Two considerable documents of this kind are still

extant. One is the letter addressed by the church of Smyrna to the church of Philomelium and to all Christian churches, after the persecution which took place under Antonius Pius. The other is the letter of the churches in Gaul to those in Asia Minor and Phrygia, after the close of the bloody persecution under Marcus Aurelius.327 In both letters the persecution is described in great detail, while in the former the death of bishop Polycarp is specially dwelt on, since the glorious end of a bishop who was well known in the East and West alike had to be announced to all Christendom. The events, which transpired in Gaul, had a special claim upon the sympathy of the Asiatic brethren, for at least a couple of the latter, Attalus of Pergamum and Alexander, a Phrygian, had suffered a glorious martyrdom in the Gallic persecution. The churches also took advantage of the opportunity to communicate to the brethren certain notable experiences of their own during the period of persecution, as well as any truths which they had verified. Thus the Smyrniote church speaks very decidedly against the practice of people delivering themselves up and craving for martyrdom. It gives one melancholy instance of this error (Mart. Polyc., iv.). The churches of Gaul, for their part (in Eus., H.E., v. 2), put in a warning against excessive harshness in the treatment of penitent apostates. They are able also to describe the tender compassion shown by their own confessors. It was otherwise with the church of Rome. She exhorted the church of Carthage to stand fast and firm during the Decian persecution,328 and at a subsequent period conferred with it upon its mode of dealing with apostates.329 Here a special case was under discussion. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, had fled during the persecution; nevertheless, he had continued to superintend his church from his retreat, since he could say with quite a good conscience that he was bound to look after his own people. The Romans, who had not been at first informed of the special circumstances of the case, evidently viewed the bishop's flight with serious misgiving; they thought themselves obliged to write and encourage the local church. The fact was, no greater disaster could befall a church in a period of distress than the loss of its clergy or bishop by death or dereliction of duty. In his treatise on “Flight during a Persecution,” Tertullian relates how deacons, presbyters, and bishops frequently ran away at the outbreak of a persecution, on the plea of Matt. x. 23: “If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another.” The result was that the church either collapsed or fell a prey to heretics.330 The more dependent the church became upon its clergy, the more serious were the consequences to the church of any failure or even of any change in the ranks of the latter. This was well understood by the ardent persecutors of the church in the third century, by Maximin I, by Decius, by Valerian, and by Diocletian. Even a Cyprian could not retain control of his church from a place of retreat! He had to witness it undergoing shocks of disastrous force. It was for this very reason that the sister churches gave practical proof of their sympathy in such crises, partly by sending letters of comfort during the trial, as the Romans did, partly by addressing congratulations to the church when the trial had been passed. In his church history Eusebius furnishes us with selections from the ample correspondence of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, and one of these letters, addressed to the church of Athens, is relevant to our present purpose. Eusebius writes as follows (H.E., IV. xxiii. 2 f.): “The epistle exhorts them to the faith and life of the gospel, which Dionysius accuses them of undervaluing. Indeed, he almost says they have fallen away from the faith since the martyrdom of Publius, their bishop, which had occurred during the persecution in those days. He also mentions Quadratus, who was appointed bishop after the martyrdom of Publius, and testifies that by the zeal of Quadratus they were gathered together again and had new zeal imparted to their faith.” The persecution which raged in Antioch during the reign of Septimius Severus claimed as its victim the local bishop of that day, one Serapion. His death must have exposed the church to great peril, for when the episcopate was happily filled up again, the bishop of Cappadocia wrote a letter of his own from prison to congratulate the church of Antioch, in the following terms: “The Lord has lightened and smoothed my bonds in this time of captivity, by letting me hear that, through the

providence of God, the bishopric of your holy church has been undertaken by Asclepiades, whose services to the faith qualify him thoroughly for such a position" (Eus., H.E., VI. xi. 5).

Hitherto we have been gleaning from the scanty remains of the primitive Christian literature whatever bore upon the material support extended by one church to another, or upon the mutual assistance forthcoming in a time of persecution. But whenever persecutions brought about internal crisis and perils in a church, as was not infrequently the case, the sympathetic interest of the church extended to this sphere of need as well, and attempts were made to meet the situation. Such cases now fall to be considered—cases in which it was not poverty or persecution, but internal abuses and internal dangers, pure and simple, which drew a word of comfort or of counsel from a sister church or from its bishop.

In this connection we possess one document dating from the very earliest period, viz., the close of the first century, which deserves especial notice. It is the so-called first epistle of Clement, really an official letter sent by the Roman church to the Corinthian.331 Within the pale of the latter church a crisis had arisen, whose consequences were extremely serious. All we know, of course, is what the majority of the church thought of the crisis, but according to their account certain newcomers, of an ambitious and conceited temper, had repudiated the existing authorities and led a number of the younger members of the church astray.332 Their intention was to displace the presbyters and deacons, and in general to abolish the growing authority of the officials (xl.-xlviii.). A sharp struggle ensued, in which even the women took some part.333 Faith, love, and brotherly feeling were already threatened with extinction (i.-iii.). The scandal became notorious throughout Christendom, and indeed there was a danger of the heathen becoming acquainted with the quarrel, of the name of Christ being blasphemed, and of the church's security being imperilled.334 The Roman Church stepped in. It had not been asked by the Corinthian church to interfere in the matter; on the contrary, it spoke out of its own accord.335 And it did so with an affection and solicitude equal to its candor and dignity. It felt bound, for conscience' sake, to give a serious and brotherly admonition, conscious that God's voice spoke through its words for peace,336 and at the same time for the strict maintenance of respect towards the authority of the officials (cp. xl. f.). Withal it never forgets that its place is merely to point out the right road to the Corinthians, not to lay commands upon them;337 over and again it expresses most admirably its firm confidence that the church knows the will of God and will bethink itself once more of the right course.338 It even clings to the hope that the very agitators will mend their ways (cp. liv.). But in the name of God it asks that a speedy end be put to the scandal. The transmission of the epistle is entrusted to the most honored men within its membership. "They shall be witnesses between us and you. And we have done this that you may know we have had and still have every concern for your speedy restoration to peace" (lxiii. 3). The epistle concludes by saying that the Corinthians are to send back the envoys to Rome as soon as possible in joy and peace, so that the Romans may be able to hear of concord regained with as little delay as possible and to rejoice speedily on that account (lxv. 1). There is nothing in early Christian literature to compare with this elaborate and effective piece of writing, lit up with all the brotherly affection and the public spirit of the church. But similar cases are not infrequent. The church at Philippi, for example, sent a letter across the sea to the aged Polycarp at Smyrna, informing him of a sad affair which had occurred in their own midst. One of their presbyters, named Valens, had been convicted of embezzling the funds of the church. In his reply, which is still extant, Polycarp treats this melancholy piece of news (Polyc., ad Phil., xi.). He does not interfere with the jurisdiction of the church, but he exhorts and counsels the Philippians. They are to take warning from this case and avoid avarice themselves. Should the presbyter and his wife repent, the church is not to treat them as enemies, but as ailing and erring members, so that the whole body may be saved. The bishop lets it be seen that the

church's treatment of the case does not appear to him to have been entirely correct. He exhorts them to moderate their passion and to be gentle. But, at the same time, in so doing he is perfectly conscious of the length to which he may venture to go in opposing an outside church. When Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, is being conveyed across Asia Minor, he takes the opportunity of writing brief letters to encourage the local churches in any perils to which they may be exposed. He warns them against the machinations of heretics, exhorts them to obey the clergy, urges a prudent concord and firm unity, and in quite a thorough fashion gives special counsels for any emergency. At the opening of the second century a Roman Christian, the brother of the bishop, desires to lay down the via media of proper order and discipline at any crisis in the church, as he himself had found that via, between the extremes of laxity and rigor. His aim is directed not merely to the Roman church but to Christendom in general (to the "foreign cities"); he wishes all to learn the counsels which he claims to have personally received from the Holy Spirit through the church (Herm. Vis. ii. 4). In the days of Marcus Aurelius it was bishop Dionysius of Corinth in particular who sought (no doubt in his church's name as well as in his own) by means of an extensive correspondence to confirm the faith of such churches, even at a great distance, as were in any peril. Two of his letters, those to the Athenians and the Romans, we have already noticed, but Eusebius gives us the contents of several similar writings, which he calls "catholic" epistles. Probably these were meant to be circulated throughout the churches, though they were collected at an early date and also (as the bishop himself is forced indignantly to relate) were interpolated. One letter to the church at Sparta contains an exposition of orthodox doctrine with an admonition to peace and unity. In the epistle to the church of Nicomedia in Bithynia he combats the heresy of Marcion. "He also wrote a letter to the church in Gortyna, together with the other churches in Crete, praising their bishop Philip for the testimony borne to the great piety and steadfastness of his church, and warning them to guard against the aberrations of heretics. He also wrote to the church of Amastris, together with the other churches in Pontus. . . . . Here he adds explanations of some passages from Holy Scripture, and mentions Palmas, their bishop, by name. He gives them long advice, too, upon marriage and chastity, enjoining them also to welcome again into their number all who come back after any lapse whatsoever, be it vice or heresy. There is also in his collection of letters another addressed to the Cnosians (in Crete), in which he exhorts Pinytus, the bishop of the local church, not to lay too heavy and sore a burden on the brethren in the matter of continence, but to consider the weakness of the majority" (Eus., H.E., iv. 23). Such is the variety of contents in these letters. Dionysius seems to have spoken his mind on every question, which agitated the churches of his day, nor was any church too remote for him to evince his interest in its inner fortunes.

After the close of the second century a significant change came over these relationships, as the institution of synods began to be adopted. The free and unconventional communications, which passed between the churches (or their bishops) yielded to an intercourse conducted upon fixed and regular lines. A new procedure had already come into vogue with the Montanist and Quartodeciman controversies, and this was afterwards developed more highly still in the great Christological controversies and in the dispute with Novatian. Doubtless we still continue to hear of cases in which individual churches or their bishops displayed special interest in other churches at a distance, nor was there any cessation of voluntary sympathy with the weal and woe of any sister church. But this gave place more than ever both to an interest in the position taken up by the church at large in view of individual and particular movements, and also to the support of the provincial churches.339 Keen interest was shown in the attitude taken up by the churches throughout the empire (or their bishops) upon any critical question. On such matters harmony could be arranged, but otherwise the provincial churches began to form groups of their

own. Still, for all this, fresh methods emerged in the course of the third century by which one church supported or rallied another, and these included the custom of inviting the honored teachers of one church to deliver addresses in another, or of securing them, when controversies had arisen, to pronounce an opinion, to instruct the parties, and to give a judgment in the matter. Instances of this are to be found, for example, in the career of the great theologian Origen.340 Even in the fourth and fifth centuries, the material support of poor churches from foreign sources had not ceased; Socrates, in his church history (vii. 25) notes one very brilliant example of the practice.

CHAPTER 5

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER, OF MORAL EARNESTNESS AND HOLINESS

In its missionary activities the Christian religion presented itself as something more than the gospel of redemption and of ministering love; it was also the religion of the Spirit and of power. No doubt, it verified its character as Spirit and power by the very fact that it brought redemption and succor to mankind, freeing them from demons (see above, pp. 125 f.) and from the misery of life. But the witness of the Spirit had a wider reach than even this. “I came to you in weakness and fear and with great trembling; nor were my speech and preaching in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor. ii. 3, 4). Though Paul in these words is certainly thinking of his conflict with demons and of their palpable defeat, he is by no means thinking of that alone, but also of all the wonderful deeds that accompanied the labors of the apostles and the founding of the church. These were not confined to his own person. From all directions they were reported, in connection with other missionaries as well. Towards the close of the first century, when people came to look back upon the age in which the church had been established, the course of events was summed up in these words (Heb. ii. 3): “Salvation began by being spoken through the Lord, and was confirmed for us by those who heard it, while God accompanied their witness by signs and wonders and manifold miracles and distributions of the holy Spirit.”

The variety of expressions342 here is in itself a proof of the number of phenomena which emerge in this connection. Let us try to single out the most important of them.

(1) God speaks to the missionaries in visions, dreams, and ecstasy, revealing to them affairs of moment and also trifles, controlling their plans, pointing out the roads on which they are to travel, the cities where they are to stay, and the persons whom they are to visit. Visions occur especially after a martyrdom, the dead martyr appearing to his friends during the weeks that immediately follow his death, as in the case of Potamiæna (Eus., H.E., vi. 5), or of Cyprian, or of many others.

It was by means of dreams that Arnobius (Jerome, Chron., p. 326) and others were converted. Even in the middle of the third century, the two great bishops Dionysius and Cyprian343 were both visionaries. Monica, Augustine's mother, like many a Christian widow, saw visions frequently; she could even detect, from a certain taste in her mouth, whether it was a real revelation or a dream-image that she saw (Aug., Conf., vi. 13. 23: “Dicebat discernere se nescio quo sapore, quem verbis explicare non poterat, quid interesset inter revelantem te et animam suam somniantem”). She was not the first who used this criterion.

(2) At the missionary addresses of the apostles or evangelists, or at the services of the churches which they founded, sudden movements of rapture are experienced, many of them being simultaneous seizures; these are either full of terror and dismay, convulsing the whole spiritual life, or exultant outbursts of a joy that sees heaven opened to its eyes. The simple question, “What must I do to be saved?” also bursts upon the mind with an elemental force.

(3) Some are inspired who have power to clothe their experience in words—prophets to explain the past, to interpret and to fathom the present, and to foretell the future.344 Their prophecies relate to the general course of history, but also to the fortunes of individuals, to what individuals are to do or leave undone.

(4) Brethren are inspired with the impulse to improvise prayers and hymns and psalms.

(5) Others are so filled with the Spirit that they lose consciousness and break out in stammering speech and cries, or in unintelligible utterances—which can be interpreted, however, by those who have the gift.

(6) Into the hands of others, again, the Spirit slips a pen, either in an ecstasy or in exalted moments of spiritual tension; they not merely speak but write as they are bidden.

(7) Sick persons are brought and healed by the missionaries, or by brethren who have been but recently awakened; wild paroxysms of terror before God's presence are also soothed, and in the name of Jesus demons are cast out.

(8) The Spirit impels men to an immense variety of extraordinary actions—to symbolic actions which are meant to reveal some mystery or to give some directions for life, as well as to deeds of heroism.

(9) Some perceive the presence of the Spirit with every sense; they see its brilliant light, they hear its voice, they smell the fragrance of immortality and taste its sweetness. Nay more; they see celestial persons with their own eyes, see them and also hear them; they peer into what is hidden or distant or to come; they are even rapt into the world to come, into heaven itself, where they listen to "words that cannot be uttered."345

(10) But although the Spirit manifests itself through marvels like these, it is no less effective in heightening the religious and the moral powers, which operate with such purity and power in certain individuals that they bear palpably the stamp of their divine origin. A heroic faith or confidence in God is visible, able to overthrow mountains, and towering far above the faith that lies in the heart of every Christian; charitable services are rendered which are far more moving and stirring than any miracle; a foresight and a solicitude are astir in the management of life, that operate as surely as the very providence of God. When these spiritual gifts, together with those of the apostles, prophets, and teachers, are excited, they are the fundamental means of edifying the churches, proving them thereby to be "churches of God."

The amplest evidence for all these traits is to be found in the pages of early Christian literature from its earliest record down to Irenæus, and even further. The apologists allude to them as a familiar and admitted fact, and it is quite obvious that they were of primary importance for the mission and propaganda of the Christian religion. Other religions and cults could doubtless point to some of these actions of the Spirit, such as ecstasy, vision, demonic and anti-demonic manifestations, but nowhere do we find such a wealth of these phenomena presented to us as in Christianity; moreover, and this is of supreme importance, the fact that their Christian range included the exploits of moral heroism, stamped them in this field with a character which was all their own and lent them a very telling power. What existed elsewhere merely in certain stereotyped and fragmentary forms, appeared within Christianity in a wealth of expression where every function of the spiritual, the mental, and the moral life seemed actually to be raised above itself.346

In all these phenomena there was an implicit danger, due to the great temptation which people felt either to heighten them artificially, or credulously to exaggerate them,347 or to imitate them fraudulently, or selfishly to turn them to their own account.348

It was in the primitive days of Christianity, during the first sixty years of its course, that their effects were most conspicuous, but they continued to exist all through the second century,

although in diminished volume.349 Irenæus confirms this view.350 The Montanist movement certainly gave new life to the “Spirit,” which had begun to wane; but after the opening of the third century the phenomena dwindle rapidly, and instead of being the hall-mark of the church at large, or of every individual community, they become no more than the endowment of a few favored individuals. The common life of the church has now its priests, its altar, its sacraments, its holy book and rule of faith. But it no longer possesses “the Spirit and power.”351Eusebius is not the first (in the third book of his history) to look back upon the age of the Spirit and of power as the bygone heroic age of the church,352 for Origen had already pronounced this verdict on the past out of an impoverished present.353 Yet this impoverishment and disenchantment hardly inflicted any injury now upon the mission of Christianity. During the third century, that mission was being prosecuted in a different way from that followed in the first and second centuries. There were no longer any regular missionaries—at least we never hear of any such. And the propaganda was no longer an explosive force, but a sort of steady fermenting process. Quietly but surely Christianity was expanding from the centers it had already occupied, diffusing itself with no violent shocks or concussions in its spread.

If the early Christians always looked out for the proofs of the Spirit and of power, they did so from the standpoint of their moral and religious energy, since it was for the sake of the latter object that these gifts had been bestowed upon the church. Paul describes this object as the edification of the entire church,354 while as regards the individual, it is the new creation of man from death to life, from a worthless thing into a thing of value. This edification means a growth in all that is good (cp. Gal. v. 22: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control”), and the evidence of power is that God has not called many wise after the flesh, nor many noble, but poor and weak men, whom he transformed into morally robust and intelligent natures. Moral regeneration and the moral life were not merely one side of Christianity to Paul, but its very fruit and goal on earth. The entire labor of the Christian mission might be described as a moral enterprise, as the awakening and strengthening of the moral sense. Such a description would not be inadequate to its full contents.

Paul's opinion was shared by Christians of the sub-apostolic age by the apologists and great Christian fathers like Tertullian355and Origen. Read the Didachê and the first chapter of Clemens Romanus, the conclusion of Barnabas, the homily entitled “Second Clement,” the “Shepherd” of Hermas, or the last chapter of the Apology of Aristides, and everywhere you find the ethical demands occupying the front rank. They are thrust forward almost with wearisome diffuseness and with a rigorous severity. Beyond all question, these Christian communities seek to regulate their common life by principles of the strictest morality, tolerating no unholy members in their midst,356 and well aware that with the admission of immorality their very existence at once ceases. The fearful punishment to which Paul sentences the incestuous person (1 Cor. 5) is not exceptional. Gross sinners were always ejected from the church. Even those who consider all religions, including Christianity, to be merely idiosyncrasies, and view progress as entirely identical with the moral progress of mankind—even such observers must admit that in these days progress did depend upon the Christian churches, and that history then had recourse to a prodigious and paradoxical system of levers in order to gain a higher level of human evolution. Amid all the convulsions of the soul and body produced by the preaching of a judgment, which was imminent, and amid the raptures excited by the Spirit of Christ, morality advanced to a position of greater purity and security. Above all, the conflict undertaken by Christianity was one against sins of the flesh, such as fornication, adultery, and unnatural vices. In the Christian communities, monogamy was held to be the sole permissible union of the sexes.357 The indissoluble character of marriage was inculcated (apart from the case of

adultery),358 and marriage was also secured by the very difficulties which second marriages encountered.359 Closely bound up with the struggle against carnal sins was the strict prohibition of abortion and the exposure of infants.360 Christians further opposed covetousness, greed, and dishonesty in business life; they attacked mammon-worship in every shape and form, and the pitiless temper which is its result. Thirdly, they combated double-dealing and falsehood. It was along these three lines, in the main, that Christian preaching asserted itself in the sphere of morals. Christians were to be pure men, who do not cling to their possessions and are not self-seeking; moreover, they were to be truthful and brave.

The apologists shared the views of the sub-apostolic fathers. At the close of his Apology, addressed to the public of paganism, Aristides exhibits the Christian life in its purity, earnestness, and love, and is convinced that in so doing he is expressing all that is most weighty and impressive in it. Justin follows suit. Lengthy sections of his great Apology are devoted to a statement of the moral principles in Christianity, and to a proof that these are observed by Christians. Besides, all the apologists rely on the fact that even their opponents hold goodness to be good and wickedness to be evil. They consider it superfluous to waste their time in proving that goodness is really goodness; they can be sure of assent to this proposition. What they seek to prove is that goodness among Christians is not an impotent claim or a pale ideal, but a power, which is developed on all sides and actually exercised in life.361 It was of special importance to them to be able to show (cp. the argument of the apostle Paul) that what was weak and poor and ignoble rose thereby to strength and worth. “They say of us, that we gabble nonsense among females, half-grown people, girls, and old women.362 Not so. Our maidens ‘philosophize,' and at their distaffs speak of things divine” (Tatian, Orat., xxxiii.). “The poor, no less than the well-to-do, philosophize with us” (ibid., xxxii.). “Christ has not, as Socrates had, merely philosophers and scholars as his disciples, but also artizans and people of no education, who despise glory, fear, and death.”363 “Among us are uneducated folk, artizans, and old women who are utterly unable to describe the value of our doctrines in words, but who attest them by their deeds.”364 Similar retorts are addressed by Origen to Celsus (in his second book), and by Lactantius (Instit., VI. iv.) to his opponents.

A whole series of proofs is extant, indicating that the high level of morality enjoined by Christianity and the moral conduct of the Christian societies were intended to promote, and actually did promote, the direct interests of the Christian mission.365 The apologists not infrequently lay great stress on this.366 Tatian mentions “the excellence of its moral doctrines” as one of the reasons for his conversion (Orat., xxix.), while Justin declares that the steadfastness of Christians convinced him of their purity, and that these impressions proved decisive in bringing him over to the faith (Apol., II. xii.). We frequently read in the Acts of the Martyrs (and, what is more, in the genuine sections) that the steadfastness and loyalty of Christians made an overwhelming impression on those who witnessed their trial or execution; so much so, that some of these spectators suddenly decided to become Christians themselves.367But it is in Cyprian's treatise “to Donatus” that we get the most vivid account of how a man was convinced and won over to Christianity, not so much by its moral principles, as by the moral energy which it exhibited. Formerly he considered it impossible to put off the old man and put on the new. But “after I had breathed the heavenly spirit in myself, and the second birth had restored me to a new manhood, then doubtful things suddenly and strangely acquired certainty for me. What was hidden disclosed itself; darkness became enlightened; what was formerly hard seemed feasible, and what had appeared impossible seemed capable of being done.”

Tertullian and Origen speak in similar terms.

But it is not merely Christians themselves who bear witness that they have been lifted into a new world of moral power, of earnestness, and of holiness; even their opponents bear testimony to their purity of life. The abominable charges circulated by the Jews against the moral life of Christians did hold their own for a long while, and were credited by the common people as well as by many of the educated classes.368 But anyone who examined the facts found something very different. Pliny told Trajan that he had been unable to prove anything criminal or vicious on the part of Christians during all his examination of them, and that, on the contrary, the purpose of their gatherings was to make themselves more conscientious and virtuous.369Lucian represents the Christians as credulous fanatics, but also as people of a pure life, of devoted love, and of a courage equal to death itself. The last-named feature is also admitted by Epictetus and Aurelius.370 Most important of all, however, is the testimony of the shrewd physician Galen. He writes (in his treatise371 "de Sententiis Politiæ Platonicæ") as follows: "Hominum plerique orationem demonstrativam continuam morte assequi nequeunt, quare indigent, ut instituantur parabolis. veluti nostro tempore videmus homines illos, qui Christiani vocantur, fidem suam e parabolis petiisse. Hi tamen interdum talia faciunt, qualia qui vere philosophantur. Nam quod mortem contemnunt, id quidem omnes ante oculos habemus; item quod verecundia quadam ducti ab usu rerum venerearum abhorrent. sunt enim inter eos et feminae et viri, qui per totam vitam a concubitu abstinuerint;372 sunt etiam qui in animis regendis coercendisque et in acerrimo honestatis studio eo progressi sint, ut nihil cedant vere philosophantibus."373 One can hardly imagine a more impartial and brilliant testimony to the morality of Christians. Celsus, too, a very prejudiced critic of Christians, finds no fault with their moral conduct. Everything about them, according to him, is dull, mean, and deplorable; but he never denies them such morality as is possible under the circumstances.

As the proof of "the Spirit and of power" subsided after the beginning of the third century, the extraordinary moral tension also became relaxed, paving the way gradually for a morality which was adapted to a worldly life, and which was no longer equal to the strain of persecution.374 This began as far back as the second century, in connection with the question, whether any, and if so what, post-baptismal sins could be forgiven. But the various stages of the process cannot be exhibited in these pages. It must suffice to remark that from about 230 A.D. onwards, many churches followed the lead of the Roman church in forgiving gross bodily sins, whilst after 251 A.D. most churches also forgave sins of idolatry. Thus the circle was complete; only in one or two cases were crimes of exceptional atrocity denied forgiveness, implying that the offender was not re-admitted to the church. It is quite obvious from the later writings of Tertullian ("nostrorum bonorum status iam mergitur," de Pudic., i.), and from many a stinging remark in Origen's commentaries, that even by 220 A.D. the Christian churches, together with their bishops and clergy, were no longer what they had previously been, from a moral point of view;375 nevertheless (as Origen expressly emphasizes against Celsus; cp. III. xxix.-xxx.) their morals still continued to excel the morals of other guilds within the empire and of the population in the cities, whilst the penitential ordinances between 251 and 325, of which we possess no small number, point to a very earnest endeavor being made to keep up morality and holiness of life. Despite their moral deterioration, the Christian churches must have still continued to wield a powerful influence and fascination for people of a moral disposition.

But here again we are confronted with the complexio oppositorum. For the churches must have also produced a powerful effect upon people in every degree of moral weakness, just on account of that new internal development which had culminated about the middle of the third century. If the churches hitherto had been societies which admitted people under the burden of sin, not denying entrance even to the worst offender, but securing him forgiveness with God and thereafter requiring him to continue pure and holy, now they had established themselves

voluntarily or involuntarily as societies based upon unlimited forgiveness. Along with baptism, and subsequent to it, they had now developed a second sacrament; it was still without form, but they relied upon it as a thing which had form, and considered themselves justified in applying it in almost every case—it was the sacrament of penitence. Whether this development enabled them to meet the aims of their Founder better than their more rigorous predecessors, or whether it removed them further from these aims, is not a question upon which we need to enter. The point is that now for the first time the attractive power of Christianity as a religion of pardon came fully into play. No doubt, everything depended on the way in which pardon was applied but it was not merely a frivolous scoff on the part of Julian the apostate when he pointed out that the way in which the Christian churches preached and administered forgiveness was injurious to the best interests of morality, and that there were members in the Christian churches whom no other religious societies would tolerate within their bounds. The feature which Julian censured had arisen upon a wide scale as far back as the second half of the third century. When clerics of the same church started to quarrel with each other, as in the days of Cyprian at Carthage, they instantly flung at each other the most heinous charges of fraud, of adultery, and even of murder. One asks, in amazement and indignation, why the offending presbyter or deacon had not been long ago expelled from the church, if such accusations were correct? To this question no answer can be given. Besides, even if these repeated and almost stereotyped charges were not in every case well founded, the not less serious fact remains that one brother wantonly taxed another with the most heinous crimes. It reveals a laxity that would not have been possible, had not a fatal influence been already felt from the reverse side of the religion of the merciful heart and of forgiveness.

Still, this forgiveness is not to be condemned by the mere fact that it was extended to worthless characters. We are not called upon to be its judges. We must be content to ascertain, as we have now ascertained, that while the character of the Christian religion, as a religion of morality, suffered some injury in the course of the third century, this certainly did not impair its powers of attraction. It was now sought after as the religion which formed a permanent channel of forgiveness to mankind. Which was partly due, no doubt, to the fact that different groups of people were now appealing to it.

Yet, if this sketch of the characteristics of Christianity is not to be left unfinished two things must still be noted. One is this: the church never sanctioned the thesis adopted by most of the gnostics,376 that there was a qualitative distinction of human beings according to their moral capacities, and that in consequence of this there must also be different grades in their ethical conduct and in the morality which might be expected from them. But there was a primitive distinction between a morality for the perfect and a morality which was none the less adequate, and this distinction was steadily maintained. Even in Paul there are evident traces of this view alongside of a strictly uniform conception. The Catholic doctrine of “præcepta” and “consilia” prevailed almost from the first within the Gentile church, and the words of the Didachê which follow the description of “the two ways” (c. vi.: “If thou canst bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect: but if thou canst not, do what thou canst”) only express a conviction which was very widely felt. The distinction between the “children” and the “mature” (or perfect), which originally obtained within the sphere of Christian knowledge, overflowed into the sphere of conduct, since both spheres were closely allied.377 Christianity had always her heroic souls in asceticism and poverty and so forth. They were held in exceptional esteem (see above), and they had actually to be warned, even in the sub-apostolic age, against pride and boasting (cp. Ignat., ad Polyc. v.: εἴ τις δύναται ἐν ἁγνείᾳ μένειν εἰς τιμὴν τῆς σαρκὸς τοῦ κυρίου, ἐν ἀκαυχησίᾳ μενέτω· ἐάν καυχήσηται, ἀπώλετο—“If anyone is able to remain in purity to the honor of the flesh of the Lord, let him remain as he is without boasting of it. If he boast, he is a lost

man;" also Clem. Rom. xxxviii.: ὁ ἁγνὸς ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ἤτω καὶ μὴ ἀλαζονευέσθω—"Let him that is pure in the flesh remain so and not boast about it"). It was in these ascetics of early Christianity that the first step was taken towards monasticism.

Secondly, veracity in matters of fact is as liable to suffer as righteousness in every religion: every religion gets encumbered with fanaticism, the indiscriminate temper, and fraud. This is writ clear upon the pages of church history from the very first. In the majority of cases, in the case of miracles that have never happened, of visions that were never seen, of voices that were never heard, and of books that were never written by their alleged authors, we are not in a position at this time of day to decide where self-deception ended and where fraud began, where enthusiasm became deliberate and then passed into conventional deception, any more than we are capable of determining, as a rule, where a harsh exclusiveness passes into injustice and fanaticism. We must content ourselves with determining that cases of this kind were unfortunately not infrequent, and that their number increased. What we call priest-craft and miracle-fraud were not absent from the third or even from the second century. They are to be found in the Catholic church as well as in several of the gnostic conventicles, where water was changed into wine (as by the Marcosians) or wine into water (cp. the books of Jeû).

Christianity, as the religion of the Spirit and of power, contained another element which proved of vital importance, and which exhibited pre-eminently the originality of the new faith. This was its reverence for the lowly, for sorrow, suffering, and death, together with its triumphant victory over these contradictions of human life. The great incentive and example alike for the eliciting and the exercise of this virtue lay in the Redeemer's life and cross. Blent with patience and hope, this reverence overcame any external hindrance; it recognized in suffering the path to deity, and thus triumphed in the midst of all its foes. "Reverence for what is beneath us—this is the last step to which mankind were fitted and destined to attain. But what a task it was, not only to let the earth lie beneath us, we appealing to a higher birthplace, but also to recognize humility and poverty, mockery and despite, disgrace and wretchedness, suffering and death—to recognize these things as divine."378 Here lies the root of the most profound factor contributed by Christianity to the development of the moral sense, and contributed with perfect strength and delicacy. It differentiates itself, as an entirely original element, from the similar phenomena which recur in several of the philosophical schools (e.g., the Cynic). Not until a much later period, however,—from Augustine onwards,—did this phase of feeling find expression in literature.

Even what is most divine on earth has its shadow nevertheless, and so it was with this reverence. It was inevitable that the new aesthetic, which it involved, should become an aesthetic of lower things, of death and its grim relics; in this way it ceased to be aesthetic by its very effort to attain the impossible, until finally a much later period devised an aesthetic of spiritual agony and raptures over suffering. But there was worse behind. Routine and convention found their way even into this phase of feeling. What was most profound and admirable was gradually stripped of its inner spirit and rendered positively repulsive379 by custom, common talk, mechanical tradition, and ritual practices. Yet, however strongly we feel about the unsightly phlegm of this corruption, and however indignantly we condemn it, we should never forget that it represented the shadow thrown by the most profound and at the same time the most heroic mood of the human soul in its spiritual exaltation; it is, in fact, religion itself, fully ripe.

CHAPTER 6

THE RELIGION OF AUTHORITY AND OF REASON, OF THE MYSTERIES AND OF TRANSCENDENTALISM

I.

"Some Christians [evidently not all] will not so much as give or accept any account of what they believe. They adhere to the watchwords 'Prove not, only believe,' and 'Thy faith shall save thee.' Wisdom is an evil thing in the world, folly a good thing." So Celsus wrote about the Christians (I. ix.). In the course of his polemical treatise he brings forward this charge repeatedly in various forms; as in I. xii., "They say, in their usual fashion, 'Enquire not'"; I. xxvi. f., "That ruinous saying of Jesus has deceived men. With his illiterate character and lack of eloquence he has gained of course almost no one but illiterate people";380 III. xliv., "The following rules are laid down by Christians, even by the more intelligent among them. 'Let none draw near to us who is educated, or shrewd, or wise. Such qualifications are in our eyes an evil. But let the ignorant, the idiots, and the fools come to us with confidence'"; vi. x. f., "Christians say, 'Believe first of all that he whom I announce to thee is the Son of God.'" "All are ready to cry out, 'Believe if thou wilt be saved, or else be gone.' What is wisdom among men they describe as foolishness with God, and their reason for this is their desire to win over none but the uneducated and simple by means of this saying." Justin also represents Christians being charged by their opponents with making blind assertions and giving no proof (Apol., I. lii.), while Lucian declares (Peregr., xiii.) that they "received such matters on faith without the slightest enquiry" (ἄνευ τινὸς ἀκριβοῦς πίστεως τὰ τοιαῦτα παρεδέξαντο).

A description and a charge of this kind were not entirely unjustified. Within certain limits Christians have maintained, from the very first, that the human understanding has to be captured and humbled in order to obey the message of the gospel. Some Christians even go a step further. Bluntly, they require a blind faith for the word of God. When the apostle Paul views his preaching, not so much in its content as in its origin, as the word of God, and even when he notes the contrast between it and the wisdom of this world, his demand is for a firm, resolute faith, and for nothing else. "We bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5), and—the word of the cross tolerates no σοφία λόγου (no wisdom of speech), it is to be preached as foolishness and apprehended by faith (1 Cor. i. 17 f.). Hence he also issues a warning against the seductions of philosophy (Col. ii. 8). Tertullian advanced beyond this position much more boldly. He prohibited Christians (de Præscr. viii. f.) from ever applying to doctrine the saying, "Seek and ye shall find." "What," he exclaims (op. cit., vii.), "what has Athens to do with Jerusalem, or the Academy with the church? What have heretics to do with Christians? Our doctrine originates with the porch of Solomon, who had himself taught that men must seek the Lord in simplicity of heart. Away with all who attempt to introduce a mottled Christianity of Stoicism and Platonism and dialectic! Now that Jesus Christ has come, no longer need we curiously inquire, or even investigate, since the gospel is preached. When we believe, we have no desire to sally beyond our faith. For our belief is the primary and palmary fact. There is nothing further that we have still to believe beyond our own belief. . . . . To be ignorant of everything outside the rule of faith, is to possess all knowledge."381

Many missionaries may have preached in this way, not merely after but even previous to the stern conflict with gnosticism. Faith is a matter of resolve, a resolve of the will and a resolve to obey. Trouble it not by any considerations of human reason!

Preaching of this kind is only possible if at the same time some powerful authority is set up. And such an authority was set up. First and foremost (cp. Paul), it was the authority of the revealed will of God as disclosed in the mission of the Son to earth. Here external and internal authority blended and coincided, for while the divine will is certainly an authority in itself (according to Paul's view), and is also capable of making itself felt as such, without men understanding its purpose and right (Rom. 9 f.), the apostle is equally convinced that God's gracious will makes itself intelligible to the inner man.

Still, even in Paul, the external and internal authority vested in the cross of Christ is accompanied by other authorities which claim the obedience of faith. These are the written word of the sacred documents and the sayings of Jesus. In their case also neither doubt nor contradiction is permissible.

For all that, the great apostle endeavored to reason out everything, and in the last resort it is never a question with him of any "sacrifice of the intellect" (see below). Some passages may seem to contradict this statement, but they only seen to do so. When Paul demands the obedience of faith and sets up the authority of "the word" or of "the cross," he simply means that obedience of faith which is inseparable from any religion whatsoever, no matter how freely and spiritually it may be set forth. But, as Celsus and Tertullian serve to remind us (if any reminder at all is necessary on this point), many missionaries and teachers went about their work in a very different manner. They simply erected their authority wherever they went; it was the letter of Scripture more and more,382but ere long it became the rule of faith, together with the church (the church as "the pillar and ground of the truth," στῦλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας, as early as 1 Tim. iii. 15). True, they endeavored to buttress the authority of these two magnitudes, the Bible and the church, by means of rational arguments (the authority of the Bible being supported by the proof from the fulfillment of prophecy, and that of the church by the proof from the unbroken tradition which reached back to Christ himself and invested the doctrine of the church with the value of Christ's own words). In so doing they certainly did not demand an absolutely blind belief. But, first of all, it was assuredly not every missionary or teacher who was competent to lead such proofs. They were adduced only by the educated apologists and controversialists. And in the second place, no inner authority can ever be secured for the Bible and the church by means of external proofs. The latter really remained a sort of alien element. At bottom, the faith required was blind faith.

Still, it would be a grave error to suppose that for the majority of people the curt demand that authorities must be simply believed and reason repudiated, acted as a serious obstacle to their acceptance of the Christian religion.383 In reality, it was the very opposite. The more peremptory and exclusive is the claim of faith which any religion makes, the more trustworthy and secure does that religion seem to the majority; the more it relieves them of the duty and responsibility of reflecting upon its truth, the more welcome it is. Any firmly established authority thus acts as a sedative. Nay more. The most welcome articles of faith are just the most paradoxical, which are a mockery of all experience and rational reflection; the reason for this being that they appear to guarantee the disclosure of divine wisdom and not of something which is merely human and therefore unreliable. "Miracle is the favorite child of faith." That is true of more than miracles; it applies also to the miraculous doctrines which cannot be appropriated by a man unless he is prepared to believe and obey them blindly.

But so long as the authorities consisted of books and doctrines, the coveted haven of rest was still unreached. The meaning of these doctrines always lies open to some doubt. Their scope, too, is never quite fixed. And, above all, their application to present-day questions is

often a serious difficulty, which leads to painful and disturbing controversies. “Blind faith” never gains its final haven until its authority is living, until questions can be put to it, and answers promptly received from it. During the first generations of Christendom no such authority existed; but in the course of the second century and down to the middle of the third, it was gradually taking shape—I mean, the authority of the church as represented in the episcopate. It did not dislodge the other authorities of God's saving purpose and the holy Scripture, but by stepping to their side it pushed them into the background. The auctoritas interpretiva is invariably the supreme and real authority. After the middle of the third century, the church and the episcopate developed so far that they exercised the functions of a sacred authority. And it was after that period that the church first advanced by leaps and bounds, till it became a church of the masses. For while the system of a living authority in the church had still defects and gaps of its own—since in certain circumstances it either exercised its functions very gradually or could not enforce its claims at all—these defects did not exist for the masses. In the bishop or priest, or even in the ecclesiastical fabric and the cultus, the masses were directly conscious of something holy and authoritative to which they yielded submission, and this state of matters had prevailed for a couple of generations by the time that Constantine granted recognition and privileges to Christianity. This was the church on which he conferred privileges, this church with its enormous authority over the masses! These were the Christians whom he declared to be the support of the throne, people who clung to the bishops with submissive faith and who would not resist their divinely appointed authority! The Christianity that triumphed was the Christianity of blind faith, which Celsus has depicted. When would a State ever have shown any practical interest in any other kind of religion?

II

Christianity is a complexio oppositorum. The very Paul who would have reason brought into captivity, proclaimed that Christianity, in opposition to polytheism, was a “reasonable service of God” (Rom. xii. 1, λογικὴ λατρεία), and declared that what pagans thought folly in the cross of Christ seemed so to those alone who were blinded, whereas what Christians preached was in reality the profoundest wisdom. He went on to declare that this was not merely reserved for us as a wisdom to be attained in the far future, but capable of being understood even at present by believers as such. He promised that he would introduce the “perfect” among them to its mysteries.384 This promises (cp., e.g., 1 Cor. ii. 6 f., σοφίαν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις) he made good; yet he never withheld this wisdom from those who were children or weak in spiritual things. He could not, indeed he dared not, utter all he understood of God's word and the cross of Christ—λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην (“We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom”)—but he moved freely in the realm of history and speculation, drawing abundantly from “the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.” In Paul one feels the joy of the thinker who enters into the thoughts of God, and who is convinced that in and with and through his faith he has passed from darkness into light, from confusion, cloudiness, and oppression into the lucid air that frees the soul.

“We have been rescued from darkness and lifted into the light”—such was the chant which rose from a chorus of Christians during those early centuries. It was intellectual truth and lucidity in which they reveled and gloried. Polytheism seemed to them an oppressive night; now that it was lifted off them, the sun shone clearly in the sky! Wherever they looked, everything became clear and sure in the light of spiritual monotheism, owing to the living God. Read, for example, the epistle of Clemens Romanus,385 the opening of the Clementine Homily,386 or

the epistle of Barnabas;387 listen to the apologists, or study Clement of Alexandria and Origen. They gaze at Nature, only to rejoice in the order and unity of its movement; heaven and earth are a witness to them of God's omnipotence and unity. They ponder the capacities and endowments of human nature, and trace in them the Creator. In human reason and liberty they extol his boundless goodness; they compare the revelations and the will of God with this reason and freedom, and lo, there is entire harmony between them! Nothing is laid on man which does not already lie within him, nothing is revealed which is not already presupposed in his inward being. The long-buried religion of nature, religion μετὰ λόγου, has been rediscovered.388 They look at Christ, and scales fall, as it were, from their eyes! What wrought in him was the Logos, the very Logos by which the world had been created and with which the spiritual essence of man was bound up inextricably, the Logos which had wrought throughout human history in all that was noble and good, and which was finally obliged to reveal its power completely in order to dissipate the obstacles and disorders by which man was beset—so weak was he, for all the glory of his creation. Lastly, they contemplate the course of history, its beginning, middle, and end, only to find a common purpose everywhere, which is in harmony with a glorious origin and with a still more glorious conclusion. The freedom of the creature, overcome by the allurements of demons, has occasioned disorders, but the disorders are to be gradually removed by the power of the Christ-Logos. At the commencement of history humanity was like a child, full of good and divine instincts, but as yet untried and liable to temptation; at the close, a perfected humanity will stand forth, fated to enter immortality. Reason, freedom, immortality—these are to carry the day against error, failure, and decay.

Such was the Christianity of many people, a bright and glad affair, the doctrine of pure reason. The new doctrine proved a deliverance, not an encumbrance, to the understanding. Instead of imposing foreign matter on the understanding, it threw light upon its own darkened contents. Christianity is divine revelation, but it is at the same time pure reason; it is the true philosophy.

Such was the conception entertained by most of the apologists, and they tried to show how the entire content of Christianity was embraced by this idea. Anything that did not fit in, they left out. It was not that they rejected it. They simply explained it afresh by means of their “scientific” method, i.e., the method of allegorical spiritualizing, or else they relegated it to that great collection of evidence, the proof of prophecy. In this way, anything that seemed obnoxious or of no material value was either removed or else enabled to retain a formal value as dart of the striking proof which confirmed the divine character of Christianity. It is impossible in these pages to exhibit in detail the rational philosophy which thus emerged;389 for our immediate purpose it is enough to state that a prominent group of Christian teachers existed as late as the opening of the fourth century (for Lactantius was among their number) who held this conception of Christianity. As apologists and as teachers ex cathedra they took an active part in the Christian mission. Justin,390 for example, had his “school,” no less than Tatian. The theologians in the royal retinue of Constantine also pursued this way of thinking, and it permeated any decree of Constantine that touched on Christianity, and especially his address to the holy council.391 When Eusebius wishes to make the new religion intelligible to the public at large, he describes it as the religion of reason and lucidity; see, for example, the first book of his church history and the life of Constantine with its appendices. We might define all these influential teachers as “rationalists of the supernatural,” to employ a technical term of modern church history; but as the revelation was continuous, commencing with creation, never ceasing, and ever in close harmony with the capacities of men, the term “supernatural” is really almost out of place in this connection. The outcome of it all was a pure religious rationalism, with a view of history all its own, in which, as was but natural, the final phenomena of the future tallied

poorly with the course traversed in the earlier stages. From Justin, Commodian, and Lactantius, we learn how the older apocalyptic and the rationalistic moralism were welded together, without any umbrage being taken at the strange blend which this produced.

III

But authority and reason, blind faith and clear insight, do not sum up all the forms in which Christianity was brought before the world. The mental standpoint of the age and its religious needs were so manifold that it was unwilling to forgo any form, even in Christianity, which was capable of transmitting anything of religious value. It was a complex age, and its needs made even the individual man complex. The very man who longed for an authority to which he might submit blindfold, often longed at the same moment for a reasonable religion; nor was he satisfied even when he had secured them both, but craved for something more, for sensuous pledges which gave him a material representation of holy things, and for symbols of mysterious power. Yet, after all, was this peculiar to that age? Was it only in these days that men have cherished such desires?

From the very outset of the Christian religion, its preaching was accompanied by two outward rites, neither less nor more than two, viz., baptism and the Lord's supper. We need not discuss either what was, or what was meant to be, their original significance. The point is, that whenever we enter the field of Gentile Christianity, their meaning is essentially fixed; although Christian worship is to be a worship in spirit and in truth, these sacraments are sacred actions which operate on life, containing the forgiveness of sins, knowledge, and eternal life.392 No doubt, the elements of water, bread, and wine are symbols, and the scene of operation is not external; still, the symbols do actually convey to the soul all that they signify. Each symbol has a mysterious but real connection with the fact which it signifies.

To speak of water, bread, and wine as holy elements, or of being immersed in water that the soul might be washed and purified: to talk of bread and wine as body and blood, or as the body and the blood of Christ, or as the soul's food for immortality: to correlate water and blood—all this kind of language was quite intelligible to that age. It was intelligible to the blunt realist, as well as to the most sublime among what may be called “the spiritualists.” The two most sublime spiritualists of the church, namely, John and Origen, were the most profound exponents of the mysteries, while the great gnostic theologians linked on their most abstract theosophies to realistic mysteries. They were all sacramental theologians. Christ, they held, had connected, and in fact identified, the benefits he brought to men with symbols; the latter were the channel and vehicle of the former; the man who participates in the unction of the holy symbol gets grace thereby. This was a fact with which people were familiar from innumerable mysteries; in and with the corporeal application of the symbol, unction or grace was poured into the soul. T he connection seemed like a predestined harmony, and in fact the union was still more inward. The sentence of the later schoolmen, “Sacramenta continent gratiam,” is as old as the Gentile church, and even older, for it was in existence long before the latter sprang into being.

The Christian religion was intelligible and impressive, owing to the fact that it offered men sacraments.393 Without its mysteries, people would have found it hard to appreciate the new religion. But who can tell how these mysteries arose? No one was to blame, no one was responsible. Had not baptism chanced to have been instituted, had not the observance of the holy supper been enjoined (and can any one maintain that these flowed inevitably from the essence of the gospel?), then some sacrament would have been created out of a parable of

Jesus, not of a word or act of some kind or another. The age for material and certainly for bloody sacrifices was now past and gone; these were no longer the alloy of any religion. But the age of sacraments was very far from being over; it was in full vigor and prime. Every hand that was stretched out for religion, tried to grasp it in sacramental form; the eye saw sacraments where sacraments there were none, and the senses gave them body.394

Water and blood, bread and wine—though the apostle Paul was far from being a sacramental theologian, yet even he could not wholly avoid these mysteries, as is plain if one will but read the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, and note his speculations upon baptismal immersion. But Paul was the first and almost395 the last theologian of the early church with whom sacramental theology was really held in check by clear ideas and strictly spiritual considerations. After him all the flood-gates were opened, and in poured the mysteries with their lore. In Ignatius, who is only sixty years later than Paul, they had already dragged down and engulfed the whole of intelligent theology. A man like the author of Barnabas believes he has fathomed the depths of truth when he connects his ideas with the water, the blood, and the cross. And the man who wrote these words—"There are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree in one" (1 John v. 8)—had a mind which lived in symbols and in mysteries. In the book of Revelation the symbols generally are not what we call "symbols" but semi-real things — e.g., the Lamb, the blood, the washing and the sprinkling, the seal and the sealing. Much of this still remains obscure to us. What is the meaning, for example, of the words (1 John ii. 27) about the "unction," an unction conveying knowledge which is so complete that it renders any further teaching quite unnecessary?

But how is this, it may be asked? Is not John a thorough "spiritualist"? And are not Origen, Valentinus, and Basilides also "spiritualists"? How, then, can we assert that their realistic expressions meant something else to them than mere symbols? In the case of John this argument can be defended with a certain amount of plausibility, since we do not know his entire personality. All we know is John the author. And even as an author he is known to us merely on one side of his nature, for he cannot have always spoken and written as he does in his extant writings. But in regard to the rest, so far as they are known to us on several sides of their characters, the plea is untenable. This is plain from a study of Clement and Origen, both of whom are amply accessible to us. In their case the combination of the mysterious realistic element with the spiritual is rendered feasible by the fact that they have simply no philosophy of religion at all which is capable of being erected upon one level, but merely one which consists of different stories built one upon the other.396 In the highest of these stories, realism of every kind certainly vanishes; in fact, even the very system of intermediate agencies and forces, including the Logos itself, vanishes entirely, leaving nothing but God and the souls that are akin to him. These have a reciprocal knowledge of each other's essence, they love each other, and thus are absorbed in one another. But ere this consummation is reached, a ladder must be climbed. And every stage or rung has special forces which correspond to it, implying a theology, a metaphysic, and an ethic of its own. On the lowest rung of the ascent, religion stands in mythological guise accompanied by sacraments whose inward value is as yet entirely unknown. Even so, this is not falsehood but truth. It answers to a definite state of the soul, and it satisfies this by filling it with bliss. Even on this level the Christian religion is therefore true. Later on, this entirely ceases, and yet it does not cease. It ceases, because it is transcended; it does not cease, because the brethren still require this sort of thing, and because the foot of the ladder simply cannot be pulled away without endangering its upper structure.

After this brief sketch we must now try to see the significance of the realistic sacramental theology for these spiritualists. Men like Origen are indeed from our standpoint the most

obnoxious of the theologians who occupied themselves with the sacraments, the blood, and the atonement. In and with these theories they brought back a large amount of polytheism into Christianity by means of a back-door, since the lower and middle stories of their theological edifice required397 to be furnished with angels and archangels, æons, semi-gods, and deliverers of every sort. This was due both to cosmological and to soteriological reasons, for the two correspond like the lines AB and BA.398 But, above all, theology was enabled by this means to respond to the very slightest pressure of popular religion, and it is here, of course, that we discover the final clue to the singular enigma now before us. This theology of the mysteries and of these varied layers and stages afforded the best means of conserving the spiritual character of the Christian religion upon the upper level, and at the same time of arranging any compromise that might be desirable upon the lower. This was hardly the result of any conscious process. It came about quite naturally, for everything was already present in germ at the very first when sacraments were admitted into the religion.399

So much for the lofty theologians. With the inferior men the various stages dropped away and the sacramental factors were simply inserted in the religion in an awkward and unwieldy fashion. Read over the remarks made even in that age by Justin the rationalist upon the "cross," in the fifty-fifth chapter of his Apology. A more sturdy superstition can hardly be imagined. Notice how Tertullian (de Bapt., i.) speaks of "water" and its affinity with the holy Spirit! One is persuaded, too, that all Christians with one consent attributed a magical force, exercised especially over demons, to the mere utterance of the name of Jesus and to the sign of the cross. One can also read the stories of the Lord's supper told by Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil of Origen, and all that Cyprian is able to narrate as to the miracle of the host. Putting these and many similar traits together, one feels driven to conclude that Christianity has become a religion of magic, with its center of gravity in the sacramental mysteries. "Ab initio sic non erat" is the protest that will be entered. "From the beginning it was not so." Perhaps. But one must go far back to find that initial stage—so far back that its very brief duration now eludes our search.

Originally the water, the bread and wine (the body and the blood), the name of Jesus, and the cross were the sole sacraments of the church, whilst baptism and the Lord's super were the sole mysteries. But this state of matters could not continue. For different reasons, including reasons of philosophy, the scope of all sacraments tended to be enlarged, and so our period witnesses the further rise of sacramental details—anointing, the laying on of hands, sacred oil and salt, etc. But the most momentous result was the gradual assimilation of the entire Christian worship to the ancient mysteries. By the third century it could already rival the most imposing cultus in all paganism, with its solemn and precise ritual, its priests, its sacrifices, and its holy ceremonies.

These developments, however, are by no means to be judged from the standpoint of Puritanism. Every age has to conceive and assimilate religion as it alone can; it must understand religion for itself, and make it a living thing for its own purposes. If the traits of Christianity which have been described in the preceding chapters have been correctly stated, if Christianity remained the religion of God the Father, of the Saviour and of salvation, of love and charitable enterprise, then it was perhaps a misfortune that the forms of contemporary religion were assumed. But the misfortune was by no means irreparable. Like every living plant, religion only grows inside a bark. Distilled religion is not religion at all.

Something further, however, still remains to be considered.

We have already seen how certain influential teachers—teachers, in fact, who founded the whole theology of the Christian Church—felt a strong impulse, and made it their definite aim, to

get some rational conception of the Christian religion and to present it as the reasonable religion of mankind. This feature proved of great importance to the mission and extension of Christianity. Such teachers at once joined issue with contemporary philosophers, and, as the example of Justin proves, they did not eschew even controversy with these opponents. They retained all that they had in common with Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics; they showed how far people could go with them on the road; they attempted to give an historical explanation400 of the points in common between themselves and paganism; and in this way they inaugurated the great adjustment of terms which was inevitable, unless Christians chose to remain a tiny sect of people who refused to concern themselves with culture and scientific learning. Still, as these discussions were carried on in a purely rational spirit, and as there was a frankly avowed partiality for the idea that Christianity was a transparently rational system, vital Christian truths were either abandoned or at any rate neglected. This meant a certain impoverishment, and a serious dilution, of the Christian faith.

Such a type of knowledge was certainly different from Paul's idea of knowledge, nor did it answer to the depths of the Christian religion. In one passage, perhaps, the apostle himself employs rational considerations of a Stoic character, when those were available for the purposes of his apologetic (cp. the opening sections of Romans), but he was hardly thinking about such ideas when he dwelt upon the Christian σοφία, σύνεσις, ἐπιστήμη, and γνῶσις ("wisdom," "intelligence," "understanding," and "knowledge"). Something very different was present to his mind at such moments. He was thinking of absorption in the being of God as revealed in Christ, of progress in the knowledge of his saving purpose, manifested in revelation and in history, of insight into the nature of sin or the power of demons (those "spirits of the air") or the dominion of death, of the boundless knowledge of God's grace, and of the clear anticipation of life eternal. In a word, he had in view a knowledge that soared up to God himself above all thrones, dominions, and principalities, and that also penetrated the depths from which we are delivered—a knowledge that traced human history from Adam to Christ, and that could, at the same time, define both faith and love, both sin and grace.

Paradoxical as it may appear, these phases of knowledge were actually fertilized and fed by the mysteries. From an early period they attached themselves to the mysteries. It was in the train of the mysteries that they crossed from the soil of heathenism, and it was by dint of the mysteries that they grew and developed upon the soil of Christianity. The case of the mysteries was at that time exactly what it was afterwards in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Despite all their acuteness, it was not the rationalists among the schoolmen who furthered learning and promoted its revival—it was the cabbalists, the natural philosophers, the alchemists, and the astrologers. What was the reason of this, it may be asked? How can learning develop itself by aid of the mysteries? The reply is very simple. Such development is possible, because learning or knowledge is attained by aid of the emotions and the imagination. Both are therefore able to arouse and to revive it. The great speculative efforts of the syncretistic philosophy of religion, whose principles have been already outlined (cp. pp. 30 f.), were based upon the mysteries (i.e., upon the feelings and fancies, whose products were thrown into shape by the aid of speculation). The gnostics, who to a man were in no sense rationalists, attempted to transplant these living and glowing speculations to the soil of Christianity, and withal to preserve intact the supremacy of the gospel. The attempt was doomed to fail. Speculations of this kind contained too many elements alien to the spirit of Christianity which could not be relinquished.401 But as separate fragments, broken up as it were into their constituent elements, they were able to render, and they did render, very signal services to a fruitful Christian philosophy of religion—these separate elements being originally prior perhaps to the combinations of later ages. All the more profound conceptions generated

within Christianity subsequently to the close of the first century, all the transcendental knowledge, all those tentative ideas, which nevertheless were of more value than mere logical deductions—all this sprang in large measure from the contact of Christianity with the ancient lore of the mysteries. It disengaged profound conceptions and rendered them articulate. This is unmistakable in the case of John or of Ignatius or of Irenæus, but the clearest case is that of the great Alexandrian school. Materials valuable and useless alike, sheer fantasy and permanent truth which could no longer be neglected, all were mixed up in a promiscuous confusion—although this applies least of all to John, who, more than anyone, managed to impress a lofty unity even upon the form and expression of his thoughts. Such ideas will, of course, be little to the taste of anyone who holds that empiricism or rationalism confines knowledge within limits which one must not so much as try to overleap; but anyone who assigns greater value to tentative ideas than to a deliberate absence of all ideas whatsoever, will not be disposed to underestimate the labor expended by the thinkers of antiquity in connection with the mysteries. At any rate, it is beyond question that this phase of Christianity, which went on developing almost from the very hour of its birth, proved of supreme importance to the propaganda of the religion. Christianity gained special weight from the fact that in the first place it had mysterious secrets of its own, which it sought to fathom only to adore them once again in silence, and secondly, that it preached to the perfect in another and a deeper sense than it did to simple folk. These mysterious secrets may have had, as it is plain that they did have, a deadening effect on thousands of people by throwing obstacles in the way of their access to a rational religion; but on other people they had a stimulating effect, lending them wings to soar up into a supra-sensible world.402

This ascent into the supra-sensible world (θεοποίησις, apotheosis) was the last and the highest word of all. The supreme message of Christianity was its promise of this divine state to every believer. We know how, in that age of the twilight of the gods, all human hopes concentrated upon this aim, and consequently a religion which not only taught but realized this apotheosis of human nature (especially in a form so complete that it did not exclude even the flesh) was bound to have an enormous success. Recent investigations into the history of dogma have shown that the development of Christian doctrine down to Irenæus must be treated in this light, viz., with the aim of proving how the idea of apotheosis—that supreme desire and dream of the ancient world, whose inability to realize it cast a deep shadow over its inner life—passed into Christianity, altered the original lines of that religion, and eventually dominated its entire contents.403 The presupposition for it in primitive Christianity was the promise of a share in the future kingdom of God. As yet no one could foresee what was to fuse itself with this premise and transform it. But Paul coordinated with it the promise of life eternal in a twofold way: as given to man in justification (i.e., in the Spirit, as an indissoluble inner union with the love of God), and as infused into man through holy media in the shape of a new nature. The fourth evangelist has grasped this double idea still more vividly, and given it sharper outline. His message is the spiritual and physical immanence of life eternal for believers. Still, the idea of love outweighs that of a natural transformation in his conception of the unity of believers with the Father and Son, so that he only approaches the verge of the conception. “We have become gods.” He still seems to prefer the expression “children of God.” The apologists also keep the idea of apotheosis secondary to that of a full knowledge of God,404 but even after the great epoch when “gnosticism” was opposed and assimilated, the church went forward in the full assurance that she understood and preached apotheosis as the distinctive product of the Christian religion. When she spoke of “adoptio” by God, or of “participatio dei,” for example, although a spiritual relationship continued to be understood, yet its basis and reality lay in a sacramental renewal of the physical nature: “Non ab initio dii facti sumus; sed primo quidem

homines, tunc demum dii" (We were not made gods at first; at first we were men, thereafter we became gods at length). These are the words of Irenæus (cp. IV. xxxviii. 4, and often elsewhere), and this was the doctrine of Christian teachers after him. "Thou shalt avoid hell when thou hast gained the knowledge of the true God. Thou shalt have an immortal and incorruptible body as well as a soul, and shalt obtain the kingdom of heaven. Thou who hast lived on earth and knows the heavenly King, shalt be a friend of God and a joint-heir with Christ, no longer held by lusts, or sufferings, or sicknesses. For thou hast become divine, and all that pertains to the God-life hath God promised to bestow on thee, seeing that thou, now become immortal, art deified."405 This was the sort of preaching which anyone could understand, and which could not be surpassed.

Christianity, then, is a revelation which has to be believed, an authority which has to be obeyed, the rational religion which may be understood and proved, the religion of the mysteries or the sacraments, the religion of transcendental knowledge. So it was preached. It was not that every missionary expressed but one aspect of the religion. The various presentations of it were all mixed up together, although every now and then one of them would acquire special prominence. It is with amazement that we fathom the depths of this missionary preaching; yet those who engaged in it were prepared at any moment to put everything else aside and rest their whole faith on the confession that "There is one God of heaven and earth, and Jesus is the Lord."

CHAPTER 7

THE TIDINGS OF THE NEW PEOPLE AND OF THE THIRD RACE: THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRISTENDOM

I

The gospel was preached simultaneously as the consummation of Judaism, as a new religion, and as the restatement and final expression of man's original religion. Nor was this triple aspect preached merely by some individual missionary of dialectic gifts; it was a conception which emerged more or less distinctly in all missionary preaching of any scope. Convinced that Jesus, the teacher and the prophet, was also the Messiah who was to return ere long to finish off his work, people passed from the consciousness of being his disciples into that of being his people, the people of God: ὑμεῖς γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν (1 Pet. ii. 9: "Ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession"); and in so far as they felt themselves to be a people, Christians knew they were the true Israel, at once the new people and the old.

This conviction that they were a people—i.e., the transference of all the prerogatives and claims of the Jewish people to the new community as a new creation which exhibited and realized whatever was old and original in religion—this at once furnished adherents of the new faith with a political and historical self-consciousness. Nothing more comprehensive or complete or impressive than this consciousness can be conceived. Could there be any higher or more comprehensive conception than that of the complex of momenta afforded by the Christians' estimate of themselves as "the true Israel," "the new people," "the original people," and "the people of the future," i.e., of eternity? This estimate of themselves rendered Christians impregnable against all attacks and movements of polemical criticism, while it further enabled them to advance in every direction for a war of conquest. Was the cry raised, "You are renegade Jews"—the answer came, "We are the community of the Messiah, and therefore the true Israelites." If people said, "You are simply Jews," the reply was, "We are a new creation and a new people." If, again, they were taxed with their recent origin and told that they were but of yesterday, they retorted, "We only seem to be the younger People; from the beginning we have been latent; we have always existed, previous to any other people; we are the original people of God." If they were told, "You do not deserve to live," the answer ran, "We would die to live, for we are citizens of the world to come, and sure that we shall rise again."

There were one or two other quite definite convictions of a general nature specially taken over by the early Christians at the very outset from the stores accumulated by a survey of history made from the Jewish standpoint. Applied to their own purposes, these were as follows: —(1) Our people is older than the world; (2) the world was created for our sakes;406 (3) the world is carried on for our sakes; we retard the judgment of the world; (4) everything in the world is subject to us and must serve us; (5) everything in the world, the beginning and course and end of all history, is revealed to us and lies transparent to our eyes; (6) we shall take part in the judgment of the world and ourselves enjoy eternal bliss. In various early Christian documents, dating from before the middle of the second century, these convictions find expression, in homilies, apocalypses, epistles, and apologies,407 and nowhere else did Celsus vent his fierce disdain of Christians and their shameless, absurd pretensions with such keenness as at this point.408

But for Christians who knew they were the old and the new People, it was not enough to set

this self-consciousness over against the Jews alone, or to contend with them for the possession of the promises and of the sacred book;409 settled on the soil of the Greek and Roman empires, they had to define their position with regard to this realm and its "people." The apostle Paul had already done so, and in this he was followed by others.

In classifying mankind Paul does speak in one passage of "Greeks and barbarians" alongside of Jews (Rom. i. 14), and in another of "barbarians and Scythians" alongside of Greeks (Col. iii. 11); but, like a born Jew and a Pharisee, he usually bisects humanity into circumcised and uncircumcised—the latter being described, for the sake of brevity, as "Greeks."410 Beside or over against these two "peoples" he places the church of God as a new creation (cp., e.g., 1 Cor. x. 32, "Give no occasion of stumbling to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God"). Nor does this mere juxtaposition satisfy him. He goes on to the conception of this new creation as that which is to embrace both Jews and Greeks, rising above the differences of both peoples into a higher unity. The people of Christ are not a third people to him beside their neighbors. They represent the new grade on which human history reaches its consummation, a grade which is to supersede the previous grade of bisection, cancelling or annulling not only national but also social and even sexual distinctions.411 Compare, e.g., Gal. iii. 28: οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, or Gal. v. 6: ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι᾽ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη (cp. vi. 15, οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τι ἐστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις, and 2 Cor. v. 17). 1 Cor. xii. 13: ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες, εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι. Coloss. iii. 11: ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος. Most impressive of all is Ephes. ii. 11 f.: μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη . . . . ἦτε ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραήλ . . . . (ὁ Χριστός) ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἓν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας . . . . ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην, καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι. Finally, in Rom. 9-11 Paul promulgates a philosophy of history, according to which the new People, whose previous history fell within the limits of Israel, includes the Gentile world, now that Israel has been rejected, but will embrace in the end not merely "the fulness of the Gentiles" (πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν) but also "all Israel" (πᾶς Ἰσραήλ).

Greeks (Gentiles), Jews, and the Christians as the new People (destined to embrace the two first)—this triple division now becomes frequent in early Christian literature, as one or two examples will show.412

The fourth evangelist makes Christ say (x. 16): "And other sheep have I which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock, one shepherd." And again, in a profound prophetic utterance (iv. 21 f.): "The hour cometh when neither in this mountain [that of the Samaritans, who stand here as representatives of the Gentiles] nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father; ye worship what ye know not; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." This passage is of importance, because it is something more than a merely formal classification; it defines, in a positive manner, the three possible religious standpoints and apportions them among the different peoples. First of all, there is ignorance of God, together with an external and therefore an erroneous worship (=the Gentiles, or Samaritans); secondly, there is a true knowledge of God together with a wrong, external worship (= the Jews); and thirdly, there is true knowledge of God together with worship that is inward and therefore true (=the Christians). This view gave rise to many similar conceptions in early Christianity; it was the precursor of a series of cognate ideas

which formed the basis of early Christian speculations upon the history of religion. It was the so-called "gnostics" in particular who frankly built their systems upon ideas of this kind. In these systems, Greeks (or pagans), Jews, and Christians sometimes appear as different grades; sometimes the two first are combined, with Christians subdivided into "psychic" (ψύχικοι) and "pneumatic" (πνευμάτικοι) members; and finally a fourfold division is also visible, viz., Greeks (or pagans), Jews, churchfolk, and "pneumatic" persons.413 During that period, when religions were undergoing transformation, speculations on the history of religion were in the air; they are to be met with even in inferior and extravagant systems of religion.414 But from all this we must turn back to writers of the Catholic church with their triple classification.

In one early Christian document from the opening of the second century, of which unfortunately we possess only a few fragments (i.e., the Preaching of Peter, in Clem., Strom., vi. 5. 41), Christians are warned not to fashion their worship on the model of the Greeks or of the Jews (μὴ κατὰ τοὺς Ἕλληνας σέβεσθε τὸν θεόν . . . μηδὲ κατὰ Ἰουδαίους σέβεσθε . . . . μηδὲ κατὰ Ἰουδαίους σέβεσθε). Then we read: ὥστε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως μανθάνοντες ἃ παραδίδομεν ὑμῖν, φυλάσσεσθε καινῶς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σεβόμενοι· εὕρομεν γὰρ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς καθῶς ὁ κύριος λέγει· ἰδοὺ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν καινὴν διαθήκην οὐχ ὡς διεθέμην τοῖς πατράσιν ὑμῶν ἐν ὄρει Χωρήβ· νέαν ἡμῖν διέθετο, τὰ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ἰουδαίων παλαιά, ὑμεῖς δὲ οἱ καινῶς αὐτὸν τρίτῳ γένει σεβόμενοι Χριστιανοί ("So do you keep what you have learnt from us holily and justly, worshipping God anew through Christ. For we find in the scriptures, as the Lord saith, Behold I make a new covenant with you, not as I made it with your fathers in Mount Horeb. A new covenant he has made with us, for that of the Greeks and Jews is old, but ye who worship him anew in the third manner are Christians").415

This writer also distinguishes Greeks, Jews, and Christians, and distinguishes them, like the fourth evangelist, by the degree of their knowledge and worship of God. But the remarkable thing is his explicit assumption that there are three classes, neither more nor less, and his deliberate description of Christianity as the new or third genus of worship. There are several similar passages which remain to be noticed, but this is the earliest of them all. Only, it is to be remarked that Christians do not yet call themselves "the third race"; it is their worship which is put third in the scale. The writer classifies humanity, not into three peoples, but into three groups of worshippers.

Similarly the unknown author of the epistle to Diognetus. Only, with him the conception of three classes of worshippers is definitely carried over into that of three peoples ("Christians esteem not those whom the Greeks regard as gods, nor do they observe the superstition of the Jews . . . . [thou enquirest] about the nature of this fresh development or interest which has entered life now and not previously," ch. i.; cp. also ch. v.: "They are attacked as aliens by the Jews, and persecuted by the Greeks"). This is brought out particularly in his endeavor to prove that as Christians have a special manner of life, existing socially and politically by themselves, they have a legitimate claim to be ranked as a special "nation."

In his Apology to the Emperor Pius, Aristides distinctly arranges human beings in three "orders," which are equivalent to nations, as Aristides assigns to each its genealogy—i.e., its historical origin. He writes (ch. ii.): φανερὸν γάρ ἐστιν ἡμῖν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὅτι τρία γένη εἰσὶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ· ὧν εἰσὶν οἱ τῶν παρ᾽ ὑμῖν λεγομένων θεῶν προσκυνηταὶ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Χριστιανοί· αὐτοὶ δὲ πάλιν οἱ τοὺς πολλοὺς σεβόμενοι θεοὺς εἰς τρία διαιροῦνται γένη, Χαλδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας καὶ Αἰγυπτίους (then follows the evidence for the origin of these nations, whilst the Christians are said to "derive their genealogy from Jesus Christ").416

How seriously Irenæus took this idea of the Christians as a special people, is evident from

his remarks in iv. 30. The gnostics had attacked the Jews and their God for having appropriated the gold and silver vessels of the Egyptians. To which Irenæus retorts that it would be much more true to accuse Christians of robbery, inasmuch as all their possessions originated with the Romans. “Who has the better right to gold and silver? The Jews, who took it as a reward for their labor in Egypt? or we, who have taken gold from the Romans and the rest of the nations, though they were not our debtors?” This argument would be meaningless unless Irenæus regarded Christians as a nation which was sharply differentiated from the rest of the peoples and had no longer anything to do with them. As a matter of fact, he regarded the exodus of Israel from Egypt as a type of the “profectio ecclesiae e gentibus” (iv. 30. 4).

The religious philosophy of history set forth by Clement of Alexandria rests entirely upon the view that these two nations, Greeks and Jews, were alike trained by God, but that they are now (see Paul's epistle to the Ephesians) to be raised into the higher unity of a third nation. It may suffice to bring forward three passages bearing on this point. In Strom., iii. 10. 70, he writes (on the saying “where two or three are gathered together,” etc.): εἴη δ᾽ ἂν καὶ ἡ ὁμόνοια τῶν πολλῶν ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν ἀριθμουμένη μεθ᾽ ὧν ὁ κύριος, ἡ μία ἐκκλησία, ὁ εἷς ἄνθρωπος, τὸ γένος τὸ ἕν. ἢ μή τι μετὰ μὲν τοῦ ἑνὸς τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ὁ κύριος νομοθετῶν ἦν, προφητεύων δὲ ἤδη καὶ τὸν Ἱερεμίαν ἀποστέλλων εἰς Βαβυλῶνα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐξ ἐθνῶν διὰ τῆς προφητείας καλῶν, συνῆγε λαοὺς τοὺς δύο, τρίτος δὲ ἦν ἐκ τῶν δυεῖν κτιζόμενος εἷς καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, ᾧ δὴ ἐμπεριπατεῖ τε καὶ κατοικεῖ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (“Now the harmony of the many, calculated from the three with whom the Lord is present, might signify the one church, the one man, the one race. Or was the Lord legislating with the one Jew [at Sinai], and then, when he prophesied and sent Jeremiah to Babylon, calling some also from the heathen, did he collect the two peoples together, while the third was created out of the twain into a new man, wherein he is now resident, dwelling within the church”). Again, in Strom., v. 14. 98, on Plato's Republic, iii. p. 415: εἰ μή τι τρεῖς τινας ὑποτιθέμενος φύσεις, τρεῖς πολιτείας, ὡς ὑπέλαβόν τινες, διαγράφει, καὶ Ἰουδαίων μὲν ἀργυρᾶν, Ἑλλήνων δὲ τρίτην [a corrupt passage, incorrectly read as early as Eus., Prepar., xiii. 13; on the margin of L there is the lemma, Ἑλλήνων σιδηρὰν ἢ χαλκήν, Χριστιανῶν χρυσῆν], Χριστιανῶν δέ, οἷς ὁ χρυσὸς ὁ βασιλικὸς ἐγκαταμέμικται, τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα (“Unless he means by his hypothesis of three natures to describe, as some conjecture, three polities, the Jews being the silver one, and the Greeks the third [the lemma running thus: —“The Greeks being the iron or brass one, and the Christians the gold one”], along with the Christians, with whom the regal gold is mixed, even the holy Spirit”). Finally, in Strom., vi. 5. 42: ἐκ γοῦν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκ τῆς νομικῆς εἰς τὸ ἓν γένος τοῦ σωζομένου συνάγονται λαοῦ οἱ τὴν πίστιν προσιέμενοι, οὐ χρόνῳ διαιρουμένων τῶν τριῶν λαῶν, ἵνα τις φύσεις ὑπολάβοι τριττάς, κ.τ.λ. (“From the Hellenic discipline, as also from that of the law, those who accept the faith are gathered into the one race of the people who are saved—not that the peoples are separated by time, as though one were to suggest three different natures,” etc.).417

Evidence may be led also from other early Christian writers to show that the triad of “Greeks (Gentiles), Jews, and Christians” was the church's basal conception of history.418 It was employed with especial frequency in the interpretation of biblical stories. Thus Tertullian enlists it in his exposition of the prodigal son (de Pudic., viii. f.); Hippolytus (Comm. in Daniel, ed. Bonwetsch, p. 32) finds the Christians in Susanna, and the Greeks and Jews in the two elders who lay snares for her; while pseudo-Cyprian (de Mont. Sina et Sion, vii.) explains that the two thieves represent the Greeks and Jews. But, so far as I am aware, the blunt expression “We Christians are the third race” only occurs once in early Christian literature subsequent to the Preaching of Peter (where, moreover, it is simply Christian worship which is described as the third class), and that is in the pseudo-Cyprianic tract de Pascha Computus (c. 17), written in

242-243 A.D. Unfortunately, the context of the expression is not quite clear. Speaking of hell-fire, the author declares it has consumed the opponents of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, “et ipsos tres pueros a dei filio protectos—in mysterio nostro qui sumus tertium genus hominum—non vexavit” (“Without hurting, however, those three lads, protected by the Son of God—in the mystery which pertains to us who are the third race of mankind”). It is hard to see how the writer could feel he was reminded of Christians as the third race of men by the three children who were all-pleasing in God's sight, although they were cast into the fiery furnace; still, reminded he was, and at any rate the inference to be drawn from the passage is that he must have been familiar with the description of Christians as a “third race.” What sense he attached to it, we are not yet in a position to determine with any certainty; but we are bound to assume, in the first instance, from our previous investigations, that Christians were to him a third race alongside of the Greeks (Gentiles) and Jews. Whether this assumption is correct or false, is a question to be decided in the second section of our inquiry.

II

The consciousness of being a people,419 and of being indeed the primitive and the new people, did not remain abstract or unfruitful in the church; it was developed in a great variety of directions. In this respect also the synagogue had led the way at every point, but Christianity met its claim by making that claim her own and extending it, wherever this was possible, beyond the limits within which Judaism had confined it.

There were three cardinal directions in which the church voiced her peculiar consciousness of being the primitive people. (1) She demonstrated that, like any other people, she had a characteristic life. (2) She tried to show that so far as the philosophical learning, the worship, and the polity of other peoples were praiseworthy, they were plagiarized from the Christian religion. (3) She began to set on foot, though merely in the shape of tentative ideas, some political reflections upon her own actual importance within the world-empire of Rome, and also upon the positive relation between the latter and herself as the new religion for the world.

1. The proofs advanced by early Christianity with regard to its πολιτεία [citizenship] were twofold. The theme of one set was stated by Paul in Philippians iii. 20: “Our citizenship (πολιτεία) is in heaven” (cp. Heb. xiii. 13 f.: “Let us go outside the camp . . . . for here we have no permanent city, but we seek one which is to come”). On this view Christians feel themselves pilgrims and sojourners on earth, walking by faith and not by sight; their whole course of life is a renunciation of the world, and is determined solely by the future kingdom towards which they hasten. This mode of life is voiced most loudly in the first similitude of Hermas, where two cities with their two lords are set in opposition—one belonging to the present, the other to the future. The Christian must have nothing whatever to do with the former city and its lord the devil; his whole course of life must be opposed to that of the present city, with its arrangements and laws. In this way Christians were able emphatically to represent themselves as really a special people, with a distinctive course of life; but they need not have felt surprised when people took them at their word, and dismissed them with the remark: πάντες ἑαυτοὺς φονεύσαντες πορεύεσθε ἤδη παρὰ τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἡμῖν πράγματα μὴ παρέχετε (“Go and kill yourselves, every one of you; begone to God at once, and don't bother us”), quoted by Justin, Apol., II. iv.

This, however, represented but one side of the proof that Christianity had a characteristic life and order of its own. With equal energy an attempt was made to show that there was a polity realized in Christianity which was differentiated from that of other nations by its absolute

morality (see above, pp. 205 f.). As early as the apostolic epistles, no point of dogma is more emphatically brought forward than the duty of a holy life, by means of which Christians are to shine as lights amid a corrupt and crooked generation. “Not like the Gentiles,” nor like the Jews, but as the people of God—that is the watchword. Every sphere of life, down to the most intimate and trivial, was put under the control of the Spirit and re-arranged; we have only to read the Didachê in order to find out the earnestness with which Christians took “the way of life.” In line with this, a leading section in all the Christian apologies was occupied by the exposition of the Christian polity as a polity which was purely ethical, the object being in every case to show that this Christian polity was in accordance with the highest moral standards, standards which even its opponents had to recognize, and that for this very reason it was opposed to the polity of the other nations. The Apologies of Justin (especially I. xiv. f.), Aristides (xv.), Tatian and Tertullian especially, fall to be considered in this light.420 The conviction that they are in possession of a distinctive polity is also voiced in the notion of Christians as the army of the true God and of Christ.421

2. The strict morality, the monotheistic view of the world, and the subordination of the entire life of man, private and social, to the regulations of a supreme ethical code—all this is “what has been from the very first” (“quod ab initio fuit”). Now as the church finds this once more repeated in her own life, she recognizes in this phenomenon the guarantee that she herself, though apparently the youngest of the nations, is in reality the oldest. Furthermore, as she undertakes to bring forward proof for this conviction by drawing upon the books of Moses, which she appropriated for her own use (cp. Tatian, Theophilus, Clement, Tertullian, and Julius Africanus),422 she is thereby dethroning the Jewish people and claiming for herself the primitive revelation, the primitive wisdom, and the genuine worship. Hence she acquires the requisite insight and courage, not merely to survey and appropriate for herself the content of all connected with revelation, wisdom, and worship that had appeared on the horizon of other nations, but to survey and estimate these materials as if they were merely copies made from an original in her own possession. We all know the space devoted by the early Christian apologies to the proof that Greek philosophy, so far as it merited praise and was itself correct, had been plagiarized from the primitive literature which belonged to Christians. The efforts made in this direction culminate in the statement that “Whatever truth is uttered anywhere has come from us.” The audacity of this assertion is apt to hide from us at this time of day the grandeur and vigor of the self-consciousness to which it gives expression. Justin had already claimed any true piece of knowledge as “Christian,” whether it occurred in Homer, the tragedians, the comic poets, or the philosophers. Did it never dawn on him, or did he really suspect, that his entire standpoint was upset by such an extension of its range, and that what was specifically “Christian” was transformed into what was common to all men? Clement of Alexandria, at any rate, who followed him in this line of thought, not merely foresaw this inference, but deliberately followed it up.

By comparing itself with philosophy, early Christianity gave itself out as a “philosophy,” while those who professed it were “philosophers.” This, however, is one form of its self-consciousness which must not be overrated, for it is almost exclusively confined to the Christian apologetic and polemic. Christians never doubted, indeed, that their doctrine was really the truth, and therefore the true philosophy. But then it was infinitely more than a philosophy. It was the wisdom of God. They too were different from mere philosophers; they were God's people, God's friends. It suited their polemic, however, to designate Christianity as philosophy, or “barbarian” philosophy, and adherents of Christianity as “philosophers.” And that for two reasons. In the first place, it was the only way of explaining to outsiders the nature of Christian doctrine—for to institute a positive comparison between it and pagan religions was a risky

procedure. And in the second place, this presupposition made it possible for Christians to demand from the State as liberal treatment for themselves as that accorded to philosophy and to philosophic schools. It is in this light, pre-eminently, that we must understand the favorite parallel drawn by the apologists between Christianity and philosophy. Individual teachers who were at the head either of a school (διδασκαλεῖον) within the church or of an independent school, did take the parallel more seriously;423 but such persons were in a certain sense merely adjuncts of catholic Christendom.424

The charge of plagiarism was not merely levelled against philosophy, so far as philosophy was genuine, but also against any rites and methods of worship which furnished actual or alleged parallels to those of Christianity. Little material of this kind was to be found in the official cults of the Greeks and Romans, but this deficiency was more than remade up for by the rich spoil which lay in the mysteries and the exotic cults, the cult of Mithra, in particular, attracting the attention of Christian apologists in this connection at a very early period. The verdict on all such features was quite simple: the demons, it was argued, had imitated Christian rites in the cults of paganism. If it could not be denied that those pagan rites and sacraments were older than their Christian parallels, the plea readily suggested itself that the demons had given a distorted copy of Christianity previous to its real appearance, with the object of discrediting it beforehand. Baptism, the Lord's supper, the rites of expiation, the cross, etc., are instances in point. The interests of dogma are always able to impinge on history, and they do so constantly. But here we have to consider some cases which are specially instructive, since the Christian rites and sacraments attained their final shape under the influence of the mysteries and their rites (not, of course, the rites of any special cultus, but those belonging to the general type of the mysteries), so that dogma made the final issue of the process its first cause. Yet even in this field the quid pro quo appears in a more favorable light when we notice that Christendom posits itself as the original People at the dawn of human history, and that this consciousness determines their entire outlook upon that history. For, in the light of this presupposition, the Christians' confiscation of those pagan rites and ceremonies simply denotes the assertion of their character as ideally human and therefore divine. Christians embody the fundamental principles of that divine revelation and worship which are the source of human history, and which constitute the primitive possession of Christianity, although that possession has of course lain undiscovered till the present moment.

3. The most interesting side of the Christian consciousness of being a people, is what may be termed, in the narrower sense of the word, the political. Hitherto, however, it has been studied less than the others. The materials are copious, but up till now little attention has been paid to them. I shall content myself here with laying bare the points of most inportance.425

The political consciousness of the primitive church was based on three presuppositions. There was first of all the political element in the Jewish apocalyptic, which was called forth by the demand of the imperial cultus and the terror of the persecution. Then there was the rapid transference of the gospel from the Jews to the Greeks, and the unmistakable affinity between Christianity and Hellenism, as well as between the church and the world-wide power of Rome. Thirdly, there was the fall and ruin of Jerusalem and the Jewish state. The first of these elements stood in antithesis to the two others, so that in this way the political consciousness of the church came to be defined in opposite directions and had to work itself out of initial contradictions.

The politics of Jewish apocalyptic viewed the world-state as a diabolic state, and consequently took up a purely negative attitude towards it. This political view is put

uncompromisingly in the apocalypse of John, where it was justified by the Neronic persecution, the imperial claim for worship, and the Domitianic reign of terror. The largest share of attention, comparatively speaking, has been devoted by scholars to this political standpoint, in so far as it lasted throughout the second and the third centuries, and quite recently (1901) Neumann has discussed it thoroughly in his study of Hippolytus. The remarkable thing is that although Christians were by no means nunmerous till after the middle of the second century, they recognized that Christianity formed the central point of humanity as the field of political history as well as its determining factor. Such a self-consciousness is perfectly intelligible in the case of Judaism, for the Jews were really a large nation and had a great history behind them. But it is truly amazing that a tiny set of people should confront the entire strength of the Roman empire,426 that it should see in the persecution of the Christians the chief role of that empire, and that it should make the world's history culminate in such a conflict. The only explanation of this lies in the fact that the church simply took the place of Israel, and consequently felt herself to be a people; this implied that she was also a political factor, and indeed the factor which ranked as decisive alongside of the state and by which in the end the state was to be overcome. Here we have already the great problem of "church and state" making its appearance, and the uncompromising form given to it at this period became normal for succeeding ages. The relationship between these two powers assumed other forms, but this form continued to lie concealed beneath them all.

This, however, is only one side of the question. The transition of the gospel from the Jews to the Greeks, the unmistakable affinity between Christianity and Hellenismn, as well as between the church and the Roman world-power, and finally the downfall of the Jewish state at the hands of Rome—these factors occasioned ideas upon the relation of the empire to the church which were very different from the aims of the accepted apocalyptic. Any systematic treatment of this view would be out of place, however; it would give a wrong impression of the situation. The better way will be, as we are dealing merely with tentative ideas, to get acquainted with the most important features and look at them one after another.

2 Thess. ii. 5-7 is the oldest passage in Christian literature in which a positive meaning is attached to the Roman empire. It is represented there, not as the realm of antichrist, but, on the contrary, as the restraining power by means of which the final terrors and the advent of antichrist are held in check. For by τὸ κατέχον (ὁ κατέχων), "that which (or he who) restrains," we must understand the Roman empire. If this be so, it follows that the church and the empire could not be considered merely as diametrically opposed to each other.

Rom. xiii. 1 f. makes this quite plain, and proceeds to draw the inference that civil authority is θεοῦ διάκονος ("a minister of God"), appointed by God for the suppression of wickedness; resistance to it means resistance to a divine ordinance. Consequently one must not merely yield to its force, but obey it for conscience' sake. The very payment of taxes is a moral duty. The author of 1 Pet. ii. 13 ff.427 expresses himself in similar terms. But he goes a step further, following up the fear of God directly with honor due to the emperor (πάντας τιμήσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε, τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε).428 Nothing could be more loyal than this conception, and it is noticeable that the author was writing in Asia Minor, among the provinces where the imperial cultus flourished.

Luke begins his account of Christ with the words (ii. 1): ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. As has been correctly surmised, the allusion to the emperor Augustus is meant to be significant. It was the official and popular idea that with Augustus a new era dawned for the empire; the imperial

throne was its “peace,” the emperor its saviour (σωτήρ). Behind the earthly saviour, Luke makes the heavenly appear—he, too, is bestowed upon the whole world, and what he brings is peace (ver. 14, ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη).429 Luke hardly intended to set Augustus and Christ in hostile opposition; even Augustus and his kingdom are a sign of the new era. This may also be gathered front the book of Acts, which in my opinion has not any consciously political aim; it sees in the Roman empire, as opposed to Judaism, the sphere marked out for the new religion, it stands entirely aloof from any hostility to the emperor, and it gladly lays stress upon such facts as prove a tolerant mood on the part of the authorities towards Christians in the past.

Justin (Apol., I. xii.) writes to the emperor: ἀρωγοὶ ὑμῖν καὶ σύμμαχοι πρὸς εἰρήνην ἐσμὲν πάντων μᾶλλον ἀνθρώπων (“We, more than any others, are your helpers and allies in promoting peace”), admitting thereby that the purpose of the empire was beneficial (pax terrena), and that the emperors sought to effect this purpose. Also, in describing Christians as the power430 best adapted to secure this end—inasmuch as they shun all crime, live a strictly moral life, and teach a strict morality, besides scaring and exorcising those supreme enemies of mankind, the demons—he too, in a certain sense, affirms a positive relationship between the church and the state.

When the author of the epistle to Diognetus differentiates Christians from the world (the state) as the soul from the body (ch. vi.) and elaborates his account of their relationship in a series of antitheses, he is laying down at the same time a positive relation between the two magnitudes in question: ἐγκέκλεισται μὲν ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ σώματι, συνέχει δὲ αὐτὴ τὸ σῶμα· καὶ Χριστιανοὶ κατέχονται μὲν ὡς ἐν φρουρᾷ τῷ κόσμῳ, αὐτοὶ δὲ συνέχουσι τὸν κόσμον (“The soul is shut up in the body, and yet holds the body together; so Christians are kept within the world as in a prison, yet they hold the world together,”). Similarly Justin (Apol. II. vii.).

All this implies already a positive political standpoint,431 but the furthest step in this direction was taken subsequently by Melito (in Eus., H.E., iv. 26). It is no mere accident that he writes in loyal Asia Minor. By noting Luke's suggestion with regard to Augustus, as well as all that had been already said elsewhere upon the positive relations subsisting between the church and the world-empire, Melito could advance to the following statement of the situation in his Apology to Marcus Aurelius:—

“This philosophy of ours certainly did flourish at first among a barbarian people. But springing up in the provinces under thy rule during the great reign of thy predecessor Augustus, it brought rich blessings to thine empire in particular. For ever since then the power of Rome has increased in size and splendor; to this hast thou succeeded as its desired possessor, and as such shalt thou continue with thy son if thou wilt protect the philosophy which rose under Augustus and has risen with the empire, a philosophy which thine ancestors also held in honor along with other religions. The most convincing proof that the flourishing of our religion has been a boon to the empire thus happily inaugurated, is this—that the empire has suffered no mishap since the reign of Augustus, but, on the contrary, everything has increased its splendor and fame, in accordance with the general prayer.”

Melito's ideas432 need no analysis; they are plainly and clearly stated. The world-empire and the Christian religion are foster-sisters; they form a pair; they constitute a new stage of human history; the Christian religion means blessing and welfare to the empire, towards which it stands as the inward to the outward. Only when Christianity is protected and permitted to develop itself freely, does the empire continue to preserve its size and splendor. Unless one is to suppose that Melito simply wanted to flatter—a supposition for which there is no ground, although there was flattery in what he said—the inference is that in the Christianity which formed

part of the world-empire he really recognized a co-ordinate and sustaining inward force. Subsequent developments justified this view of Melito, and in this light his political insight is marvellous. But still more marvellous is the fact that at a time like this, when Christians were still a feeble folk, he actually recognized in Christianity the one magnitude parallel to the state, and that simply on the ground of religion—i.e., as being a spiritual force which was entrusted with the function of supporting the state.433

There is yet another early Christian writer on whom the analogy of Christendom and the world-empire dawned (a propos of its œcumenical range); only, he attempted to explain it in a very surprising fashion, which betrayed a deep hostility towards the empire. Hippolytus writes (in Dan., iv. 9): "For as our Lord was born in the forty-second year of the emperor Augustus, whence the Roman empire developed, and as the Lord also called all nations and tongues by means of the apostles and fashioned believing Christians into a people, the people of the Lord, and the people which consists of those who bear a new name—so was all this imitated to the letter by the empire of that day, ruling 'according to the working of Satan': for it also collected to itself the noblest of every nation, and, dubbing them Romans, got ready for the fray. And that is the reason why the first census took place under Augustus, when our Lord was born at Bethlehem; it was to get the men of this world, who enrolled for our earthly king, called Romans, while those who believed in a heavenly king were termed Christians, bearing on their foreheads the sign of victory over death."

The œcumenical range of the Roman empire is, therefore, a Statanic aping of Christianity. As the demons purloined Christian philosophy and aped the Christian cultus and sacraments, so also did they perpetrate a plagiarism against the church by founding the great imperial state of Rome! This is the self-consciousness of Christendom expressed in perhaps the most robust, but also in the most audacious form imaginable! The real cosmopolitan character of Christianity is stated by Octavius (Min. Felix, xxxiii.) thus: "Nos gentes nationesque distinguimus: deo una domus est mundus hic totus" ("We draw distinctions between nations and races, but to God the whole of this world is one household").

Origen's political views are more accurate, but how extravagant are his ideas! In chapters lxvii.-lxxv. of his eighth book against Celsus, by dint of a fresh interpretation given to a primitive Christian conception, and a recourse to a Platonic idea, he propounds the idea that the church, this κόσμος τοῦ κόσμου (in Joh. vi. 38), or universe of the universe, is the future kingdom of the whole world, destined to embrace the Roman empire and humanity itself, to amalgamate and to replace the various realms of this world.. Cp. ch. lxviii.: "For if, in the words of Celsus, all were to do as we do, then there is no doubt whatever that even the barbarians would become law-abiding and humane, so soon as they obeyed the Word of God; then would all religions vanish, leaving that of Christ alone to reign. And reign it will one day, as the Word never ceases to gain soul after soul." This means the reversal of the primitive Christian hope. The church now presents itself as the civilizing and cohesive power which is to create, even in the present age, a state that shall embrace an undivided humanity. Origen, of course, is not quite sure whether this is feasible in the present age. No further away than ch. lxxii., a propos of the question (to which Celsus gave a negative answer) whether Asia, Europe, and Libya, Greeks and barbarians alike, could agree to recognize one system of laws, we find him writing as follows: "Perhaps," he says, "such a result would not indeed be possible to those who are still in the body; but it would not be impossible to those who are released from the body" (καὶ τάχα ἀληθῶς ἀδύνατον μὲν τὸ τοιοῦτο τοῖς ἔτι ἐν σώμασι οὐ μὲν ἀδύνατον καὶ ἀπολυθεῖσιν αὐτῶν).434 In II. xxx. he writes: "In the days of Jesus, righteousness arose and fulness of peace, beginning with his birth. God prepared the nations for his teaching, by causing the Roman emperor to rule over all the world;

there was no longer to be a plurality of kingdoms, else would the nations have been strangers to one another, and so the apostles would have found it harder to carry out the task laid on them by Jesus, when he said, 'Go and teach all nations.'"

In his reply to Celsus (III. xxix.-xxx.), this great father of the church, who was at the same time a great and sensible statesman, submits a further political consideration, which is not high-flown this time, but sober. It has also the advantage of being impressive and to the point. Although the passage is somewhat lengthy. I quote it here, as there is nothing like it in the literature of early Christianity [Greek text in Hist. Dogma, ii. 126]:—

"Apollo, according to Celsus, required the Metapontines to consider Aristeas as a god. But the Metapontines considered Aristeas was a man, and perhaps not even a respectable man, and this conviction of theirs seemed to them more valid than the declaration of the oracle that Aristeas was a god and deserving of divine honor. Consequently they would not obey Apollo, and no one regarded Aristeas as a god. But with regard to Jesus, we may say that it proved a blessing to the human race to acknowledge him as God's son, as God appearing in a human soul and body. . . . . God, who sent Jesus, brought to nought all the conspiracies of the demons and gave success to the gospel of Jesus over the whole earth for the conversion and amelioration of mankind, causing churches everywhere to be established, which should be ruled by other laws than those of superstitious, licentious, and evil men. For such is the character of the masses who constitute the assemblies throughout the various towns. Whereas, the churches or assemblies of God, whom Christ instructs, are 'lights in the world,' compared to the assemblies of the districts among which they live as strangers. For who would not allow that even the inferior members of the church, and such as take a lower place when judged by the standard of more eminent Christians—even these are far better people than the members of profane assemblies?

"Take the church of God at Athens; it is a peaceable and orderly body, as it desires to please God, who is over all. Whereas the assembly of the Athenians is refractory, nor can it be compared in any respect to the local church or assembly of God. The same may be said of the church of God at Corinth and the local assembly of the people, as also of the church of God at Alexandria and the local assembly in that city. And if any candid person hears this and examines the facts of the case with a sincere love for the truth, he will admire him who conceived the design and was able to realize it, establishing churches of God to exist as strangers amid the popular assemblies of the various cities. Furthermore, if one compares the council of the Church of God with that of the cities, one by one, it would be found that many a councillor of the church is worthy to be a leader in God's city, if such a city exists in the world; whereas other councillors in all parts of the world show not a trait of conduct to justify the superiority born of their position, which seems to give them precedence over their fellow-citizens. Such also is the result of any comparison between the president of the church in any city and the civic magistrates. It will be found that, in the matter of conduct, even such councillors and presidents of the church as are extremely defective arid indolent compared to their more energetic colleagues, are possessed of virtues which are in general superior to those of civic councillors and rulers."

At this point I shall break off the present part of our investigation. The evidence already brought forward will suffice to give some idea of how Christians held themselves to be the new People and the third race of mankind, and also of the inferences which they drew from these conceptions. But how did the Greeks and Romans regard this phenomenon of Christianity with its enormous claims? This is a question to which justice must be done in an excursus.

EXCURSUS

CHRISTIANS AS A THIRD RACE, IN THE JUDGMENT OF THEIR OPPONENTS

For a proper appreciation of the Greek and Roman estimate of Christianity, it is essential, in the first instance, to recollect how the Jews were regarded and estimated throughout the empire, since it was generally known that the Christians had emanated from the Jews.

Nothing is more certain than that the Jews were distinguished throughout the Roman empire as a special people in contrast to all others. Their imageless worship (ἀθεότης), their stubborn refusal to participate in other cults, together with their exclusiveness (ἀμιξία), marked them off from all nations as a unique people.435 This uniqueness was openly acknowledged by the legislation of Cæsar. Except for a brief period, the Jews were certainly never expected to worship the emperor. Thus they stood alone by themselves amid all the other races who were included in, or allied to, the Roman empire. The blunt formula "We are Jews" never occurs in the Greek and Roman literature, so far as I know;436 but the fact was there, i.e., the view was widely current that the Jews were a national phenomenon by themselves, deficient in those traits which were common to the other nations.437 Furthermore, in every province and town the Jews, and the Jews alone, kept themselves aloof from the neighboring population by means of their constitutional position and civic demeanor. Only, this very uniqueness of character was taken to be a defect in public spirit and patriotism, as well as an insult and a disgrace, from Apollonius Molon and Posidonius down to Pliny, Tacitus, and later authors,438 although one or two of the more intelligent writers did not miss the "philosophic" character of the Jews.439

Disengaging itself from this Jewish people, Christianity now encountered the Greeks and Romans. In the case of Christians, some of the sources of offence peculiar to the Jews were absent; but the greatest offence of all appeared only in heightened colors, viz., the ἀθεότης and the ἀμιξία (μισανθρωπία). Consequently the Christian religion was described as a "superstitio nova et malefica" (Suet., Nero, 16), as a "superstitio prava, immodica" (Plin., Ep., x. 96, 97), as an "exitiabilis superstitio" (Tacit., Annal., xv. 44), and as a "vana et demens superstitio" (Min. Felix, 9), while the Christians themselves were characterized as "per flagitia invisi," and blamed for their "odium generis humani."440

Several sensible people during the course of the second century certainly took a different view. Lucian saw in Christians half crazy, credulous fanatics, yet he could not altogether refuse them his respect. Galen explained their course of life as philosophic, and spoke of them in terms of high esteem.441 Porphyry also treated them, and especially their theologians, the gnostics and Origen, as respectable opponents.442 But the vast majority of authors persisted in regarding them as an utter abomination. "Latebrosa et lucifuga natio," cries the pagan Cæcilius (in Minut. Felix, viii. f.), "in publicum muta, in angulis garrula; templa ut busta despiciunt, deos despuunt, rident sacra . . . . occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo paene antequam noverint . . . . cur nullas aras habent, templa nulla, nulla nota simulacra . . . . nisi illud quod colunt et interprimunt, aut punieudum est aut pudendum? unde autem vel quis ille aut ubi deus unicus, solitarius, destitutus, quem non gens libera, non regna, non saltem Romana superstitio noverunt? Judaeorum sola et misera gentilitas unum et ipsi deum, sed palam, sed templis, aris, victimis caeremoniisque coluerunt, cuius adeo nulla vis ac potestas est, ut sit Romanis numinibus cum sua sibi natione captivus. At iam Christiani quanta monstra, quae portenta confingunt."443 What people saw—what Cæcilius saw before him—was a descending series, with regard to the numina and cultus: first Romans, then Jews, then Christians.

So monstrous, so repugnant are those Christians (of whose faith and life Cæcilius proceeds to tell the most evil tales), that they drop out of ordinary humanity, as it were. Thus Cæcilius indeed calls them a “natio,” but he knows that they are recruited from the very dregs of the nations, and consequently are no “people” in the sense of a “nation.” The Christian Octavius has to defend them against this charge of being a non-human phenomenon, and Tertullian goes into still further details in his Apology and in his address ad Nationes. In both of these writings the leading idea is the refutation of the charge brought against Christianity, of being something exceptional and utterly inhuman. “Alia nos opinor, natura, Cyropennæ [Cynopae?] aut Sciapodes,” we read in Apol., viii., “alii ordines dentium, alii ad incestam libidinem nervi? . . . . homo est enim et Christianus et quod et tu” (“We are of a different nature, I suppose! Are we Cyropennae or Sciapodes? Have we different teeth, different organs for incestuous lust? . . . . Nay, a Christian too is a man, he is whatever you are.” In Apol., xvi., Tertullian is obliged to refute wicked lies told about Christians which, if true, would make Christians out to be quite an exceptional class of human beings. Whereas, in reality, “Christiani homines sunt vobiscum degentes, eiusdem victus, habitus, instructus, eiusdem ad vitam necessitatis. neque enim Brachmanae aut Indorum gymnosophistae sumus, silvicolae et exules vitae . . . . si caeremonias tuas non frequento, attamen et illa die homo sum” (Apol., xlii.: “Christian men live beside you, share your food, your dress, your customs, the same necessities of life as you do. For we are neither Brahmins nor Indian gymnosophists, inhabiting the woods, and exiles from existence. If I do not attend your religious ceremonies, none the less am I a human being on the sacred day”). “Cum concutitur imperium, concussis etiam ceteris membris eius utique et nos, licit extranei a turbis aestimemur,444 in aliquo loco casus invenimur” (Apol., xxxi.: “When the state is disturbed and all its other members affected by the disturbance, surely we also are to be found in some spot or another, although we are supposed to live aloof from crowds.” It is evident also from the nicknames and abusive epithets hurled at them, that Christians attracted people's attention as something entirely strange (cp., e.g., Apol. 1).

In his two books ad Nationes, no less than in the Apology, all these arguments also find contemporary expression. Only in the former one further consideration supervenes, which deserves special attention, namely, the assertion of Tertullian that Christians were called “genus tertium” (the Third race) by their opponents. The relevant passages are as follows:—

Ad Nat., I. viii.: “Plane, tertium genus dicimur. An Cyropennae aliqui vel Sciapodes vel aliqui de subterraneo Antipodes? Si qua istic apud vos saltem ratio est, edatis velim primum et secundum genus, ut ita de tertio constet. Psammetichus quidem putavit sibi se de ingenio exploravisse prima generis. dicitur enim infantes recenti e partu seorsum a commercio hominum alendos tradidisse nutrici, quam et ipsam propterea elinguaverat, ut in totum exules vocis humanae non auditu formarent loquellam, sed de suo promentes eam primam nationem designarent cuius sonum natura dictasset. Prima vox ‘beccos' renuntiata est; interpretatio eius ‘panis' apud Phrygas nomen est; Phryges primum genus exinde habentur . . . . sint nunc primi Phryges, non tamen tertii Christiani. Quantae enim aliae gentium series post Phrygas? verum recogitate, ne quos tertium genus dicitis principem locum obtineant, siquidem non ulla gens non Christiana. itaque quaecunque gens prima, nihilominus Christiana. ridicula dementia novissimos diciti et tertios nominatis. sed de superstitione tertium genus deputamur, non de natione, ut sint Romani, Judaei, dehinc Christiani. ubi autem Graeci? vel si in Romanorum suberstitionibus censentur, quoniam quidem etiam deos Graeciae Roma sollicitavit, ubi saltem Ægyptii, et ipsi, quod sciam, privatae curiosaeque religionis? porro si tam monstruosi, qui tertii loci, quales habendi, qui primo et secundo antecedunt?” (“We are indeed called the third race of men! Are we monsters, Cyropennae, or Sciopades, or some Antipodeans from the underworld? If these have any meaning for you, pray explain the first and second of the races, that we may

thus learn the ‘third.' Psammetichus thought he had ingeniously hit upon primeval man. He removed, it is said, some newly born infants from all human intercourse and entrusted their upbringing to a nurse whom he had deprived of her tongue, in order that being exiled entirely from the sound of the human voice, they might form their words without hearing it, and derive them from their own nature, thus indicating what was the first nation whose language was originally dictated by nature. The first word they uttered was ‘beccos,' the Phrygian word for bread. The Phrygians, then, are held to be the first race . . . . If, then, the Phrygians are the first race, still it does not follow that the Christians are the third. For how many other races successively came after the Phrygians? But take heed lest those whom you call the third race take first place, since there is no nation which is not Christian. Whatever nation, therefore, is the first, is nevertheless Christian now. It is senseless absurdity for you to call us the latest of nations and then to dub us the Third. .But, you say, it is on the score of religion and not of nationality that we are considered to be third; it is the Romans first, then the Jews, and after that the Christians. What about the Greeks then? Or supposing that they are reckoned among the various Roman religions (since it was from Greece that Rome borrowed even her deities), where do the Egyptians at any rate come in, since they possess a religion which, so far as I know, is all their own, and full of secrecy? Besides, if those who occupy the third rank are such monsters, what must we think of those who precede them in the first and second?”).

Further, in ad Nat., I. xx. (after showing that the charges brought against Christians recoil upon their adversaries the heathen), Tertuilian proceeds: “Habetis et vos tertium genus etsi non de tertio ritu, attamem de tertio sexu. Illud aptius de viro et femina viris et feminis iunctum” (“You too have your ‘third race' [i.e., of eunuchs], though it is not in the way of a third religion, but of a third sex. Made up of male and female in conjunction, it is better suited to pander to men and women!”)

Add also a passage fromn the treatise Scorpiace (x.: a word to heretics who shunned martyrdom): “Illic constitues et synagogas Judaeorum fontes persecutionum, apud quas apostoli flagella perpessi sunt, et populos nationum cum suo quidem circo, ubi facile conclamant: ‘Usque quo genus tertium?'” (“Will you set up there [i.e., in heaven] also synagogues of the Jews—which are fountains of persecution—before which the apostles suffered scourging, and heathen crowds with their circus, forsooth, where all are ready to shout, ‘How long are we to endure this third race?'”).

From these passages we infer:—

i. That “the third race” (genus tertium) as a designation of Christians on the lips of the heathen was perfectly common in Carthage about the year 200. Even in the circus people cried, “Usque quo genus tertium?”

ii. That this designation referred exclusively to the Christian method of conceiving and worshipping God. The Greeks, Romans, and all other nations passed for the first race (genus primum), in so far as they mutually recognized each other's gods or honored foreign gods as well as their own, and had sacrifices amid images. The Jews (with their national God, their exclusiveness, and a worship which lacked images but included sacrifice)445 constituted the second race (genus alterum). The Christians, again (with.their spiritual God, their lack of images and sacrifices, and the contempt for the gods—contemnere deos—which they shared with the Jews446), formed the Third race (genus tertium).

iii. When Tertullian talks as if the whole system of classification could denote the chronological series of the nations, it is merely a bit of controversial dialectic. Nor has the

designation of “the Third race” (genus tertium) anything whatever to do either with the virginity of Christians, or, on the other hand, with the sexual debaucheries set down to their credit.447

All these results448 were of vital importance to the impression made by Christianity (and Judaism449) upon the pagan world. As early as the opening of the second century Christians designate their religion as “the third method” of religion (cp. the evidence above furnished by the Preaching of Peter), and frankly declare, about the year 240 A.D., “We are the third race of mankind” (cp. the evidence of the treatise de Pascha Computus).450 Which proves that the pagans did borrow this conception, and that (even previously to 200 A.D.)451 they described the Jews as the second and the Christians as the third race of men. This they did for the same reason as the Christians, on account of the nature of the religion in question.

It is indeed amazing! One had certainly no idea that in the consciousness of the Greeks and Romans the Jews stood out in such bold relief from the other nations, and the Christians from both, or that they represented themselves as independent “genera,” and were so described in an explicit formula. Neither Jews nor Christians could look for any ample recognition,452 little as the demarcation was intended as a recognition at all.

The polemical treatises against Christians prove that the triple formula “Romans, etc., Jews, and Christians” was really never absent from the minds of their opponents. So far as we are acquainted with these treatises, they one and all adopt this scheme of thought: the Jews originally parted company with all other nations, and after leaving the Egyptians, they formed an ill-favored species by themselves, while it is from these very Jews that the Christians have now broken off, retaining all the worst features of Judaism and adding loathsome and repulsive elements of their own. Such was the line taken by Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian in their anti-Christian writings. Celsus speaks of the γένος of the Jews, and opposes both γένη in the sharpest manner to all other nations, in order to show that when Christians, as renegade Jews, distinguish themselves from this γένος—a γένος which is, at least, a people— they do so to their own loss. He characterizes Christians (VIII. ii.) as ἀποτειχίζοντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀπορρηγνύντες ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων (“people who separate themselves and break away front the rest of mankind”). For all that, everything in Christianity is simply plagiarized from a plagiarism, or copied from a copy. Christians per se have no new teaching (μάθημα, I. iv.; cp. II. v. and IV. xiv.). That they have any teaching at all to present, is simply due to the fact that they have kept back the worst thing of all, viz., their στασιάζειν πρὸς τὸ κοινόν (“their revolt against the common weal”).453 Porphyry—who, I imagine, is the anti-Christian controversialist before the mind of Eusebius454—in his Preparatio, i. 2, begins by treating Christians as a sheer impossibility, inasmuch as they will not and do not belong to the Greeks or to the barbarians. Then he goes on to say: καὶ μηδ᾽ αὐτῷ τῷ παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις τιμουμένῳ θεῷ κατὰ τὰ παῤ αὐτοῖς προσανέχειν νόμιμα, καινὴν δὲ τινα καὶ ἐρήμην ἀνοδίαν ἑαυτοῖς συντεμεῖν μήτε τὰ Ἑλλήνων μήτε τὰ Ἰουδαίων φυλάττουσαν (“Nor do they adhere to the rites of the God worshipped by the Jews according to their customs, but fashion some new and solitary vagary for themselves of which there is no trace in Hellenism or Judaism”). So that he also gives the triple classification. Finally, Julian (Neumann, p.164) likewise follows the division of Ἕλληνες, Ἰουδαῖοι, and Γαλιλαῖοι [Greeks, Jews, Galileans]. The Galileans are neither Greeks nor Jews; they have come from the Jews, but have separated from them and struck out a path of their own. “They have repudiated every noble and significant idea current among us Greeks, and among the Hebrews who are descended from Moses; yet they have lifted from both sources everything that adhered to these imitations like an ill-omened demon, taking their godlessness from the levity of the Jews, and their careless and lax way of living from our own thoughtlessness and vulgarity.”

Plainly, then, Greek and Jews and Christians were distinguished throughout upon the ground of religion, although the explicit formula of “the third race” occurs only in the West. After the middle of the third century, both empire and emperor learnt to recognize and dread the third race of worshippers as a “nation,” as well as a race. They were a state within the state. The most instructive piece of evidence in this connection is the account of Decius given by Cyprian (Ep. lv. 9): “Multo patientius et tolerabilius audivit levari adversus se aemulum principem quam constitui Romae dei sacerdotem” (“He would hear of a rival prince being set up against himself with far more patience and equanimity than of a priest of God being appointed at Rome”). The terrible edict issued by this emperor for the persecution of Christians is in the first instance the practical answer given by the state to the claims of the “New People” and to the political view advocated by Melito and Origen. The inner energy of the new religion comes out in its self-chosen title of “the New People” or “the Third race” just as plainly as in the testimony extorted from its opponents, that in Christianity a new genus of religion had actually emerged side by side with the religions of the nations and of Judaism. It does not afford much direct evidence upon the outward spread and strength of Christianity, for the former estimate emerged, asserted itself, and was recognized at an early period, when Christians were still, in point of numbers, a comparatively small society.455 But it must have been of the highest importance for the propaganda of the Christian religion, to be so distinctly differentiated from all other religions and to have so lofty a consciousness of its own position put before the world.456 Naturally this had a repelling influence as well on certain circles. Still it was a token of power, and power never fails to succeed.

CHAPTER 8

THE RELIGION OF A BOOK AND A HISTORICAL REALIZATION

Christianity, unlike Islam, never was and never became the religion of a book in the strict sense of the term (not until a much later period, that of rigid Calvinism, did the consequences of its presentation as the religion of a book become really dangerous, and even then the rule of faith remained at the helm). Still, the book of Christianity—i.e., in the first instance, the Old Testament—did exert an influence which brought it to the verge of becoming the religion of a book. Paul, of course, when we read him aright, was opposed to this development, and wide circles throughout Christendom—both the gnostics and the Marcionites — even went the length of entirely repudiating the Old Testament or of ascribing it to another god altogether, though he too was righteous and dependent on the most high God.457 But in the catholic church this gnostic criticism was indignantly rejected, whilst the complicated position adopted by the apostle Paul towards the book was not understood at all. The Old Testament, interpreted allegorically, continued to be the sacred book for these Christians, as it was for the Jews, from whom they aimed to wrest it.

This attitude to the Old Testament is quite intelligible. What other religious society could produce a book like it?458 How overpowering and lasting must have been the impression made by it on Greeks, educated and uneducated alike, once they learnt to understand it! Many details might be strange or obnoxious, but the instruction and inspiration of its pages amply made up for that. Its great antiquity—stretching in some parts, as men held, to thousands of years459—was already proof positive of its imperishable value; its contents seemed in part a world of mysteries and in part a compendium of the profoundest wisdom. By its inexhaustible wealth, by its variety, comprehensiveness, and extensive character, it seemed like a literary cosmos, a second creation which was the twill of the first.460 This indeed was the deepest impression which it made. The opinion most widely held by Greeks who came in contact with the Old Testament was that this was a book which was to be coupled with the universe, and that a similar verdict could be passed upon both of them. Variously as they might still interpret it, the fact of its being a parallel creation to the world, equally great and equally comprehensive, and of both issuing from a single author, appeared indubitable even to the gnostics and the Marcionites, whilst the members of the catholic church recognized in this divine author the most high God himself!461 In the entire history of human thought, when did any other book earn such an opinion?462

The Old Testament certainly was an enormous help to the Christian propaganda, and it was in vain that the Jews protested.463We have one positive testimony, in the following passage from Tatian (Orat. xxix.), that for many people the Old Testament formed the real bridge by which they crossed to Christianity. “When I was paying earnest heed to what was profitable,” he writes, “some barbarian writings came into my hands which were too old for Greek ideas and too divine for Greek errors. These I was led to trust, owing to their very simplicity of expression and the unstudied character of their authors, owing to their intelligible description of creation, their foreknowledge of the future, the excellence of their precepts, and the fact of their embracing the universe under the sole rule of God. Thus was my soul instructed by God, and I understood how other teachings lead to condemnation, whilst these writings abolish the bondage that prevails throughout the world and free us from a plurality of rulers and tyrants innumerable. They furnish us, not with something which we had not already received, but with something which had been received but which, thanks to error, had been lost.”464

This confession is particularly noticeable, not merely on account of the explicit manner in which it brings out the significance of the Old Testament for the transition to Christianity, but also for its complete and clear statement of the reasons for this influence. In the first place, the form of this book made a deep impression, and it is characteristic of Tatian the Greek, though he would remain a Greek no longer, that its form is the first point which he singles out. The vigorous style of the prophets and psalmists captivated the man who had passed through the schools of rhetoric and philosophy. Vigor coupled with simplicity—this was what made the book seem to him so utterly different from those treatises and unwieldy tomes in which their authors trade desperate efforts to attain clearness of thought upon questions of supreme moment. The second item mentioned by the apologist is the narrative of creation in Genesis. This also is significant and quite intelligible. Every Greek philosopher had his cosmology, and here was a narrative of creation that was both lucid and comprehensible. It did not look like a philosophy, nor did it look like an ordinary myth; it was an entirely new genre, something between and above them both. It can only have been inspired by God himself! The third feature which struck Tatian was the prophecies of the book. A glance at the early Christian writers, and especially at the apologists, reveals the prominent and indeed the commanding role played by the argument from prophecy, and this argument could only be led by means of the Old Testament. The fourth item was the moral code. Here Tatian was certainly thinking in the first instance of the decalogue, which even the gnostics, for all their critical attitude towards the book as a whole, considered only to require completion, and which was therefore distinguished by them from the rest of the Old Testament.465 To Gentile Christians the decalogue invariably meant the sum of morals, which only the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount could render more profound.466 Finally, the fifth item mentioned by the apologist is the rigid monotheism which stamps the whole volume.

This list really includes all the elements in the Old Testament which seemed of special weight and marked its origin as divine. But in a survey of the services rendered by it to the Christian church throughout the first two centuries, the following points stand out clearly.

1. Christians borrowed from the Old Testament its monotheistic cosmology and view of nature. Though the gospels and epistles presuppose this, they do not expressly state it, and in the Old Testament books people found exactly what they required, viz., in the first place, innumerable passages proclaiming and inculcating monotheism, and also challenging polytheism, and in the second place many passages which extolled God as the creator of heaven and earth and depicted his creation.

2. From the Old Testament it could be proved that the appearance and the entire history of Jesus had been predicted hundreds and even thousands of years ago; and further, that the founding of the New People which was to be fashioned out of all nations upon earth,467 had from the very beginning been prophesied and prepared for (cp. pp. 240 f.).468

Their own religion appeared, on the basis of this book, to be the religion of a history which was the fulfillment of prophecy; what remained still in the future could only be a brief space of time, and even in its course everything would be fulfilled in accordance with what had been prophesied. The certain guarantee for this was afforded by what had already been fulfilled. By aid of the Old Testament, Christian teachers dated back their religion to the very beginning of things, and connected it with the creation. This formed one of the most impressive articles of the mission-preaching among educated people, and thereby Christianity got a hold which was possessed by no religion except Judaism. But one must take good care not to imagine that to the minds of these Christians the Old Testament was pure prophecy which still lacked its

fulfillment. The Old Testament was indeed a book of prophecies, but for that very reason it had didactic significance as the complete revelation of God, which needed no manner of addition whatsoever, and excluded any subsequent modification. The historical fulfillment—"lex radix evangeliorum" (Tert., Scorp., ii.)—of these revelations merely attested their truth in the eyes of all the world. Indeed, the whole gospel was thus put together from the Old Testament. Handbooks of this kind must have been widely circulated in different though similar editions.

3. Proofs from the Old Testament were increasingly employed to justify principles and institutions adopted by the Christian church (not merely imageless, spiritual worship, the abolition of the ceremonial law and its precepts, with baptism and the Lord's supper, but also—though hesitatingly—the Christian priesthood, the episcopate, and the new organizations within the cultus).

4. The book was used for the purpose of exhortation, following the formula of "a minori ad maius." If God had praised or punished this or that in the past, how much more, it was argued, are we to look for similar treatment from him, we who are now living in the last days and who have received "the calling of promise."

5. From the Old Testament (i.e., from its prophetic denunciations) Christians proved469 that the Jewish people had no covenant with God (cp. pp. 66 f.).

6. Christians edified themselves by means of the Old Testament and its sayings about trust in God, about God's aid, about humility, and about holy courage, as well as by means of its heroic spirits and its prophets, above all, by the psalms.

What has been summarized in these paragraphs is enough to indicate the importance of the Old Testament for primitive Christianity and its mission.470 Be it remembered, however, that a large portion of its contents was allegorized, i.e., criticized and re-interpreted. Without this, a great deal of the Old Testament would have been unacceptable to Christians. Anyone who refused such re-reading of its contents had to reject the book in whole or part.471

After the rise of the New Testament, which was the most important and independent product of the primitive church, and which legitimized its faith as a new religion, certain aspects of the Old Testament fell into the background. Still, these were not numerous. Plainly, there were vital points at which the former could not undertake to render the service done by the latter. No doubt any statement of Christian morality always went back to the words of Jesus as its primary source. Here the Old Testament had to retire. But elsewhere the latter held its own. It was only in theory, not in practice, that an imperceptible revolution occurred. The conflict with gnosticism, and the formation of the New Testament which took place in and with that conflict, made it plain to the theologians of the catholic church that the simple identification of the Old Testament and the gospel was by no means a matter of course. The first theologians of the ancient catholic church, Irenæus and Tertullian, already relax this absolute identification; they rather approximate to the conception of the apostle Paul, viz., that the Old Testament and the old covenant mark quite a different level from that of the New. The higher level of the new covenant is recognized, and therewith the higher level of the New Testament as well. Now in theory this led to many consequences of no small moment, for people learned to assign higher value to the specific significance of the Christian religion when it was set in contrast to the Old Testament—a point on which the gnostics had insisted with great energy. But in practice this change of estimate did not seriously affect the use of the Old Testament. If one could now hold theoretically that much of the Old Testament was "demutatum, suppletum, impletum, perfectum," and even "expunctum" by the New Testament (Tert., de Orat., i.), the third century

saw the Old Testament allegorized and allegorically employed as direct evidence for the truths of Christianity. Indeed people really ceased to allegorize it. As the churches became stocked with every kind of sacred ceremony, and as they carefully developed priestly, sacrificial and sacramental ideas, people now began to grow careless and reckless in applying the letter of Old Testament ceremonial laws to the arrangements of the Christian organization and worship. In setting itself up as a legislative body, the church had recourse to the Old Testament in a way that Paul had severely censured; it fell back on the law, though all the while it blamed the Jews and declared that their observance of the law was quite illicit. In dogma there was now greater freedom from the Old Testament than had been the case during the second century; Christological problems occupied the foreground, and theological interests shifted from problems of θεός and λόγος to those of the Trinity and of Christology, as well as to Christocentric mysteries. In the practice of the church, however, people employed the Old Testament more lavishly than their predecessors, in order to get a basis for usages which they considered indispensable. For a purpose of this kind the New Testament was of little use.

The New Testament as a whole did not generally play the same role as the Old Testament in the mission and practice of the church. The gospels certainly ranked on a level with the Old Testament, and actually eclipsed it; through them the words of Jesus gleamed and sparkled, and in them his death and resurrection were depicted. But the epistles never enjoyed the same importance—particularly as many passages in them, in Paul especially, landed the fathers of the church in sore difficulties,472 above all during the conflict with gnosticism. Augustine was the first to bring the Pauline gospel into prominence throughout the West; in the East, it never emerged at all from the shadow. As for the Johannine theology, it left hardly any traces upon the early church. Only one or two sections of it proved effective. As a whole, it remained a sealed book, though the same may be said of the Pauline theology.473

CHAPTER 9

THE CONFLICT WITH POLYTHEISM AND IDOLATRY

1. In combating "demons" (pp. 125 f.) and in taking the field against the open immorality which was part and parcel of polytheism (pp. 205 f.), the early church was waging war against polytheism. But it did not rest content with this onset. Directly, no doubt, the "dumb idols" were weakened by this attack; still, they continued to be a real power, particularly in the circles from which the majority of Christians were drawn. Nowadays, the polemic against the gods of Olympus, against Egyptian cats and crocodiles, or against carved and cast and chiseled idols, seems to our eyes to have been cheap and superfluous. It was not a difficult task, we may fairly add; philosophers like the Cynics and satirists like Lucian supplied a wealth of material, and the intellect and moral sense alike had long ago outgrown that sort of deity. But it was by no means superfluous. Had it been unnecessary, the apologists from Aristides to Arnobius would never have pursued this line of controversy with such zest, the martyr Apollonius would never have troubled to deliver his long polemic before the senate, and Tertullian, an expert in heathen laws and customs, would never have deemed it necessary to refute polytheism so elaborately in his defense before the presiding magistrate. Yet even from this last-named refutation we see how disreputable (we might almost say, how shabby) the public system of gods and sacrifices had already become. It was scoffed at on the stage; half-dead animals of no value were offered in sacrifice;474 the idols were dishonored, the temples were profaned.475 The whole business lay under a mass of disgust, disdain, derision, and nausea. But it would be a serious mistake to suppose that this feeling was universal. Not merely was everything kept going officially, but many minds still clung to such arrangements and ceremonies. The old cults were freshened by the influx of the new religions, and a new significance was often lent even to their most retrograde elements. Besides, whether the public system of religion was flourishing or entirely withered, it by no means represented the sole existing authority. In every town and province, at Rome as well as at Alexandria, in Spain, in Asia, in Egypt, there were household gods and family gods, with household customs of religion, and all manner of superstitions and ceremonies. These rarely rise above the surface of literature, but inscriptions, tombs, and magical papyri have brought them nearer us. Here every household function has its guardian spirit; every event is under one controlling god. And this religious world, this second-class religion, it must he remembered, was living and active everywhere.

As a rule, the apologists contented themselves with assailing the official world of gods.476 Their method aimed, in the first place, at rousing the moral sense against these so-called "gods" by branding their abominable vices; in the second place, it sought to exhibit the folly and absurdity of what was taught or told about the gods; and, thirdly, it aimed at exposing the origin of the latter. The apologists showed that the gods were an empty nothing, illusions created by the demons who lay in wait behind their dead puppets and introduced them in order to control men by this means. Or, following the track of Euhemerus, they showed that the so-called gods were nothing but dead men.477 Or, again, they pointed out that the whole thing was a compound of vain fables and deceit, and very often the product of covetous priestcraft. In so doing they displayed both wit and irony, as well as a very strong feeling of aversion. We do not know, of course, how much of all this argument and feeling was original. As has been already remarked, the Stoic, Sceptic, and Cynic philosophers (in part, the Epicureans also) had preceded Christianity along this line, and satires upon the gods were as cheap as blackberries in that age. Consequently, it is needless to illustrate this point by the citation of individual passages. A perusal of the Apology of Aristides, which is of no great size, is quite sufficient to

give one an idea of this kind of polemic; the Oratio ad Graecos of pseudo-Justin may also be consulted, and especially the relevant sections in the Apology of Tertullian.

The duty of keeping oneself free from all contamination with polytheism ranked as the supreme duty of the Christian. It took precedence of all others. It was regarded as the negative side of the duty of confessing one's faith, and the “sin of idolatry” was more strictly dealt with in the Christian church than any sin whatsoever.478 Not for long, and not without great difficulty, did the church make up her mind to admit that forgiveness could be extended to this offence, and what forced her first to this conclusion was the stress of the terrible consequences of the Decian outburst (i.e., after 250 A.D.).479 This we can well understand, for exclusiveness was the condition of her existence as a church. If she made terms with polytheism at a single point, it was all over with her distinctive character. Such was the position of affairs, at any rate until about the middle of the third century. After that she could afford to be less anxious, since the church as an institution had grown so powerful, and her doctrine, cultus, and organization had developed in so characteristic a fashion by that time, that she stood out as a sharply defined magnitude sui generis, even when, consciously or unconsciously, she went half-way to meet polytheism in disguise, or showed herself rather lenient towards it.

But as the duty of confession did not involve the duty of pushing forward to confess, or indeed of denouncing oneself,480 (in the epistle of the church of Smyrna to the church of Philomelium an explicit protest is even entered against this practice, while elsewhere481 the Montanist craving for martyrdom is also censured),482 so to protest against polytheism did not involve the obligation of publicly protesting against it of one's own accord. There were indeed cases in which a Christian who was standing as a spectator in court audibly applauded a confessor, and in consequence of this was himself arrested. Such cases were mentioned with approval, for it was held that the Spirit had impelled the spectator. But open abuse of the emperor or of the gods was not sanctioned any more than rebellion; in fact, all unprovoked insults and all upsetting of images were rebuked.483 Here and there, however, such incidents must have occurred, for in the sixtieth canon of Elvira we read: “Si quis idola fregerit et ibidem fuerit occisus, quatenus in evangelio scriptum non est neque invenietur sub apostolis unquam factum, placuit in numerum eum non recipi martyrum” (“If anyone shall have broken an idol and been slain in the act, he shall not be reckoned among the martyrs, seeing that no such command is to be found in scripture, nor will any such deed be found to be apostolic”).

2. In order to combat polytheism effectively, one could not stop short of the philosophers, not even of the most distinguished of their number, for they had all some sort of connection with idol-worship. But at this stage of their polemic the apologists diverged in different directions. All were agreed that no philosopher had discovered the truth in its purity and perfection; and further, that no philosopher was in a position to demonstrate with certainty the truth which he had discovered, to spread it far and wide, or to make men so convinced of it as to die for it. But one set of apologists were quite content with making this strict proviso; moreover, they delighted in the harmony of Christianity and philosophy; indeed, like Justin, they would praise philosophers for their moral aims and profound ideas. The Christian teachers in Alexandria even went the length of finding a parallel to the Jewish law in Greek philosophy.484 They found affinities with Plato's doctrine of God and metaphysics, and with the Stoic ethic. They recognized philosophers like Seneca485 as their fellows to some extent. They saw in Socrates a hero and forerunner of the truth. Others, again, would not hear of philosophy or philosophers; the best service they could render the gospel-mission was, in their opinion, to heap coarse abuse on both. Tatian went to incredible lengths in this line, and was guilty of shocking injustice. Theophilus fell little short of him, while even Tertullian, for all his debt to the Stoics, came

dangerously near to Tatian. But these apologists were under an entire delusion if they imagined they were accomplishing very much by dint of all their calumnies. So far as we are in a position to judge, it was the methods, not of these extremists, but of Justin, Clement, and Origen, that impressed the Greek world of culture. Yet even the former had probably a public of their own. Most people either do not think at all, or else think in the crudest antitheses, and such natures would likely be impressed by Tatian's invectives. Besides, it is impossible to ignore the fact that neither he nor Tertullian were mere calumniators. They were honest men. Wherever they came upon the slightest trace of polytheism, all their moral sense rose in revolt; in polytheism, they were convinced, no good was to be found, and hence they gave credit to any calumnies which a profligate literature put at their disposal. Now traces of polytheism were thickly sown throughout all the philosophers, including even the most sublime of their number. Why, Socrates himself had ordered a cock to be slain, after he was dead, in honor of Æsculapius! The irony of the injunction was not understood. It was simply viewed as a recognition of idolatry. So even Socrates the hero had to be censured. Yet, whether half-admirers or keen opponents of philosophy, the apologists to a man occupied philosophic ground, and indeed Platonic ground. They attacked philosophy, but they brought it inside the church and built up the doctrinal system of the church on the outlines of Platonism and with the aid of Platonic material (see below, the epilogue of this book).

3. From the practical point of view, what was of still greater moment than the campaign against the world and worship of the gods, was the campaign against the apotheosis of men. This struggle, which reached its height in the uncompromising rejection of the imperial cultus, marked at the same time the resolute protest of Christianity against the blending of religion and patriotism, and consequently against that cultus of the state in which the state (personified in the emperor) formed itself the object of the cultus. One of the cardinal aims and issues of the Christian religion was to draw a sharp line between the worship of God and the honor due to the state and to its leaders. Christianity tore up political religion by the roots.

The imperial cultus486 was of a twofold nature. In both aspects it was an Oriental, not a Greek or a Roman phenomenon; yet this worship of the dead Cæsars and of the living Cæsar, with its adoration of the imperial images, was dovetailed, not only without any difficulty, but inevitably, into the “caeremoniae Romanae,” once the empire had become imperial. From the first the headquarters of the former (i.e., the worship of the dead Cæsars) were in Rome, whence it passed into the provinces as the most vital element of the state religion. The latter (i.e., the worship of the living Cæsar) originated in the East, but as early as the first century it was adopted by Caligula and Domitian, and during the second century it became quite common (in the shape of adoration paid to the imperial images). The rejection of either cult was a crime which came under the head of sacrilege as well as of high treason, and it was here that the repressive measures taken by the state against Christianity almost invariably started, inasmuch as the state did not concede Christianity the same liberty on this point as she granted to Judaism. Had the Christians merely turned round against Olympus and hit upon some compromise with the imperial cultus, they would in all probability have been left entirely unmolested—such is Tertullian's blunt assertion in his Apology (xxviii. f.). Nearly all the encounters between individual Christians and the regulations of the empire resolved themselves into a trial for treason. The positive value of the imperial cultus for the empire has been stated recently and impressively by von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf.487

The Christians repudiated the imperial cultus in every shape and form, even when they met it in daily life, in the very oaths and turns of expression which made the emperor appear a superhuman being. Unhesitatingly they reckoned it a phase of idolatry. Withal, they guarded

themselves against the charge of being disrespectful and disloyal, by pointing to their prayers for the emperor and for the state.488 These prayers, in fact, constituted a fixed part of Christian worship from the very first,489 while the saying of Christ, “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,” was generally referred, not merely to obedience and the punctual payment of taxes, but also to intercession. The sharpest strictures passed by individual Christian teachers upon the character of the Roman state and the imperial office never involved the neglect of intercession or dissuaded Christians from this duty. Numerous passages, in which the emperor is mentioned immediately after God, attest the fact that he was held by Christians to be “a deo secundus ante omnes et super omnes deos” (Tertull., Apol. xxx.: “second only to God, before and above all the gods”).490 Christians, in fact, could declare that they tolerated no defect, either in the theory or in the practice of their loyalty. They taught—and they made their teaching an inherent element of history—that worship paid to God was one thing, and honor paid to a ruler quite another; also, that to worship a monarch was a detestable and humiliating offence. Nevertheless, they strictly inculcated obedience to all authority, and respect for the emperor.

The general position of the church did not alter upon this point during the third century;491 it adhered to its sharp denial of apotheosis in the shape of the imperial cultus. But at another point apotheosis gradually filtered into the church with elemental force, namely, through the worship of the apostles and the martyrs. As early as the apocryphal Acts, written towards the close of the second and the opening of the third century, we find the apostles appearing as semi-divine; in fact, even by the year 160 A.D., the pagans in Smyrna were afraid that the Christians would pay divine honors to the martyred Polycarp, while Lucian scoffs at the impostor Peregrinus, with his cheap martyrdom, passing for a god amongst the Christians. Both fear and scoff were certainly baseless as yet. But they were not baseless three generations afterwards. Towards the close of the third century there were already a number of chapels in existence, consecrated492 to the apostles, patriarchs, martyrs, and even the archangels; people had a predilection for passing the night at the graves of the saints, and a cultus of the saints had been worked out in a wide variety of local forms, which afforded an indispensable means of conserving those ancient cults to which the common people still clung. Theoretically, the line between the worship of God and this cultus of deliverers and intercessors was sharply drawn throughout the third century, although one Christian root for the latter cultus is evident in the communion of the saints. As things stood, however, the distinction between the two was constantly blurred in the course of practical experience.493 For all its monotheism, the Christian religion at the close of the third century represented a religion which was exceptionally strong in saints and angels and deliverers, in miraculous relics, and so forth; on this score it was able to challenge any cult whatsoever. Porphyry (the pagan quoted in Macar. Magnes, IV. xxi.) was quite alive to this. He wrote as follows: “If, therefore, you declare that beside God there are angels who are not subject to suffering and death, and are incorruptible in nature—just the beings we call gods, inasmuch as they stand near the godhead—then what is all the dispute about, with regard to names? Or are we to consider it merely a difference of terminology? . . . . So, if anyone likes to call them either gods or angels— for names are, on the whole, of no great moment, one and the same goddess, for example, being called Athenê and Minerva, and by still other names among the Egyptians and the Syrians—then it makes no great difference, as their divine nature is actually attested even by yourselves in Matt. xxii. 29-31.”494

4. The warfare against polytheism was also waged by means of a thoroughgoing opposition to the theatre and to all the games. Anyone who considers the significance495 of these features in ancient life and their close connection with idolatry,496 knows what a polemic against them implied. But we may point out that existence, in case of vast numbers of people, was divided into daily drudgery and—“panis et circenses” (free food and the theatre). No member of the

Christian church was allowed to be an actor or gladiator, to teach acting (see Cypr., Epist. ii.), or to attend the theatre.497 The earliest flash of polemic occurs in the Oratio of Tatian (xxii.-xxiii.), and it was followed by others, including the treatises of Tertullian and pseudo-Cyprian (Novatian) de Spectaculis, and the discussions of Lactantius.498These writings by themselves are enough to show that the above prohibitions were not universally obeyed.499 The passion for public games was almost irresistible, and Tertullian has actually to hold out hopes of the spectacle afforded by the future world as a compensation to Christians who were robbed of their shows in the present.500 Still, the conflict with these shows was by no means in vain. On the contrary, its effects along this line were greater than along other lines. By the time that Constantine granted privileges to the church, public opinion had developed to such a pitch that the state immediately adopted measures for curtailing and restricting the public spectacles.501

5. A sharp attack was also made upon luxury, in so far as it was bound up in part with polytheism and certainly betrayed a senseless and pagan spirit. Cp. the Paedagogus of Clement, and Tertullian's writings “de cultu feminarum.” It was steadily maintained that the money laid out upon luxuries would be better spent in charity. But no special regulations for the external life of Christians were as yet drawn up.

6. With regard to the question of how far a Christian could take part in the manners and customs and occupations of' daily life without denying Christ and incurring the stain of idolatry, there was a strict attitude as well as a lenient, freedom as well as narrowness, even within the apostolic age. Then the one burning question, however, seems to have been that of food offered to idols, or whether one could partake of meals provided by unbelievers. In those days, as the large majority of Christians belonged to the lower classes, they had no representative duties, but were drawn from working people of the lower orders, from day-laborers, in fact, whose simple occupation hardly brought them into any kind of relation to public life, and consequently exempted them from any conflict in this sphere. Presently, however, a change came over the situation. A host of difficult and vexatious problems poured upon the churches. Even the laxer party would do nothing that ran counter to the will of God. They, too, had scriptural proofs ready to support their position, and corollaries from scriptural principles. “Flee from one city to another” was the command they pled when they prudently avoided persecution. “I have power over all things,” “We must be all things to all men”—so they followed the apostle in declaring. They knew how to defend even attendance at public spectacles from scripture. Novatian (de Spect., ii.) sorrowfully quotes their arguments as follows: “Where, they ask, are such scriptures? Where are such things prohibited? Nay, was not Elijah the charioteer of Israel? Did not David himself dance before the ark? We read of horns, psalteries, trumpets, drums, pipes, harps, and choral dances. The apostle, too, in his conflict with evil sets before us the struggle of the cæstus and our wrestling with the spiritual powers of wickedness. Again, he takes illustrations front the racecourse, and holds out to us the prize of the crown. Why, then, may not a faithful Christian look at things of which the sacred books could write?”

This defense of attendance at the games sounds almost frivolous. But there were many graver conflicts on this subject, which one can follow with serious interest.

Participation in feasts and in convivial gatherings already occasioned such conflicts to a large extent, but it was the question of one's occupation that was really crucial. Can a Christian engage in business generally in the outside world without incurring the stain of idolatry? Though the strict party hardly tabooed a single occupation on the score of principle, yet they imposed such restrictions as amounted almost to a prohibition. In his treatise de Idololatria, Tertullian goes over a series of occupations, and his conclusion is the same in almost every case: better

leave it alone, or be prepared to abandon it at any moment. To the objection, “But I have no means of livelihood,” the reply follows, “A Christian need never be afraid of starving.”502

Tertullian especially prohibits the manufacture of idols (iv. f.), as was only natural. Yet there were Christian workmen who knew no other trade, and who tried to shelter themselves behind the text, “Let every man abide in the calling wherein he was called” (1 Cor. vii. 20). They also pointed out that Moses had a serpent manufactured in the wilderness. From Tertullian's charges it is quite evident that the majority in the church connived at such people and their practices. “From idols they pass into the church; from the workshop of the adversary they come to the house of God; to God the Father they raise hands that fashion idols; to the Lord's body they apply hands that have conferred bodies upon idols. Nor is this all. They are not content to contaminate what they receive from other hands, but even hand on to others what they have themselves contaminated. Manufacturers of idols are actually elected to ecclesiastical office!” (vii.).

As against these lax members of the church, Tertullian prohibits the manufacture, not only of images and statues, but also of anything which was even indirectly employed in idol-worship. Carpenters, workers in stucco, joiners, slaters, workers in gold-leaf, painters, brass-workers, and engravers—all must refrain from manufacturing the slightest article required for idol worship; all must refuse to participate in any work (e.g., in repairs) connected therewith (ch. viii.).

Similarly, no one is allowed to practice as an astrologer or a magician. Had not the magi to depart home “by another way”?503 Nor can any Christian be a schoolmaster or a professor of learning, since such professions frequently bring people into contact with idolatry.504 Knowledge of the pagan gods has to be diffused; their names, genealogy and myths have to be imparted; their festivals and holy days have to be observed, “since it is by means of them that the teacher's fees are reckoned.” The first payment of any new scholar is devoted by the teacher to Minerva. Is the contamination of idolatry any the less because in this case it leads to something else? It may be asked, if one is not to be a teacher of pagan learning, ought one then to be a pupil? But Tertullian is quite ready to be indulgent on this point, for—“how can we repudiate secular studies which are essential to the pursuit of religious studies?” A remarkable passage (x.).505

Then comes trade. Tertullian is strongly inclined to prohibit trade altogether506 owing to its origin in covetousness and its connection, however indirectly, with idolatry. It provides material for the temple services. What more need be said? “Even supposing that these very wares—frankincense, I mean, and other foreign wares—used in sacrificing to idols, are also of use to people as medicinal salves, and particularly to us Christians in our preparations for a burial, still you are plainly promoting idolatry, so long as processions, ceremonies, and sacrifices to idols are furnished at the cost of danger, loss, inconvenience, schemes, discussion, and commercial ventures.” “With what face can a Christian dealer in incense, who happens to pass by a temple, spit on the smoking altars, and puff aside their fumes, when he himself has provided material for those very altars?” (xi.).507 The taking of interest on money was not differentiated from usury, and was strictly prohibited. But the prohibition was not adhered to. Repeatedly, steps had to be taken against even the clergy, the episcopate, and the church widows for taking interest or following occupations tinged with usury.508

Can a Christian hold a civil appointment? Joseph and Daniel did; they kept themselves free from idolatry, said the liberal party in the church. But Tertullian is unconvinced. “Supposing,” he says, “that any one holder of an office were to succeed in coming forward with the mere title of the office, without either sacrificing or lending the sanction of his presence to a sacrifice, without

farming out the supply of sacrificial victims, without handing over to other people the care of the temples or superintending their revenues, without holding spectacles either at his own or at the state's expense, without presiding at such spectacles, without proclaiming or announcing any ceremony, without even taking an oath, and moreover—in regard to other official business—without passing judgment of life or death on anyone or on his civil standing . . . . without either condemning or laying down ordinances of punishment, without chaining or imprisoning, or torturing a single person—well, supposing all that to be possible, then there is nothing to be said against a Christian being an official!" Furthermore, the badges of officials are all mixed up with idolatry. "If you have abjured the pomp of the devil, know that whatever part of it you touch is idolatry to you" (xvii.-xviii.).

This involves the impossibility of any Christian being a military officer. But may he not be a private and fill subordinate positions in the army? "'The inferior ranks do not need to sacrifice, and have nothing to do with capital punishments.' True, but it is unbecoming for anyone to accept the military oath of God and also that of man, or to range himself under the standard of Christ and also under that of the devil, or to bivouac in the camp of light and also in the camp of darkness; no soul can be indebted to both, to Christ and to the devil." You point to the warriors of Israel, to Moses and Joshua, to the soldiers who came to John the Baptist, to the centurion who believed. But "subsequently the Lord disarmed Peter, and in so doing unbuckled the sword of every soldier. Even in peace it is not to be worn" (xix.).

Furthermore, in ordinary life a good deal must be entirely proscribed. One must abjure any phrase in which the gods are named. Thus one dare not say "by Hercules," or "as true as heaven" (medius fidius), or use any similar expletive (xx.). And no one is tacitly to accept an adjuration addressed to himself, from fear of being recognized as a Christian if he demurs to it.509 Every pagan blessing must be rejected; accept it, and you are accursed of God. "It is a denial of God for anyone to dissemble on any occasion whatsoever and let himself pass for a pagan. All denial of God is idolatry, just as all idolatry is denial of God, be it in word or in deed" (xxi.-xxii.). Even the pledge exacted from Christians as a guarantee when money is borrowed, is a denial of God, though the oath is not sworn in words (xxiii.).

"Such are the reefs and shoals and straits of idolatry, amid which faith has to steer her course, her sails filled by the Spirit of God." Yet after the close of the second century the large majority of Christians took quite another view of the situation, and sailed their ship with no such anxieties about her track.510 Coarse forms of idolatry were loathed and severely punished, but during the age of Tertullian, at least, little attention was paid any longer to such subtle forms as were actually current. Moreover, when it suits his point to do so, Tertullian himself in the Apology meets the charge of criminal isolation brought against Christians, by boasting that "we share your voyages and battles, your agriculture and your trading" (xlii.), remarking in a tone of triumph that Christians are to be met with everywhere, in all positions of state, in the army, and even in the senate. "We have left you nothing but the temples." Such was indeed the truth. The facts of the case show that Christians were to be found in every line of life,511 and that troubles occasioned by one's occupation must have been on the whole very rare (except in the case of soldiers; see below, Bk. IV. Ch. II.). Nor was the sharp criticism passed by Tatian, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and even (though for different reasons, of course) by Origen, upon the state as such, and upon civil relations, translated very often into practice.512 The kingdom of Christ, or the world-empire of the Stoics, or some platonic republic of Christian philosophy, might be played off against the existing state, as the highest form of social union intended by God, but all this speculation left life untouched, at least from the close of the second century onwards. The Paedagogus of Clement already furnishes directions for managing to live a Christian life in the

world. By the close of our period, the court, the civil service, and the army were full of Christians.513

Still, it was significant, highly significant indeed, that gross and actual idolatry was combated to the bitter end. With it Christianity never came to terms.514

EPILOGUE

CHRISTIANITY IN ITS COMPLETED FORM AS SYNCRETISTIC RELIGION

How rich, then, and how manifold, are the ramifications of the Christian religion as it steps at the very outset on to pagan soil! And every separate point appears to be the main point; every single aspect seems to be the whole! It is the preaching of God the Father Almighty (θεὸς πατὴρ παντοκράτωρ), of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the resurrection. It is the gospel of the Saviour and of salvation, of redemption and the new creation. It is the message of man becoming God. It is the gospel of love and charity. It is the religion of the Spirit and power, of moral earnestness and holiness. It is the religion of authority and of an unlimited faith; and again, the religion of reason and of enlightened understanding. Besides that it is a religion of "mysteries." It proclaims the origin of a new people, of a people which had existed in secret from the very beginning. It is the religion of a sacred book. It possessed, nay, it was, everything that can possibly be considered as religion.

Christianity thus showed itself to be syncretistic. But it revealed to the world a special kind of syncretism, namely, the syncretism of a universal religion. Every force, every relationship in its environment, was mastered by it and made to serve its own ends—a feature in which the other religions of the Roman empire make but a poor, a meager, and a narrow show. Yet, unconsciously, it learned and borrowed from many quarters; indeed, it would be impossible to imagine it existing amid all the wealth and vigor of these religions, had it not drawn pith and flavor even from them. These religions fertilized the ground for it, and the new grain and seed which fell upon that soil sent down its roots and grew to be a mighty tree. Here is a religion which embraces everything. And yet it can always be expressed with absolute simplicity: one name, the name of Jesus Christ, still sums up everything.

The syncretism of this religion is further shown by its faculty for incorporating the most diverse nationalities—Parthians, Medes and Elamites, Greeks and barbarians. It mocked at the barriers of nationality. While attracting to itself all popular elements, it repudiated only one, viz., that of Jewish nationalism. But this very repudiation was a note of universalism, for, although Judaism had been divested of its nationalism and already turned into a universal religion, its universalism had remained for two centuries confined to narrow limits. And how universal did Christianity show itself, in relation to the capacities and culture of mankind! Valentinus is a contemporary of Hermas, and both are Christians; Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria are contemporaries, and both are teachers in the church; Eusebius is a contemporary of St Antony, and both are in the service of the same communion.

Even this fails to cover what may be termed "syncretism," in the proper sense of the word. After the middle of the third century A.D., Christianity falls to be considered as syncretistic religion515 in the fullest sense; as such it faced the two other syncretistic products of the age, Manicheanism and the Neoplatonic religion which was bound up with the sun-cult.516 Henceforward, Christianity may be just as truly called a Hellenic religion as an Oriental, a native religion as a foreign. From the very outset it had been syncretistic upon pagan soil; it made its appearance, not as gospel pure and simple, but equipped with all that Judaism had already acquired during the course of its long history, and entering forthwith upon nearly every task in which Judaism was defective. Still, it was the middle of the third century that first saw the new religion in full bloom as the syncretistic religion par excellence, and yet, for all that, as an exclusive religion. As a church, it contained everything the age could proffer, a powerful priesthood, with a high priest and subordinate clergy, a priesthood which went back to Christ

and the apostles, and led bishops to glory in their succession and apostolic ordination. Christianity possessed every element included in the conception of "priesthood." Its worship and its sacraments together represented a real energy of the divine nature. The world to come and the powers of an endless life were in operation in the cultus, and through it upon the world; they could be laid hold of and appropriated in a way that was at once spiritual and corporeal. To believers, Christianity disclosed all that was ever embraced under the terms "revealed knowledge," "mysteries," and "cultus." In its doctrine it had incorporated everything offered by that contemporary syncretism which we have briefly described (pp. 30 f.). And while it certainly was obliged to re-arrange this syncretism and correct it in some essential points, upon the whole it did appropriate the system. In the doctrinal system of Origen which dominated thoughtful Christians in the East during the second half of the third century, the combination of the gospel and of syncretism is a fait accompli. Christianity possessed in a more unsullied form the contents of what is meant by "the Greek philosophy of religion."517 Powerful and vigorous, assured of her own distinctive character, and secure from any risk of being dissolved into contemporary religions, she believed herself able now to deal more generously and complaisantly with men, provided only that they would submit to her authority. Her missionary methods altered slowly but significantly in the course of the third century. Gregory Thaumaturgus, who shows himself a pupil of Origen in his religious philosophy with its comprehensive statement of Christianity, but who, as a Hellenist, excels his master, accommodated himself as a bishop in a truly surprising way to the pagan tendencies of those whom he converted. We shall hear of him later on. Saints and intercessors, who were thus semi-gods, poured into the church.518 Local cults and holy places were instituted. The different provinces of life were distributed afresh among guardian spirits. The old gods returned; only, their masks were new. Annual festivals were noisily celebrated. Amulets and charms, relics and bones of the saints, were cherished eagerly.519 And the very religion which erstwhile in its strictly spiritual temper had prohibited and resisted any tendency towards materialism, now took material shape in every one of its relationships. It had mortified the world and nature. But now it proceeded to revive them, not of course in their entirety, but still in certain sections and details, and—what is more—in phases that were dead and repulsive. Miracles in the churches became more numerous, more external, and more coarse. Whatever fables the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles had narrated, were dragged into contemporary life and predicated of the living present.

This church, whose religion Porphyry blamed for its audacious critique of the universe, its doctrine of the incarnation,520 and its assertion of the resurrection of the flesh521—this church labored at her mission in the second half of the third century, and she won the day. But had she been summoned to the bar and asked what right she had to admit these novelties, she could have replied, "I am not to blame. I have only developed the germ which was planted in my being from the very first." This religion was the first to cut the ground from under the feet of all other religions, and by means of her religious philosophy, as a civilizing power, to displace ancient philosophy.522 But the reasons for the triumph of Christianity in that age are no guarantee for the permanence of that triumph throughout the history of mankind. Such a triumph rather depends upon the simple elements of the religion, on the preaching of the living God as the Father of men and on the representation of Jesus Christ. For that very reason it depends also on the capacity of Christianity to strip off repeatedly such a collective syncretism and unite itself to fresh coefficients. The Reformation made a beginning in this direction.

BOOK III

THE MISSIONARIES: THE METHODS OF THE MISSION AND THE COUNTER-MOVEMENTS

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES (APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS, AND PROPHETS OR TEACHERS: THE INFORMAL MISSIONARIES)

I

BEFORE entering upon the subject proper, let us briefly survey the usage of the term "apostle," in its wider and narrower senses, throughout the primitive Christian writings.523

1. In Matthew, Mark, and John, "apostle" is not a special and distinctive name for the inner circle of the disciples of Jesus. These are almost invariably described as "the twelve,"524 or the twelve disciples.525 As may be inferred from Matt. xix. 28, the choice of this number probably referred to the twelve tribes of Israel.526 In my opinion the fact of their selection is historical, as is also the tradition that even during his lifetime Jesus once dispatched them to preach the gospel, and selected them with that end in view. At the same time, the primitive church honored them pre-eminently not as apostles but as the twelve disciples (chosen by Jesus). In John they are never called the apostles;527 in Matthew they are apparently called "the twelve apostles" (x. 2) once,528 but this reading is a correction, Syr. Sin. giving "disciples." At one place Mark writes "the apostles" (vi. 30), but this refers to their temporary missionary labors during the life of Jesus. All three evangelists are thus ignorant of "apostle" as a designation of the twelve: there is but one instance where the term is applied to them ad hoc.529

2. With Paul it is quite otherwise. He never employs the term "the twelve" (for in 1 Cor. xv. 5 he is repeating a formula of the primitive church),530 but confines himself to the idea of "apostles." His terminology, however, is not unambiguous on this point.

(a) He calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, and lays the greatest stress upon this fact.531 He became an apostle, as alone one could, through God (or Christ); God called him and gave him his apostleship,532 and his apostleship was proved by the work he did and by the way in which he did it.533

(b) His fellow-missionaries—e.g., Barnabas and Silvanus—are also apostles; not so, however, his assistants and pupils, such as Timothy and Sosthenes.534

(c) Others also—probably, e.g., Andronicus and Junias535 are apostles. In fact, the term cannot be sharply restricted at all; for as God appoints prophets and teachers "in the church," so also does he appoint apostles to be the front rank therein,536 and since such charismatic callings depend upon the church's needs, which are known to God alone, their numbers are not fixed. To the apostleship belong (in addition to the above mentioned call of God or Christ) the wonderful deeds which accredit it (2 Cor. xii. 12) and a work of its own (1 Cor. ix. 1-2), in addition to special rights.537 He who can point to such is an apostle. The very polemic against false apostles (2 Cor. ix. 13) and "super-apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5, xii. 11) proves that Paul did not regard the conception of "apostle" as implying any fixed number of persons, otherwise the polemic would have been differently put. Finally, a comparison of 1 Cor. xv. 7 with verse 5 of the same chapter shows, with the utmost clearness, that Paul distinguished a circle of apostles which was wider than the twelve—a distinction, moreover, which prevailed during the earliest period of the church and within Palestine.538

(d) But in a further, strict, sense of the term, "apostle" is reserved for those with whom he himself works539 and here some significance attaches to the very chronological succession of

those who were called to the apostleship (Rom. xvi. 7). The twelve who were called during the lifetime of Jesus fall to be considered as the oldest apostles;540 with their qualities and functions they form the pattern and standard for all subsequent apostles. Thus the twelve, and (what is more) the twelve as apostles, come to the front. As apostles Paul put them in front; in order to set the dignity of his own office in its true light, he embraced the twelve under the category of the original apostolate (thereby allowing their personal discipleship to fall into the background, in his terminology), and thus raised them above all other apostles, although not higher than the level which he claimed to occupy himself. That the twelve henceforth rank in history as the twelve apostles, and in fact as the apostles, was a result brought about by Paul; and, paradoxically enough, this was brought about by him in his very effort to fix the value of his own apostleship. He certainly did not work out this conception, for he neither could nor would give up the more general conception of the apostleship. Thus the term "apostle" is confined to the twelve only twice in Paul,541 and even in these passages the reference is not absolutely certain. They occur in the first chapter of Galatians and in 1 Cor. ix. 5. Gal. i. 17 speaks of of οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλοι ("those who were apostles before me"), where in all likeliehood the twelve are alone to be understood. Yet the subsequent remark in verse 19 (ἕτερον τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου) shows that it was of no moment to Paul to restrict the conception rigidly. In 1 Cor. ix. 5 we read, μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς the collocation of λοιπῶν ἀπόστολῶν with the Lord's brothers renders it very probable that Paul here is thinking of the twelve exclusively, and not of all the existing apostles, when he mentions "the apostles." To sum up our results: Paul holds fast to the wider conception of the apostolate, but the twelve disciples form in his view its original nucleus.

3. The terminology of Luke is determined as much by that of the primitive age (the Synoptic tradition) as by the post-Pauline. Following the former, he calls the chosen disciples of Jesus "the twelve,"542 or "the eleven;"543 but he reproduces the latter in describing these disciples almost invariably throughout Acts as simply "the apostles"—just as though there were no other544 apostles at all—and in relating, in his gospel, how Jesus himself called them apostles (vi. 13). Accordingly, even in the gospel he occasionally calls them "the apostles."545 This would incline one to assert that Luke either knew, or wished to know, of no apostles save the twelve; but the verdict would be precipitate, for in Acts xiv. 4, 14, he describes not merely Paul but also Barnabas as an apostle.546 Obviously, the terminology was not yet fixed by any means. Nevertheless it is surprising that Paul is only described as an "apostle" upon one occasion in the whole course of the book. He does not come547 under the description of the qualities requisite for the apostleship which Luke has in view in Acts i. 21 f., a description which became more and more normative for the next age. Consequently he cannot have been an apostle for Luke, except in the wider sense of the term.

4. The apocalypse of John mentions those who call themselves apostles and are not (ii. 2),548 which implies that they might be apostles. Obviously the writer is following the wider and original conception of the apostolate, The reference in xviii. 20 does not at least contradict this,549 any more than xxi. 14 (see above), although only the twelve are named here "apostles," while the statement with its symbolic character has certainly contributed largely to win the victory for the narrower sense of the term.

5. In First Peter and Second Peter (i. 1), Peter is called an apostle of Jesus Christ. As for Jud. 17 and 2 Peter iii. 2 (μνησθῆναι τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ὑμῶν ἐντολῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος), in the first passage it is certain, and in the second very likely, that only the twelve disciples are to be understood.

6. That the epistle of Clement uses “apostles” merely to denote the original apostles and Paul, is perfectly clear from xlii. 1 f. (the apostles chosen previous to the resurrection) and xlvii. 4 (where Apollos, as ἀνὴρ δεδοκιμάσμενος παρ᾽ ἀποστόλοις, a man approved by the apostles, is definitely distinguished from the apostles); cp. also v. 3 and xliv. 1. For Clement's conception of the apostolate, see below. The epistle of Barnabas (v. 9) speaks of the Lord's choice of his own apostles (ἴδιος ἀπόστολοι), and therefore seems to know of some other apostles; in viii. 3 the author only mentions the twelve “who preached to us the gospel of the forgiveness of sins550 and were empowered to preach the gospel,” without calling them expressly “apostles.”551 As the Preaching of Peter professes to be an actual composition of Peter, it is self-evident that whenever it speaks of apostles, the twelve are alone in view.552

7. The passage in Sim. IX. xvii. 1 leaves it ambiguous whether Hermas meant by “apostles” the twelve or some wider circle. But the other four passages in which the apostles emerge (Vis., III. v. 1; Sim., IX. xv. 4, xvi. 5, xxv. 2) make it perfectly clear that the author had in view a wider, although apparently a definite, circle of persons, and that he consequently paid no special attention to the twelve (see below, Sect. III., for a discussion upon this point and upon the collocation of apostles, bishops, and teachers, or of apostles and teachers). Similarly, the Didachê contemplates nothing but a wider circle of apostles. It certainly avows itself to be, as the title suggests, a διδαχὴ κυρίου διὰ τῶν ιβ΄ ἀποστόλων (an instruction of the Lord given through the twelve apostles), but the very addition of the number in this title is enough to show that the book knew of other apostles as well, and xi. 3-6 takes apostles exclusively in the wider sense of the term (details of this in a later section).

8. In the dozen or so passages where the word “apostle” occurs in Ignatius, there is not a single one which renders it probable that the word is used in its wider sense. On the contrary, there are several in which the only possible allusion is to the primitive apostles. We must therefore conclude that by “apostle” Ignatius simply and solely understood553 the twelve and Paul (Rom. iv. 3). Any decision in the case of Polycarp (Ep., vi. 3, viii. 1) is uncertain, but he would hardly have occupied a different position from that of Ignatius. His church added to his name the title of an “apostolic and prophetic teacher” (Ep. Smyrn., xvi. 2). shows that while two conceptions existed side by side, the narrower was successful in making headway against its rival.554

II

One other preliminary inquiry is necessary before we can proceed to the subject of this chapter. We are to discuss apostles, prophets, and teachers as the missionaries or preachers of Christianity; the question is, whether this threefold group can be explained from Judaism.

Such a derivation is in any case limited by the fact that these classes did not form any triple group in Judaism, their close association being a characteristic of primitive Christianity. With regard to each group, the following details are to be noted:—

1. Apostles.555—Jewish officials bearing this title are unknown to us until the destruction of the temple and the organization of the Palestinian patriarchate; but it is extremely unlikely that no “apostles” previously existed, since the Jews would hardly have created an official class of “apostles” after the appearance of the Christian apostles. At any rate, the fact was there, as also, beyond question, was the name556—i.e., of authoritative officials who collected contributions from the Diaspora for the temple and kept the churches in touch with Jerusalem

and with each other. According to Justin (Dial. xvii., cviii., cxvii.), the thoroughly systematic measures which were initiated from Jerusalem in order to counteract the Christian mission even in Paul's day were the work of the high priests and teachers, who despatched men (ἄνδρας χειροτονήσαντες ἐκλεκτούς) all over the world to give correct information about Jesus and his disciples. These were "apostles"557 that is, this task was entrusted to the "apostles" who kept Jerusalem in touch with the Diaspora.558

Eusebius (in Isa. xviii. 1 f.) proves that the chosen persons whom Justin thus characterizes are to be identified with the "apostles" of Judaism. The passage has been already printed (cp. p. 59), but in view of its importance it may once more be quoted: εὕρομεν ἐν τοῖς τῶν παλαιῶν συγγράμμασιν, ὡς οἱ τῆν Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἰκοῦντες τοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους ἱερεῖς καὶ πρεσβύτεροι γράμματα διαχαράξαντες εἰς πάντα διεπέμψαντο τὰ ἔθνη τοῖς ἀπανταχοῦ Ἰουδαίοις διαβάλλοντες τὴν Χριστοῦ διδασκαλίαν ὡς αἵρεσιν καινὴν καὶ ἀλλοτρίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, παρήγγελλόν τε δι᾽ ἐπιστολῶν μὴ παραδέξασθαι αὐτήν . . . . οἵ τε ἀπόστολοι αὐτῶν ἐπιστολὰς βιβλίνας κομιζόμενοι559 ἀπανταχοῦ γῆς διέτρεχον, τὸν περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἐνδιαβάλλοντες λόγον. ἀποστόλους δὲ εἰσέτι καὶ νῦν (so that the institution was no novelty) ἔθος ἐστὶν Ἰουδαὶοις ὀνομάζειν τοὺς ἐγκύκλια γράμματα παρὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτῶν ἐπικομιζομένονς. The primary function, therefore, which Eusebius emphasized in the Jewish "apostles" of his own day, was their duty of conveying encyclical epistles issued by the central authority for the instruction and direction of the Diaspora. In the law-book (Theodosianus Codex, xvi. 8. 14), as is only natural, another side is presented "Superstitionis indignae est, ut archisynagogi sive presbyteri Judaeorum vel quos ipsi apostolos vocant, qui ad exigendum aurum atque argentum a patriarcha certo tempore diriguntur," etc. ("It is part of this worthless superstition that the Jews have chiefs of their synagogues, or elders, or persons whom they call apostles, who are appointed by the patriarch at a certain season to collect gold and silver"). The same aspect is adduced, as the context indicates, by Julian (Epist. xxv.; Hertlein, p. 513), when he speaks of "the apostleship you talk about" λεγομένη παῤ ὑμῖν ἀποστολή Jerome (ad Gal., i. 1) merely remarks: "Usque hodie a patriarchis Judaeorum apostolos mitti" ("To this day apostles are despatched by the Jewish patriarchs"). But we gain much more information from Epiphanius, who, in speaking of a certain Joseph (adv. Hær., xxx. 4), writes: οὗτος τῶν παῤ αὐτοῖς ἀξιωματικῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐναρίθμιος ἦν· εἰσὶ δὲ οὗτοι μετὰ τὸν πατριάρχην ἀπόστολοι καλούμενοι, προσεδρεύουσι δὲ τῷ πατριάρχῃ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ πολλάκις καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ συνεχῶς διάγουσι, διὰ τὸ συμβουλεύειν καὶ ἀναφέρειν αὐτῷ τὰ κατὰ τὸν νόμον.560 He tells (chap. xi.) when this Joseph became an apostle (or, got the εὐκαρπία τῆς ἀποστολῆς), and then proceeds: καὶ μετ᾽ ἐπιστολῶν οὗτος ἀποστέλλεται εἰς τὴν Κιλίκων γῆν· ὅς ἀνελθὼν ἐκεῖσε ἀπὸ ἑκάστης πόλεως τῆς Κιλικίας τὰ ἐπιδέκατα καὶ τὰς ἀπαρχὰς παρὰ τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ Ἰουδαίων εἰσέπραττεν . . . . ἐπεὶ οὖν, οἷα ἀπόστολος (οὕτως γὰρ παῤ αὐτοῖς, ὡς ἔφην, τὸ ἀξίωμα καλεῖται), ἐμβριθέστατος καὶ καθαρεύων δῆθεν τὰ εἰς κατάστασιν εὐνομίας, οὕτως ἐπιτελεῖν προβαλλόμενος, πολλοὺς τῶν κακῶν κατασταθέντων ἀρχισυναγώγων καὶ ἱερέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀζανιτῶν . . . . καθαιρῶν τε καὶ μετακινῶν τοῦ ἀξιώματος ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἐνεκοτεῖτο, κ.τ.λ. ("He was despatched with epistles to Cilicia, and on arriving there proceeded to levy from every city of Cilicia the titles and firstfruits paid by the Jews throughout the province. When, therefore, in virtue of his apostleship (for so is this order of men entitled by the Jews, as I have said), he acted with great rigour, forsooth, in his reforms and restoration of good order-which was the very business before him—deposing and removing from office many wicked chiefs of the synagogue and priests and presbyters and ministers . . . . he became hated by many people").

Putting together these functions of the "apostles,"561 we get the following result. (1) They were consecrated persons of a very high rank; (2) they were sent out into the Diaspora to

collect tribute for headquarters; (3) they brought encyclical letters with them, kept the Diaspora in touch with the centre and informed of the intentions of the latter (or of the patriarch), received orders about any dangerous movement, and had to organize resistance to it; (4) they exercised certain powers of surveillance and discipline in the Diaspora; and (5) on returning to their own country they formed a sort of council which aided the patriarch in supervising the interests of the law.

In view of all this one can hardly deny a certain connection between these Jewish apostles and the Christian. It was not simply that Paul562 and others had hostile relations with them their very organization afforded a sort of type for the Christian apostleship, great as were the differences between the two. But, one may ask, were not these differences too great? Were not the Jewish apostles just financial officials? Well, at the very moment when the primitive apostles recognized Paul as an apostle, they set him also a financial task (Gal. ii. 10); he was to collect money throughout the Diaspora for the church at Jerusalem. The importance henceforth attached by Paul to this side of his work is well known; on it he spent unceasing care, although it involved him in the sorest vexations and led finally to his death. Taken by itself, it is not easy to understand exactly how the primitive apostles could impose this task on Paul, and how he could quietly accept it. But the thing becomes intelligible whenever we assume that the church at Jerusalem, together with the primitive apostles, considered themselves the central body of Christendom, and also the representatives of the true Israel. That was the reason why the apostles whom they recognized were entrusted with a duty similar to that imposed on Jewish "apostles," viz., the task of collecting the tribute of the Diaspora. Paul himself would view it, one imagines, in a somewhat different light, but it is quite probable that this was how the matter was viewed by the primitive apostles. In this way the connection between the Jewish and the Christian apostles, which on other grounds is hardly to be denied in spite of all their differences, becomes quite evident.563

These statements about the Jewish apostles have been contested by Monnier (op. cit., pp. 16 f.): "To prop up his theory, Harnack takes a text of Justin and fortifies it with another from Eusebius. That is, he proves the existence of an institution in the first century by means of a second-century text, and interprets the latter by means of a fourth-century writer. This is too easy." But it is still more easy to let such confusing abstractions blind us to the reasons which in the present instance not only allow us but even make it obvious to explain the testimony of Justin by that of Eusebius, and again to connect it with what we know of the antichristian mission set on foot by the Jerusalemites, and of the false apostles in the time of Paul. I have not ignored the fact that we possess no direct evidence for the assertion that Jewish emissaries like Saul in the first century bore the name of "apostles."

(2) Prophets.—The common idea is that prophets had died out in Judaism long before the age of Jesus and the apostles, but the New Testament itself protests against this erroneous idea. Reference may be made especially to John the Baptist, who certainly was a prophet and was called a prophet; also to the prophetess Hanna (Luke ii. 36), to Barjesus the Jewish prophet in the retinue of the pro-consul at Cyprus (Acts xiii. 7), and to the warnings against false prophets (Matt. vii. 15, xxiv. 11, 25 = Mark xiii. 22, 1 John iv. 1, 2 Pet. ii. 1). Besides, we are told that the Essenes possessed the gift of prophecy;564 of Theudas, as of the Egyptian,565 it is said, προφήτης ἔλεγεν εἶναι ("he alleged himself to be a prophet, Joseph" Antiq., xx. 5. 1); Josephus the historian played the prophet openly and successfully before Vespasian;566 Philo called himself a prophet, and in the Diaspora we hear of Jewish interpreters of dreams, and of prophetic magicians.567 What is still more significant, the wealth of contemporary Jewish apocalypses, oracular utterances, and so forth shows that, so far from being extinct, prophecy

was in luxuriant bloom, and also that prophets were numerous, and secured both adherents and readers. There were very wide circles of Judaism who cannot have felt any surprise when a prophet appeared: John the Baptist and Jesus were hailed without further ado as prophets, and the imminent return of ancient prophets was an article of faith.568 From its earliest awakening, then, Christian prophecy was no novelty, when formally considered, but a phenomenon which readily coordinated itself with similar contemporary phenomena in Judaism. In both cases, too, the high value attached to the prophets follows as a matter of course, since they are the voice of God; recognized as genuine prophets, they possess an absolute authority in their preaching and counsels. They were not merely deemcd capable of miracles, but even expected to perform them. It even seemed credible that a prophet could rise from the dead by the power of God; Herod and a section of the people were quite of opinion that Jesus was John the Baptist redivivnt (see also Rev. xi. 11).569

(3) Teachers.—No words need be wasted on the importance of the scribes and teachers in Judaism, particularly in Palestine; but in order to explain historically the prestige claimed and enjoyed by the Christian διδάσκαλοι it is necessary to allude to the prestige of the Jewish teachers. “The rabbis claimed from their pupils the most unqualified reverence, a reverence which was to exceed even that paid to father and mother.” “Let esteem for thy friend border on respect for thy teacher, and respect for thy teacher on reverence for God.” “Respect for a teacher surpasses respect for a father; for son and father alike owe respect to a teacher.” “If a man's father and teacher have lost anything, the teacher's loss has the prior claim; for while his father has only brought the nian into the world, his teacher has taught him wisdom and brought him to life in the world to come. If a man's father and teacher are bearing burdens, he must help the teacher first, and then his father. If father and teacher are both in captivity, he must ransom the teacher first.” As a rule, the rabbis claimed everywhere the highest rank. “They love the uppermost places at feasts and the front seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-place, and to be called by men ‘rabbi’”(Matt. xxiii. 6 f. and parallel passages). “Their very dress was that of people of quality.”570

Thus the three members of the Christian group—apostles, prophets, teachers—were already to be met with in contemporary Judaism, where they were individually held in very high esteem. Still, they were not grouped together; otherwise the prophets would have been placed in a more prominent position. The grouping of these three classes, and the special development of the apostleship, were the special work of the Christian church. It was a work which had most vital consequences.

III

As we are essaying a study of the missionaries and teachers, let us take the Didachê into consideration.571

In the fourth chapter, where the author gathers up the special duties of Christians as members of the church, this counsel is put forward as the first commandment: τέκνον μοῦ, τοῦ λαλοῦντός σοι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ μνησθήσῃ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, τιμήσεις δὲ αὐτὸν ὡς κύριον· ὅθεν γὰρ ἡ κυριότης λαλεῖται, ἐκεῖ κύριός ἐστιν (“My son, thou shalt remember him that speaketh to thee the word of God by night and day; thou shalt honour him as the Lord. For whencesoever the lordship is lauded, there is the Lord present “).572 As is plain from the whole book (particularly from what is said in chap. xv. on the bishops and deacons), the writer knew only one class of people who were to be honored in the church, viz., those alone who preached

the word of God in their capacity of ministri evangelii.573

But who are these λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ in the Didachê? Not permanent, elected officials of an individual church, but primarily independent teachers who ascribed their calling to a divine command or charism. Among them we distinguish (1) apostles, (2) prophets, and (3) teachers. These preachers, at the time when the author wrote, and for the circle of churches with which he was familiar, were in the first place the regular missionaries of the gospel (apostles), in the second place the men who ministered to edification, and consequently sustained the spiritual life of the churches (prophets and teachers).574

(1) They were not elected by the churches, as were bishops and deacons alone (xv. 1, χειροτονήσατε ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους). In 1 Cor. xii. 28 we read: καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους (cp. Ephes. iv. 11: καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους. The early source incorporated in Acts xiii. gives a capital idea of the way in which this divine appointment is to be understood in the case of the apostles. In that passage we are told how after prayer and fasting five prophets and teachers resident in the church at Antioch (Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul) received instructions from the holy Spirit to despatch Barnabas and Saul as missionaries or apostles.575 We may assume that in other cases also the apostles could fall back on such an exceptional commission.576The prophets were authenticated by what they delivered in the form of messages from the Holy Spirit, in so far as these addresses proved spiritually effective. But it is impossible to determine exactly how people were recognized as teachers. One clue seems visible, however, in Jas. iii. 1, where we read: μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε, εἰδότες ὅτι μεῖζον κρίμα λημψόμεθα. From this it follows that to become a teacher was a matter of personal choice —based, of course, upon the individual's consciousness of possessing a charisma. The teacher also ranked as one who had received the holy Spirit577 for his calling; whether he was a genuine teacher (Did., xiii. 2) or not, was a matter which, like the genuineness of the prophets (Did., xi. 11, xiii. 1), had to be decided by the churches. Yet they merely verified the existence of a divine commission; they did not in the slightest degree confer any office by their action. As a rule, the special and onerous duties which apostles and prophets had to discharge (see below) formed a natural barrier against the intrusion of a crowd of interlopers into the office of the preacher or the missionary.

(2) The distinction of “apostles, prophets, and teachers” is very old, and was common in the earliest period of the church. The author of the Didachê presupposes that apostles, prophets, and teachers were known to all the churches. In xi. 7 he specially mentions prophets; in xii. 3 f. he names apostles and prophets, conjoining in xiii. 1-2 and xvi. 1-2 prophets and teachers (never apostles and teachers: unlike Hermas). The inference is that although this order —“apostles, prophets, and teachers”—was before his mind, the prophets and apostles formed in certain aspects a category by themselves, while in other aspects the prophets had to be ranked with the teachers (see below). This order is identical with that of Paul (1 Cor. xii. 28), so that its origin is to be pushed back to the sixth decade of the first century; in fact, it goes back to a still earlier period, for in saying οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, κ.τ.λ., Paul is thinking without doubt of some arrangement in the church which held good among Jewish Christian communities founded apart from his co-operation, no less than among the communities of Greece and Asia Minor. This assumption is confirmed by Acts xi. 27, xv. 22, 32, and xiii. 1. f. In the first of these passages we hear of prophets who had migrated from the Jerusalem-church to the Antiochene;578 the third passage implies that five men, who are described as prophets and teachers, occupied a special position in the church at Antioch, and

that two of their number were elected by them as apostles at the injunction of the Spirit (see above).579 Thus the apostolic vocation was not necessarily involved in the calling to be a prophet or teacher; it required for itself a further special injunction of the Spirit. From Acts xiii. 1 f. the order—"apostles, prophets, teachers"—follows indirectly but quite obviously; we have therefore evidence for it (as the notice may be considered historically reliable) in the earliest Gentile church and at a time which was probably not even one decade distant from the year of Paul's conversion.

A century may have elapsed between the event recorded in Acts xiii. 1 f. and the final editing of the Didachê. But intermediate stages are not lacking. First, we have the evidence of 1 Cor. (xii. 28),580 with two witnesses besides in Ephesians (whose evidence is all the more weighty if the epistle is not genuine) and Hermas. Yet neither of these witnesses is of supreme importance, inasmuch as both fail to present in its pristine purity the old class of the regular λαλούντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ as apostles, prophets, and teachers; both point to a slight modification of this class, owing to the organization of individual churches, complete within themselves, which had grown up on other bases.

Like Did. xi. 3, Eph. ii. 20 and iii. 5 associate apostles and prophets, and assign them an extremely high position. All believers, we are told, are built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, to whom, in the first instance, is revealed the secret that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs of the promise of Christ. That prophets of the gospel, and not of the Old Testament, are intended here is shown both by the context and by the previous mention of apostles. Now in the list at iv. 11 the order "apostles, prophets, and teachers" is indeed preserved, but in such a way that "evangelists" are inserted after "prophets," and "pastors" added to "teachers" (preceding them, in fact, but constituting with them a single group or class).581 From these intercalated words it follows (1) that the author (or Paul) knew missionaries who did not possess the dignity of apostles,582 but that he did not place them immediately after the apostles, inasmuch as the collocation of "apostles and prophets" was a sort of noli me tangere (not so the collocation of "prophets and teachers"); (2) that he reckoned the leaders of an individual church (ποιμένες) among the preachers bestowed upon the church as a whole (the individual church in this way made its influence felt); (3) that he looks upon the teachers as persons belonging to a definite church, as is evident from the close connection of teachers with ποιμένες and the subsequent mention (though in collocation) of the former. The difference between the author of Ephesians and the author of the Didachê on these points, however, ceases to have any significance when one observes two things: (a) first, that even the latter places the ποιμένες (ἐπίσκοποι) of the individual church side by side with the teachers, and seeks to have like honor paid to them (xv. 1-2); and secondly (b), that he makes the permanent domicile of teachers in an individual church (xiii. 2) the rule, as opposed to any special appointment (whereas, with regard to prophets, domicile would appear, from xiii. 1, to have been the exception). It is certainly obvious that the Didachê's arrangement approaches more nearly than that of Ephesians to the arrangement given by Paul in Corinthians, but it would be more than hasty to conclude that the Didachê must therefore be older than the former epistle. We have already seen that the juxtaposition of the narrower conception of the apostolate with the broader is very early, and that the latter, instead of being simply dropped, kept pace for a time with the former. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that passages like Acts xiii. 1, xi. 27, xxi. 10, etc., prove that although the prophets, and especially the teachers, had to serve the whole church with their gifts, they could possess, even in the earliest age, a permanent residence and also membership of a definite community, either permanently or for a considerable length of time. Hence at an early period they could be viewed in this particular light, without prejudice to their function as teachers who were assigned to the church in general.

As for Hermas, the most surprising observation suggested by the book is that the prophets are never mentioned, for all its enumeration of classes of preachers and superintendents in Christendom.583 In consequence of this, apostles and teachers ἀπόστολοι and διδάσκαλοι are usually conjoined.584 Now as Hermas comes forward in the role of prophet, as his book contains one large section (Mand. xi) dealing expressly with false and genuine prophets, and finally as the vocation of the genuine prophet is more forcibly emphasized in Hermas than in any other early Christian writing and presupposed to be universal, the absence of any mention of the prophet in the "hierarchy" of Hermas must be held to have been deliberate. In short, Hermas passed over the prophets because he reckoned himself one of them. If this inference be true585 we are justified in supplying "prophets "wherever Hermas names "apostles and teachers," so that he too becomes an indirect witness to the threefold group of "apostles, prophets, teachers."586 In that case the conception expounded in the ninth similitude of the "Shepherd" is exactly parallel to that of the man who wrote the Didachê. Apostles (prophets) and teachers are the preachers appointed by God to establish the spiritual life of the churches; next to them come (chapters xxv.-xxvii.) the bishops and deacons.587 On the other hand, the author alters this order in Vis., III. v. 1, where he writes:588οἱ μὲν οὖν λίθοι οἱ τετράγωνοι καὶ λευκοὶ καὶ συμφωνοῦντες ταῖς ἁρμογαῖς αὐτῶν, οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἀπόστολοι (add καὶ προφῆται) καὶ ἐπίσκοποι καὶ διδάσκαλοι καὶ διάκονοι οἱ πορευθέντες κατὰ τὴν σεμνοτητα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπισκοπήσαντες καὶ διδάξαντες καὶ διακονήσαντες ἁγνῶς καὶ σεμνῶς τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ, οἱ μὲν κεκοιμημένοι, οἱ δὲ ἔτι ὄντες According to the author of the Didachê also, the ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι are to be added to the ἀπόστολοι, προφῆται, and διδάσκαλοι, but the difference between the two writers is that Hernias has put the bishops, just as the author of Ephesians has put the ποιμένες, before the teachers. The reasons for this are unknown to us; all we can make out is that at this point also the actual organization of the individual communities had already modified the conception of the organization of the collective church which Hermas shared with the author of the Didachê.589

Well then; one early source of Acts, Paul, Hermas, and the author of the Didachê all attest the fact that in the earliest Christian churches "those who spoke the word of God" (the λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) occupied the highest position,590 and that they were subdivided into apostles, prophets, and teachers. They also bear evidence to the fact that these apostles prophets, and teachers were not esteemed as officials of an individual community, but were honored as preachers who had been appointed by God and assigned to the church as a whole. The notion that the regular preachers in the church were elected by the different churches is as erroneous as the other idea that they had their "office" transmitted to them through a human channel of some kind or other. So far as men worked together here, it was in the discharge of a direct command from the Spirit.

Finally, we have to consider more precisely the bearings of this conclusion, viz., that, to judge from the consistent testimony of the earliest records, the apostles, prophets, and teachers were allotted and belonged, not to any individual community, but to the church as a whole. By means of this feature Christendom possessed, amid all its scattered fragments, a certain cohesion and a bond of unity which has often been underestimated. These apostles and prophets, wandering from place to place, and received by every community with the utmost respect, serve to explain how the development of the church in different provinces and under very different conditions could preserve, as it did, such a degree of homogeneity. Nor have they left their traces merely in the scanty records, where little but their names are mentioned, and where witness is borne to the respect in which they were held. In a far higher degree their self-expression appears throughout a whole genre of early Christian literature, namely, the so-called catholic epistles and writings. It is impossible to understand the origin, spread, and vogue of a

literary genre so peculiar and in many respects so enigmatic, unless one correlates it with what is known of the early Christian “apostles, prophets, and teachers.” When one considers that these men were set by God within the church—i.e., in Christendom as a whole, and not in any individual community, their calling being meant for the church collective—it becomes obvious that the so-called catholic epistles and writings, addressed to the whole of Christendom, form a genre in literature which corresponds to these officials, and which must have arisen at a comparatively early period. An epistle like that of James, addressed “to the twelve tribes of the dispersion,” with its prophetic passages (iv.-v.), its injunctions uttered even to presbyters (v. 14), and its emphatic assertions (v. 15 f.), this epistle, which cannot have come from the apostle James himself, becomes intelligible so soon as we think of the wandering prophets who, conscious of a divine calling which led them to all Christendom, felt themselves bound to serve the church as a whole. We can well understand how catholic epistles must have won great prestige, even although they were not originally distinguished by the name of any of the twelve apostles.591Behind these epistles stood the teachers called by God, who were to be reverenced like the Lord himself. It would lead us too afar afield to follow up this view, but one may refer to the circulation and importance of certain “catholic” epistles throughout the churches, and to the fact that they determined the development of Christianity in the primitive period hardly less than the Pauline epistles. During the closing decades of the first century, and at the opening of the second, the extraordinary activity of these apostles, prophets, or teachers left a lasting memorial of itself in the “catholic” writings; to which we must add other productions like the “Shepherd” of Hermas, composed by an author of whom we know nothing except the fact that his revelations were to be communicated to all the churches. He is really not a Roman prophet; being a prophet, he is a teacher for Christendom as a whole.

It has been remarked, not untruly, that Christendom came to have church officials—as distinct from local officials of the communities—only after the episcopate had been explained as an organization intended to perpetuate the apostolate in such a way that every bishop was held, not simply to occupy an office in the particular community, but to rank as a bishop of the catholic church (and, in this sense, to be a follower of the apostles). This observation is correct. But it has to be supplemented by the following consideration that in the earliest age special forms of organization did arise which in one aspect afford an analogy to ecclesiastical office in later catholicism. For “those who spake the word of God” (the λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) were catholic teachers (διδάσκαλοι καθολικοί).592 Yet even when these primitive teachers were slowly disappearing, a development commenced which ended in the triumph of the monarchical episcopate, i.e., in the recognition of the apostolic and catholic significance attaching to the episcopate. The preliminary stages in this development may be distinguished wherever in Ephesians, Hermas, and the Didachê the permanent officials of the individual community are promoted to the class of apostles, prophets, and teachers,” or already inserted among them. When this happened, the fundamental condition was provided which enabled the bishops at last to secure the prestige of “apostles, prophets, and teachers.” If one looks at 1 Cor. xii. 28or Did. xiii. (“the prophets are your high-priests”), and then at the passages in Cyprian and the literature of the following period, where the bishops are extolled as the apostles, prophets, teachers, and high-priests of the church, one has before one's eyes the start and the goal of one of the most important developments in early Christianity. In the case of prominent bishops like Polycarp of Smyrna, the end had long ago been anticipated; for Polycarp was honored by his church and throughout Asia as an “apostolic and prophetic teacher.”

As for the origin of the threefold group, we have shown that while its component parts existed in Judaism, their combination cannot be explained from such a quarter. One might be inclined to trace it back to Jesus Christ himself, for he once sent out his disciples as

missionaries (apostles), and he seems (according to Matt. x. 41) to have spoken of itinerant preaching prophets whom he set on foot. But the historicity of the latter passage is disputed;593 Jesus expressely denied the title “teacher” to his disciples (Matt. xxiii. 8); and an injunction such as that implied in the creation of this threefold group does not at all tally with the general preaching of Jesus or with the tenor of his instructions. We must therefore assume that the rise of the threefold group and the esteem in which it was held by the community at Jerusalem (and that from a very early period) were connected with the “Spirit” which possessed the community. Christian prophets are referred to in the context of Acts 2. (cp. verse 18); they made their appearance very soon (Acts iv. 36). Unfortunately, we do not know any further details, and the real origin of the enthusiastic group of “apostles, prophets, and teachers” is as obscure as that of the ecclesiastical group of “bishops, deacons, and presbyters,” or of the much later complex of the so-called inferior orders of the clergy. In each case it is a question of something consciously created, which starts from a definite point, although it may have sprung up under pressure exerted by the actual circumstances of the situation.

IV

The Didachê begins by grouping together apostles and prophets (xi. 3), and directing that the ordinance of the gospel is to hold good as regards both of them; but in its later chapters it groups prophets and teachers together and is silent on the apostles. From this it follows, as has been already pointed out, that the prophets had something in common with apostles on the one hand and with teachers on the other. The former characteristic may be inferred from the expression κατὰ τὰ δόγμα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, as well as from the detailed injunctions that follow.594 The “ordinance of the gospel” can mean only the rules which we read in Mark vi. (and parallels),595 and this assumption is corroborated by the fact that in Matt. x., which puts together the instructions for apostles, itinerant prophets also are mentioned, who are supposed to be penniless. To be penniless, therefore, was considered absolutely essential for apostles and prophets; this is the view shared by 3 John, Origen, and Eusebius. John remarks that the missionaries wandered about and preached, without accepting anything from pagans. They must therefore have been instructed to “accept” from Christians. Origen (contra Cels., III. ix.) writes: “Christians do all in their power to spread the faith all over the world. Some of them accordingly make it the business of their life to wander not only from city to city but from township to township and village to village, in order to gain fresh converts for the Lord. Nor could one say they do this for the sake of gain, since they often refuse to accept so much as the bare necessities of life; even if necessity drives them sometimes to accept a gift, they are content with getting their most pressing needs satisfied, although many people are ready to give them much more than that. And if at the present day, owing to the large number of people who are converted, some rich men of good position and delicate high-born women give hospitality to the messengers of the faith, will any one venture to assert that some of the latter preach the Christian faith merely for the sake of being honored? In the early days, when great peril threatened the preachers of the faith especially, such a suspicion could not easily have been entertained; and even at the present day the discredit with which Christians are assailed by unbelievers outweighs any honor that some of their fellow-believers show to them.” Eusebius (H.E., iii. 37) writes: “Very many of the disciples of that age (pupils of the apostles), whose heart had been ravished by the divine Word with a burning love for philosophy [i.e., asceticism], had first fulfilled the command of the Saviour and divided their goods among the needy. Then they set out on long journeys, performing the office of evangelists, eagerly striving to preach Christ to those who as yet had never heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the holy gospels. In

foreign lands they simply laid the foundations of the faith. That done, they appointed others as shepherds, entrusting them with the care of the new growth, while they themselves proceeded with the grace and co-operation of God to other countries and to other peoples." See, too, H.E., v. 10. 2, where, in connection with the end of the second century, we read: "There were even yet many evangelists of the word eager to use their divinely inspired zeal, after the example of the apostles, to increase and build up the divine Word. One of these was Pantænus" (ἔνθεου ζῆλον ἀποστολικοῦ μιμήματος συνεισφέρειν ἐπ᾽ αὐξήσει καὶ οἰκοδομῇ τοῦ θείου λόγου προμηθούμενοι, ὧν εἷς γενόμενος καὶ Πανταῖνος).596 The second essential for apostles, laid down by the Didachê side by side with poverty, namely, indefatigable missionary activity (no settling down), is endorsed by Origen and Eusebius also.597

The Didachê informs us that these itinerant missionaries were still called apostles at the opening of the second century. Origen and Eusebius assure us that they existed during the second century, and Origen indeed knows of such even in his own day; but the name of "apostle" was no longer borne,598 owing to the heightened reverence felt for the original apostles and also owing to the idea which gained currency even in the course of the second century, that the original apostles had already preached the gospel to the whole world. This idea prevented any subsequent missionaries from being apostles, since they were no longer the first to preach the gospel to the nations.599

We have already indicated how the extravagant estimate of the primitive apostles arose.600 Their labours were to be looked upon as making amends for the fact that Jesus Christ did not himself labour as a missionary in every land. Furthermore, the belief that the world was near its end produced, by a sort of inevitable process, the idea that the gospel had by this time been preached everywhere; for the end could not come until this universal proclamation had been accomplished, and the credit of this wonderful extension was assigned to the apostles.601 On these grounds the prestige of the primitive apostles shot up to so prodigious a height, that their commission to the whole world was put right into the creed.602 We are no longer in a position nowadays to determine the degree of truth underlying the belief in the apostles' world-wide mission. In any case it must have been extremely slight, and any representation of the twelve apostles as a unity organized for the purpose of worldwide labours among the Gentile churches is to be relegated without hesitation to the province of legend.603

Unfortunately, we know next to nothing of any details concerning the missionaries (apostles) and their labours during the second century; their very names are lost, with the exception of Pantænus, the Alexandrian teacher, and his mission to "India" (Eus., H.E., v. 10). Perhaps we should look upon Papylus in the Acts of Carpus and Papylus as a missionary; for in his cross-examination he remarks: ἐν πάσῃ ἐπαρχία καὶ πόλει εἰσίν μου τέκνα κατὰ θεόν (ch. 32, "in every province and city I have children according to God"). Attalus in Lyons was probably a missionary also (Eus., H.E. v. 1). Neither of these cases is, however, beyond doubt. If we could attach any value to the romance of Paul and Thecla (in the Acta Pauli), one name would come up in this connection, viz., that of Thecla, the only woman who was honored with the title of ἡ ἀπόστολος. But it is extremely doubtful if any basis of fact, apart from the legend itself, underlies the veneration felt for her, although the legend itself may contain some nucleus of historic truth. Origen knows of cases within his own experience in which a missionary or teacher was subsequently chosen to be bishop by his converts,604 but the distinction between missionary and teacher had been blurred by this time, and the old triad no longer existed.

Yet even though we cannot describe the labours of the apostles during the second century—and by the opening of the third century only stragglers from this class were still to be met with—

the creation and the career of this heroic order form of themselves a topic of supreme interest. Their influence need not, of course, be overestimated. For, in the first place, we find the Didachê primarily concerned with laying down rules to prevent abuses in the apostolic office; so that by the beginning of the second century, as we are not surprised to learn, it must have been already found necessary to guard against irregularity. In the second place, had apostles continued to play an important part in the second century, the stereotyped conception of the primitive apostles, with their fundamental and really exhaustive labours in the mission-field, could never have arisen at all or become so widely current. Probably, then, it is not too hazardous to affirm that the church really had never more than two apostles in the true sense of the term, one great and the other small, viz., Paul and Peter—unless perhaps we add John of Ephesus. The chief credit for the spread of Christianity scarcely belongs to the other regular apostles, penniless and itinerant, otherwise we should have heard of them, or at least have learnt their names; whereas even Eusebius was as ignorant about them as we are to-day. The chief credit for the spread of Christianity is due to those who were not regular apostles, and also to the "teachers."

V

Though the prophets,605 according to the Didachê and other witnesses, had also to be penniless like the apostles, they are not to be reckoned among the regular missionaries. Still, like the teachers, they were indirectly of importance to the mission, as their charismatic office qualified them for preaching the word of God, and, indeed, put them in the way of such a task. Their inspired addresses were listened to by pagans as well as by Christians, and Paul assumes (1 Cor. xiv. 24), not without reason, that the former were especially impressed by the prophet's harangue and by his power of searching the hearer's heart. Down to the close of the second century the prophets retained their position in the church;606 but the Montanist movement brought early Christian prophecy at once to a head and to an end. Sporadic traces of it are still to be found in later years,607 but such prophets no longer possessed any significance for the church; in fact, they were quite summarily condemned by the clergy as false prophets. Like the apostles, the prophets occupied a delicate and risky position. It was easy for them to degenerate. The injunctions of the Didachê (ch. xi.) indicate the sort of precautions which were considered necessary, even in the opening of the second century, to protect the churches against fraudulent prophets of the type sketched by Lucian in Proteus Peregrinus; and the latter volume agrees with the Didachê, inasmuch as it describes Peregrinus in his prophetic capacity as now settled in a church, now itinerating in company with Christians who paid him special honor—for prophets were not confined to any single church. Nor were even prophetesses awanting; they were to be met with inside the Catholic Church as well as among the gnostics in particular.608

The materials and sources available for a study of the early Christian prophets are extremely voluminous, and the whole subject is bound up with a number of questions which are still unsettled; for example, the relation of the Christian prophets to the numerous categories of the pagan prophets (Egyptian, Syrian, and Greek) who are known to us from the literature and inscriptions of the period, is a subject which has never yet been investigated.609 However, these materials are of no use for our immediate purpose, as no record of the missionary labours of the prophets is extant.

VI

The Didachê mentions teachers twice (xiii. 2, xv. 1-2), and, what is more, as a special class within the churches. Their ministry was the same as that of the prophets, a ministry of the word; consequently they belonged to the "honored" class, and, like the prophets, could claim to be supported. On the other hand, they were evidently not obliged to be penniless;610 nor did they wander about, but resided in a particular community.

These statements are corroborated by such passages in our sources (see above, pp. 336 f.) as group apostles, prophets, and teachers together, and further, by a series of separate testimonies which show that to be a teacher was a vocation in Christianity, and that the teacher enjoyed great repute not only in the second century, but partly also, as we shall see, in later years. First of all, the frequency with which we find authors protesting that they are not writing in the capacity of teachers (or issuing instructions) proves how serious was the veneration paid to a true teacher, and how he was accorded the right of issuing injunctions that were universally valid and authoritative. Thus Barnabas asserts: ἐγὼ δὲ οὐχ ὡς διδάσκαλος ἀλλ᾽ ὡς εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑποδείξω (i. 8, "I am no teacher, but as one of yourselves I will demonstrate"); and again, "Fain would I write many things, but not as a teacher" πολλὰ δὲ θέλων γράφειν οὐχ ὡς διδάσκαλος, iv. 9).611 Ignatius explains, οὐ διατάσσομαι ὑμῖν ὡς ὤν τις . . . . προσλαλῶ ὑμῖν ὡς συνδιδασκαλίταις μου ("I do not command you as if I were somebody . . . . I address you as my school-fellows," ad Eph., iii. 1);612 and Dionysius of Alexandria in the third century still writes (Ep. ad Basil.): ἐγὼ δὲ οὐχ ὡς διδάσκαλος, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς μετὰ πάσης ἁπλότητος προσῆκον ἡμᾶς ἀλλήλοις διαλέγεσθαι ("I speak not as a teacher, but with all the simplicity with which it befits us to address each other").613 The warning of the epistle of James (iii. 1): μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε, proves how this vocation was coveted in the church, a vocation of which Hermas pointedly remarks (Sim., IX. xxv. 2) that its members had received the holy Spirit.614 Hermas also refers (Mand., IV. iii. 1) to a saying which he had heard from certain teachers with regard to baptism, and which the angel proceeds deliberately to endorse; this proves that there were teachers of high repute at Rome in the days of Hermas. An elaborate charge to teachers is given in the pseudo-Clementine Epist. de Virginitate (I. 11): "Doctores esse volunt et disertos sese ostendere . . . . neque adtendunt ad id quod dicit [Scriptura]: 'Ne multi inter vos sint doctores, fratres, neque omnes sitis prophetæ.' . . . . Timeamus ergo iudicium quod imminet doctoribus; grave enim vero iudicium subituri sunt doctores illi, qui docent615 et non faciunt, et illi qui Christi nomen mendaciter assumunt dicuntque se docere veritatem, at circumcursant et temere vagantur seque exaltant atque gloriantur in sententia carnis suae. . . . . Verumtamen si accepisti sermonem scientiae aut sermonem doctrinae aut prophetias aut ministerii, laudetur deus . . . . illo igitur charismate, quod a deo accepisti (sc. χαρίσματι διδαχῆς illo inservi fratribus pneumaticis, prophetis, qui dignoscant dei esse verba ea, quae loqueris, et enarra quod accepisti charisma in ecclesiastico conventu ad aedificationem fratrum tuorum in Christo" ("They would be teachers and show off their learning. . . . . and they heed not what the Scripture saith: 'Be not many teachers, my brethren, and be not all prophets.' . . . . Let us therefore dread that judgment which hangs over teachers. For indeed a severe judgment shall those teachers undergo who teach but do not practise, as also those who falsely take on themselves the name of Christ, and say they are speaking the truth, whereas they gad round and wander rashly about and exalt themselves and glory in the mind of their flesh. . . . . But if thou hast received the word of knowledge, or of teaching, or of prophecy, or of ministry, let God be praised. . . . . Therefore with that spiritual gift received from God, do thou serve thy brethren the spiritual ones, even the prophets who detect that thy words are the words of God; and publish the gift thou hast received in the assembly of the church to edify thy brethren in Christ"). From this passage it is plain that there were still teachers (and prophets) in the churches, that the former ranked below the latter

(or had to submit to a certain supervision), and that, as we see from the whole chapter, gross abuses had to be dealt with in this order of the ministry. As was natural, this order of independent teachers who were in the service of the entire church produced at an early period prominent individuals who credited themselves with an exceptionally profound knowledge of the δικαιώματα τοῦ θεοῦ (ordinances of God), and consequently addressed themselves, not to all and sundry, but to the advanced or educated, i.e., to any select body within Christendom. Insensibly, the charismatic teaching also passed over into the profane, and this marked the point at which Christian teachers as an institution had to undergo, and did undergo, a change. It was inevitable that within Christianity schools should be founded similar to the numerous contemporary schools which had been established by Greek and Roman philosophers. They might remain embedded, as it were, in Christianity; but they might also develop very readily in a sectarian direction, since this divisive tendency beset any school whatsoever. Hence the efforts of itinerant Christian apologists who, like Justin616 and Tatian,617 set up schools in the larger towns; hence scholastic establishments such as those of Rhodon and the two Theodoti at Rome;618 hence the enterprise of many so-called "gnostics"; hence, above all, the Alexandrian catechetical school (with its offshoots in Cæsarea Palest.), whose origin, of course, lies buried in obscurity,619 and the school of Lucian at Antioch (where we hear of Συλλουκιανισταί, i.e., a union similar to those of the philosophic schools). But as a direct counterpoise to the danger of having the church split up into schools, and the gospel handed over to the secular culture, the acumen, and the ambition of individual teachers,620 the consciousness of the church finally asserted its powers, and the word "school" became almost a term of reproach for a separatist ecclesiastical community.621 Yet the "doctors" (διδάσκαλοι)—I mean the charismatic teachers who were privileged to speak during the service, although they did not belong to the clergy—did not become extinct all at once in the communities; indeed, they maintained their position longer than the apostles or the prophets. From the outset they had been free from the "enthusiastic" element which characterized the latter and paved the way for their suppression. Besides, the distinction of "milk" and "strong meat," of different degrees of Christian σοφία, σύνεσις, ἐπιστήμη and γνῶσις, was always indispensable.622 In consequence of this, the διδάσκαλοι had naturally to continue in the churches till the bulk of the administrative officials or priests came to possess the qualification of teachers, and until the bishop (together with the presbyters) assumed the task of educating and instructing the church. In several even of the large churches this did not take place till pretty late, i.e., till the second half of the third century, or the beginning of the fourth. Up to that period "teachers" can still be traced here and there.623 Beside the new and compact organization of the churches (with the bishops, the college of presbyters, and the deacons) these teachers rose like pillars of some ruined edifice which the storm had spared. They did not fit into the new order of things, and it is interesting to notice how they are shifted from one place to another. Tertullian's order624 (de Præscr., iii.) is: "bishop, deacon, widow, virgin, teacher, martyr"! Instead of putting the teacher among the clergy, he thus ranks him among the spiritual heroes, and, what is more, assigns him the second place amongst them, next to the martyrs—for the order of the list runs up to a climax. In the Acta Perpetuæ et Felic., as well as in the Acta Saturnini et Dativi (under Diocletian; cp. Ruinart's Acta Martyr., Ratisbon, 1859, p. 418), both of African origin, we come across the title "presbyter doctor," and from Cyprian (Ep. xxix.) we must also infer that in some churches the teachers were ranked in the college of presbyters, and entrusted in this capacity with the duty of examining the readers.625 On the other hand, in the account given by Hippolytus in Epiph., Hær., xlii. 2 (an account which refers to Rome in the days of Marcion), the teachers stand beside the presbyters (not inside the college of presbyters): οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διδάσκαλοι, a position which is still theirs in Egyptian villages after the middle of the third century. Dionysius of Alexandria (Eus., H.E., vii. 24. 6), speaking of his sojourn in such villages, observes, "I called together the presbyters and

teachers of the brethren in the villages" (συνεκάλεσα τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ διδασκάλους τῶν ἐν ταῖς κώμαις ἀδελφῶν). As there were no bishops in these localities at that period, it follows that the teachers still shared with the presbyters the chief position in these village churches.

This item of information reaches us from Egypt; and, unless all signs deceive us, we find that in Egypt generally, and especially at Alexandria, the institution of teachers survived longest in juxtaposition with the episcopal organization of the churches (though their right to speak at services of worship had expired; see below). Teachers still are mentioned frequently in the writings of Origen,626 and what is more, the "doctores" constitute for him, along with the "sacerdotes," quite a special order, parallel to that of priests within the church. He speaks of those "who discharge the office of teachers wisely in our midst" c. Cels., IV. lxxii.), and of "doctores ecclesiae" (Hom. XIV. in Gen., vol. ii. p. 97). In Hom. II. in Num. (vol. ii. p. 278) he remarks: "It often happens that a man of low mind, who is base and of an earthly spirit, creeps up into the high rank of the priesthood or into the chair of the doctorate, while he who is spiritual and so free from earthly ties that he can prove all things and yet himself be judged by no man—he occupies the rank of an inferior minister, or is even left among the common throng" ("Nam saepe accidit, ut is qui humilem sensum gerit et abiectum et qui terrena sapit, excelsum sacerdotii gradum vel cathedram doctores insideat, et ille qui spiritualis est et a terrena conversatione tam liber ut possit examinare omnia et ipse a nemine iudicari, vel inferioris ministerii ordinem teneat vel etiam in plebeia multitudine relinquatur ").627 In Hom. VI. in Levit. (vol. ix. p. 219) we read: "Possunt enim et in ecclesia sacerdotes et doctores filios generare sicut et ille qui dicebat (Gal. iv. 19), et iterum alibi dicit (1 Cor. iv. 15). Isti ergo doctores ecclesiae in huiusmodi generationibus procreandis aliquando constrictis femoralibus utuntur et abstinent a generando, cum tales invenerint auditores, in quibus sciant se fructum habere non posse!"628 These passages from Origen, which might be multiplied (see, e.g., Hom. II. in Ezek. and Hom. III. for the difference between magistri and presbyteri), show that during the first thirty years of the third century there still existed at Alexandria an order of teachers side by side with the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons. But indeed we scarcely need the writings of Origen at all. There is Origen himself, his life, his lot—and that is the plainest evidence of all. For what was the man himself but a διδάσκαλος τῆς ἐκκλησίας, busily travelling as a teacher upon endless missions, in order to impress true doctrine on the mind, or to safeguard it? What was the battle of his life against that "ambitious" and utterly uneducated bishop Demetrius, but the conflict of an independent teacher of the church with the bishop of an individual community? And when, in the course of this conflict, which ended in a signal triumph for the hierarchy, a negative answer was given to this question among other things, viz., whether the "laity" could give addresses in the church, in presence of the bishops, was not the affirmative answer, which was still given by bishops like Alexander and Theoktistus, who pointed to the primitive usage,629 simply the final echo of an organization of the Christian churches older and more venerable than the clerical organization which was already covering all the field? During the course of the third century, thc "teachers" were thrust out of the church, i.e., out of the service;630 some of them may have even been fused with the readers.631 No doubt, the order of teachers had developed in such a way as to incur at a very early stage the exceptionally grave risk of sharply Hellenizing and thus secularizing Christianity. The 8[8a?KaXot of the third century may have been very unlike the &8c ,, caXot who had ranked as associates of the prophets. But Hellenizing was hardly the decisive reason for abolishing the order of teachers in the churches; here, as elsewhere, the change was due to the episcopate with its intolerance of any office that would not submit to its strict control and allow itself to be incorporated in the simple and compact organization of thc hierarchy headed by the bishop. After the middle of the third century, not all, but nearly all, the teachers of the church were clerics, while the instruction

of the catechumens was undertaken either by the bishop himself or by a presbyter. The organizing of the catechetical system gradually put an end to the office of independent teachers.

The early teachers of the church were missionaries as well;632 a pagans as well as catechumens entered their schools and listened to their teaching. We have definite information upon this point in the case of Justin (see above), but Tatian also delivered his “Address” in order to inform the pagan public that he had become a Christian teacher, and we have a similar tradition of the missionary work done by the heads of the Alexandrian catechetical school in the way of teaching. Origen, too, had pagan hearers whom he instructed in the elements of Christian doctrine (cp. Eus., H.E., vi. 3); indeed, it is well known that even Julia Mamæa, the queen-mother, had him brought to Antioch that she might listen to his lectures (Eus., H.E., vi. 21). Hippolytus also wrote her a treatise, of which fragments have been preserved in a Syriac version. When one lady of quality in Rome was arraigned on a charge of Christianity, her teacher Ptolemæus (διδύσκαλος ἐκείνης τῶν Χριστιανῶν μαθημάτων γενόμενος) was immediately arrested also (Justin, Apol., II. 2). In the African Acta Saturnini et Dativi, dating from Diocletian's reign, we read (Ruinart's Acta Mart., Ratisbon, 1859, p. 417) the following indictment of the Christian Dativus, laid by Fortunatianus (“vir togatus”) with regard to his sister who had been converted to Christianity: “This is the fellow who during our father's absence, while we were studying here, perverted our sister Victoria, and took her away from the glorious state of Carthage with Secunda and Restituta as far as the colony of Abitini; he never entered our house without beguiling the girls' minds with some wheedling arguments” (“Hic est qui per absentiam patris noster, nobis hic studentibus, sororem nostram Victoriam seducens, hinc de splendidissima Carthaginis civitate una cum Secunda et Restituta ad Abitinensem coloniam secum usque perduxit, quique nunquam domum nostram ingressus est, nisi tunc quando quibusdam persuasionibus puellares animos illiciebat”). This task also engaged the whole activity of the Christian apologists. The effects upon the inner growth of Christianity we may estimate very highly.633 But we know nothing of the scale on which they worked among pagans. We have no information as to whether the apologies really reached those to whom they were addressed, notably the emperors; or, whether the educated public took any notice of them. Tertullian bewails the fact that only Christians read Christian literature (“ad nostras litteras nemo venit nisi iam Christianus,” de Testim., i.), and this would be true of the apologies as well. Celsus, so far as I know, never takes them into account, though there were a number of them extant in his day. He only mentions the dialogue of Aristo of Pella; but that cannot have been typical, otherwise it would have been preserved.

The apologists set themselves a number of tasks, emphasizing and elucidating now one, now another aspect of the truth. They criticized the legal procedure of the state against Christians; they contradicted the revolting charges, moral and political, with which they were assailed; they criticized the pagan mythology and the state-religion; they defined, in very different ways, their attitude to Greek philosophy, and tried partly to side with it, partly to oppose it;634 they undertook an analysis of ordinary life, public and private; they criticized the achievements of culture and the sources as well as the consequences of conventional education. Still further, they stated the essence of Christianity, its doctrines of God, providence, virtue, sin, and retribution, as well as the right of their religion to lay claim to revelation and to uniqueness. They developed the Logos-idea in connection with Jesus Christ, whose ethics, preaching, and victory over demons they depicted. Finally, they tried to furnish proofs for the metaphysical and ethical content of Christianity, to rise from a mere opinion to a reasoned conviction, and at the same time—by means of the Old Testament—to prove that their religion was not a mere novelty but the primitive religion of mankind.635 The most important of these

proofs included those drawn from the fulfilment of prophecy, from the moral energy of the faith, from its enlightenment of the reason, and from the fact of the victory over demons.

The apologists also engaged in public discussions with pagans (Justin, Apol. II., and the Cynic philosopher Crescens; Minucius Felix and Octavius) and Jews (Justin, Dial. with Trypho; Tertull., adv. Jud., i.). In their writings some claimed the right of speaking in the name of God and truth; and although (strictly speaking) they do not belong to the charismatic teachers, they describe themselves as "taught of God."636

The schools established by these teachers could only be regarded by the public and the authorities as philosophic schools; indeed, the apologists avowed themselves to be philosophers637 and their doctrine a philosophy,638 so that they participated here and there in the advantages enjoyed by philosophic schools, particularly in the freedom of action they possessed. This never can have lasted any time, however. Ere long the Government was compelled to note that the preponderating element in these schools was not scientific but practical, and that they were the outcome of the illegal "religio Christiana."639

VII

"Plures efficimur quotiens metimur a vobis; semen est sanguis Christianorum . . . . illa ipsa obstinatio, quam exprobratis magistra est"—so Tertullian cries to the authorities (Apol. 1.: "The oftener we are mown down by you, the larger grow our numbers. The blood of Christians is a seed. . . . . That very obstinacy which you reprobate is our instructress"). The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the regular teachers but Christians themselves, in virtue of their loyalty and courage. How little we hear of the former and their results! How much we hear of the effects produced by the latter! Above all, every confessor and martyr was a missionary; he not merely confirmed the faith of those who were already won, but also enlisted new members by his testimony and his death. Over and again this result is noted in the Acts of the martyrs, though it would lead us too far afield to recapitulate such tales. While they lay in prison, while they stood before the judge, on the road to execution, and by means of the execution itself, they won people for the faith. Ay, and even after death. One contemporary document (cp. Euseb. vi. 5) describes how Potamiæna, an Alexandrian martyr during the reign of Septimius Severus, appeared immediately after dcath even to non-Christians in the city, and how they were converted by this vision. This is by no means incredible. The executions of the martyrs (legally carried out, of course) must have made an impression which startled and stirred wide circles of people, suggesting to their minds the question: Who is to blame, the condemned person or the judge?640 Looking at the earnestness, the readiness for sacrifice, and the steadfastness of these Christians, people found it difficult to think that they were to blame. Thus it was by no means an empty phrase, when Tertullian and others like him asserted that the blood of Christians was a seed.

Nevertheless, it was not merely the confessors and martyrs who were missionaries. It was characteristic of this religion that everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda.641 Christians are to "let their light shine, that pagans may see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven." If this dominated all their life, and if they lived according to the precepts of their religion, they could not be hidden at all; by their very mode of living they could not fail to preach their faith plainly and audibly.642 Then there was the conviction that the day of judgment was at hand, and that they were debtors to the heathen. Furthermore, so far from narrowing Christianity, the exclusiveness of the gospel was a powerful aid in promoting its

mission, owing to the sharp dilemma which it involved.

We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries. Justin says so quite explicitly. What won him over was the impression made by the moral life which he found among Christians in general. How this life stood apart from that of pagans even in the ordinary round of the day, how it had to be or ought to be a constant declaration of the gospel—all this is vividly portrayed by Tertullian in the passage where he adjures his wife not to marry a pagan husband after he is dead (ad Uxor., II. iv.-vi.). We may safely assume, too, that women did play a leading role in the spread of this religion (see below, Book IV. Chap. II.). But it is impossible to see in any one class of people inside the church the chief agents of the Christian propaganda. In particular, we cannot think of the army in this connection. Even in the army there were Christians, no doubt, but it was not easy to combine Christianity and military service. Previous to the reign of Constantine, Christianity cannot possibly have been a military religion, like Mithraism and some other cults.643

EXCURSUS

TRAVELLING: THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AND LITERATURE

THE apostles, as well as many of the prophets, travelled unceasingly in the interests of their mission. The journeys of Paul from Antioch to Rome, and probably to Spain, lie in the clear light of history, but—to judge from his letters—his fellow-workers and companions were also continually on the move, partly along with him, and partly on their own account.645 One thinks especially of that missionary couple, Aquila and Priscilla. To study and state in detail the journeys of Paul and the rest of these missionaries would lead us too far afield, nor would it be relevant to our immediate purpose. Paul felt that the Spirit of God drove him on, revealing his route and destination; but this did not supersede the exercise of deliberation and reflection in his own mind, and evidences of the latter may be found repeatedly throughout his travels. Peter also journeyed as a missionary; he too reached Rome.

However, what interests us at present is not so much the travels of the regular missionaries as the journeys undertaken by other prominent Christians, -from which we may learn the vitality of personal communication and intercourse throughout the early centuries. In this connection the Roman church became surprisingly prominent. The majority of the Christians with whose travels we are acquainted made it their goal.646

Justin, Hegesippus, Julius Africanus, and Origen were Christian teachers who were specially travelled men, i.e., men who had gone over a large number of the churches. Justin, who came from Samaria, stayed in Ephesus and Rome. Hegesippus reached Rome via Corinth after starting, about the middle of the second century, on an Eastern tour occupying several years, during which he visited many of the churches. Julius Africanus from Emmaus in Palestine also appeared in Edessa, Rome, and Alexandria. But the most extensive travels were those of Origen, who, from Alexandria and Cæsarea (in Palestine) respectively, made his appearance in Sidon, Tyre, Bostra, Antioch, Cæsarea (in Cappadocia), Nikomedia, Athens, Nicopolis, Rome, and other cities647 (sometimes more than once).

The following notable Christians648 journeyed from abroad to Rome:—

Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (Eus., H.E., iv. 14, v. 24).

Valentinus the gnostic, from Egypt (Iren., iii. 4. 3).

Cerdo the gnostic, from Syria (Iren., i. 27. 1, iii. 4. 3).

Marcion the heretic, from. Sinope (Hippolytus, cited in Epiph., Hær.; xlii. 1 f.).

Marcellina the heretic (Iren., i. 25. 6).

Justin the apologist, from Samaria (see his Apology; also Euseb., H.E., iv. 11).

Tatian the Assyrian (Orat. xxxv.).

Hegesippus, from the East (Eus., H.E., iv. 22, according to the ὑπομνήματα of Hegesippus).

Euelpistus, Justin's pupil, from Cappadocia (Acta Justini).

Hierax, Justin's pupil, from Cappadocia (Acta Justini).649

Rhodon, from Asia (Eus., H.E., v. 13).

Irenæus, from Asia (Eus., H.E., v. 1-4; [Martyr. Polyc., append.]).

Apelles, Marcion's pupil (Tertull., de Præscr., xxx.; though Apelles may have been born at Rome), from —?

Florinus, from Asia (Eus., H.E., v. 15. 20).

Proclus and other Montanists from Phrygia or Asia (Eus., H.E., ii. 25, iii. 31, vi. 20; Tertull., adv. Prax., 1).

[Tertullian, from Carthage (de Cultu Fem., i. 7; Eus., H.E., ii. 2).]

Theodotus, from Byzantium (Epiph., Hær., liv. 1).

Praxeas, from Asia (Tert., adv. Prax., 1).

Abercius, from Hieropolis (see his inscription).

Julius Africanus, from Emmaus (Κεστοί).

Alcibiades, from Apamea in Syria (Hippol., Philos., ix. 13).

[Prepon the Marcionite, an Assyrian (Hippol., Philos., vii. 31).]

Epigonus, from Asia (Hipp., Philos., ix. 7).

Sabellius, from Pentapolis (Theodoret, Hær. Fab., ii. 9).

Origen, from Alexandria (Eus., H.E., vi. 14).

Many Africans, about the year 250 (Cyprian's epistles).650

Shortly after the middle of the second century, Melito of Sardes journeyed to Palestine (Eus., H.E., iv. 26), as did Alexander from Cappadocia (Eus., H.E., vi. 11) and Pionius froth Smyrna (about the middle of the third century: see the Acta Pionii); Julius Africanus travelled to Alexandria (Eus., H.E., vi. 31); Hermogenes, a heretic, emigrated from the East to Carthage (Theophilus of Antioch opposed him, as did Tertullian); Apelles went from Rome to Alexandria (Tert., de Præscr., xxx.); during the Decian persecution and afterwards, Roman Christians were despatched to Carthage (see Cyprian's epistles); at the time of Valerian's persecution, several Roman brethren were in Alexandria (Dionys. Alex., cited by Euseb., H.E., vii. 11); while Clement of Alexandria got the length of Cappadocia (Eus., H.E., vi. 11). This list is incomplete, but it will give some idea of the extent to which the travels of prominent teachers promoted intercommunication.

As for the exchange of letters,651 I must content myself with noting the salient points. Here, too, the Roman church occupies the foreground. We know of the following letters and despatches issued from it:—

The pastoral letter to Corinth (i.e., the first epistle of Clement), c. 96 A.D.

The “Shepherd” of Hermas, which (according to Vis., ii. 4) was sent to the churches abroad.

The pastoral letter of bishop Soter to Corinth (i.e., the homily he sent thither, or 2 Clem.). The letter in reply, from Dionysius of Corinth, shows that Rome had for decades been in the

habit of sending letters and despatches to a number of churches.

During the Montanist controversy, under (Soter) Eleutherus and Victor, letters passed to Asia, Phrygia, and Gaul.

During the Easter controversy, Victor issued letters to all the churches abroad.

Pontian wrote to Alexandria, assenting to the condemnation of Origen.

During the vacancy in the Papacy after bishop Fabian's death, letters passed to Carthage, to the other African churches, and to Sicily; the Roman martyrs also wrote to the Carthaginian.

Bishop Cornelius wrotee numerous letters to Africa, as well as to Antioch and Alexandria.

Bishop Stephanus wrote to Africa, Alexandria, Spain, and Gaul, as well as to all the churches abroad during the controversy over the baptism of heretics. He also sent letters and despatches to Syria and Arabia, following the custom of his predecessors.

Letters of bishop Xystus II. to Alexandria.

Letters of bishop Dionysius to Alexandria.

A letter and despatches of bishop Dionysius to Cappadocia.

A letter of bishop Felix to Alexandria.

Letters to Antioch during the trouble caused by Paul of Samosata.

Among the non-Roman letters are to be noted: those of Ignatius to the Asiatic churches and to Rome, that written by Polycarp of Smyrna to Philippi and other churches in the neighbourhood, the large collection of those written by Dionysius of Corinth (to Athens, Lacedæmon, Nicomedia, Crete, Pontus, Rome), the large collections of Origen's letters (no longer extant), of Cyprian's (to the African churches, to Rome, Spain, Gaul, Cappadocia), and of Novatian's (to a very large number of churches throughout all Christendom: no longer extant), and of those written by Dionysius of Alexandria (preserved in fragments).652 Letters were sent from Cappadocia, Spain, and Gaul to Cyprian (Rome); the synod which gathered in Antioch to deal with Paul of Samosata, wrote to all the churches of Christendom; and Alexander of Alexandria, as well as Arius, wrote letters to a large number of churches in the Eastern empire.653

The more important Christian writings also circulated with astonishing rapidity.654 Out of the wealth of material at our disposal, the following instances may be adduced:—

Ere the first half of the second century expired, the four gospels appear to have reached the majority, or at any rate a very large number, of churches throughout the empire.

A collection of Paul's letters was already known to Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and all the leading gnostics.

The first epistle of Clement (addressed to Corinth) was in the hands of Polycarp (at Smyrna), and was known to Irenæus at Lyons, as well as to Clement of Alexandria.

A few weeks or months after the epistles of Ignatius were composed, they were collected and despatched to Philippi; Irenæus in Lyons and Origen in Alexandria were acquainted with them.

The Didachê was circulated in the second century through East and West alike.

The “Shepherd” of Hermas, in its complete form, was well known in Lyons, Alexandria, and Carthage, even in the second century.

The Apology and other works of Justin were known to Irenæus at Lyons, and to Tertullian at Carthage, etc. Tatian was read in Alexandria.

By the close of the second century, writings of Melito, bishop of Sardes (during the reign of Marcus Aurelius) were read in Ephesus, Alexandria, Rome, and Carthage.

As early as about the year 200 A.D., writings of Irenæus (who wrote c. 190) were read in Rome and Alexandria, whilst, like Justin, he was known at a later period to Methodius in Lycia.

The writings of several authors in Asia Minor during the reign of Marcus Aurelius were read in Alexandria, Carthage, and Rome.

The “Antitheses” of the heretic Marcion were known to all the larger churches in the East and West by the end of the second century.

The apocryphal Acta Pauli, originating in Asia, was probably read in all the leading churches, and certainly in Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria, by the end of the second century.

Numerous writings of the Roman Hippolytus were circulated throughout the East. What a large number of Christian writings were gathered from all parts of the world in the library at Cæsarea (in Palestine) is known to us from the Church History of Eusebius, which was written from the material in this collection. It is owing primarily to this library, which in its way formed a counterpart of the Alexandrian, that we possess to-day a coherent, though very limited, knowledge of Christian antiquity.655 And even previous to that, if one takes the trouble (and it is no trouble) to put together, from the writings of Celsus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, their library of Christian works, it becomes evident that they had access to an extensive range of Christian books from, all parts of the church.

These data are merely intended to give an approximate idea of how vital was the intercourse, personal and epistolary and literary, between the various churches, and also between prominent teachers of the day. It is not easy to exaggerate the significance of this fact for the mission and propaganda of Christianity. The co-operation, the brotherliness, and moreover the mental activity of Christians, are patent in this connection, and they were powerful levers in the extension of the cause. Furthermore, they must have made a powerful impression on the outside spectator, besides guaranteeing a certain unity in the development of the religion and ensuring the fact that when a Christian passed from the East to the West, or from one distant church to another, he never felt himself a stranger. Down to the age of Constantine, or at any rate until the middle of the third century, the centripetal forces in early Christianity were, as a matter of fact, more powerful than the centrifugal. And Rome was the centre of the former tendencies. The Roman Church was the Catholic Church. It was more than the mere symbol and representative of Christian unity; to it more than to any other Christians owed unity itself.

So far as I know, the technical side of the spread of early Christian literature has not yet been investigated, and any results that can be reached are far from numerous.656 We must realize, however, that a large number of these writings, not excluding the oldest and most important of them, together with almost all the epistolary literature, was never “edited” in the technical sense of the term—never, at any rate, until after some generations had passed. There

were no editions of the New Testament (or of the Old?) until Origen (i.e., the Theodotian), although Marcion's New Testament deserves to be called a critical revision and edition, while revised editions.were meant by those early fathers who bewailed the falsification of the Bible texts by the gnostics. For the large majority of early Christian writings the exemplars in the library at Caesarea served as the basis for editions (i.e., transcripts) from the fourth and fifth centuries onwards. Yet even after editions of the Scriptures were published they were frequently transcribed at will from some rough copy. From the outset the apologies, the works of the gnostics (which were meant for the learned), and any ecclesiastical writings designed, from Irenæus downwards, for the educated Christian public, were published and circulated. The first instance of a bishop collecting and editing his own letters is that of Dionysius of Corinth, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (Eus., H.E., iv. 23).

Unedited or unpublished writings were naturally exposed in a special degree to the risk of falsification. The church fathers are full of complaints on this score. Yet even those which were edited were not preserved with due care.657

To what extent the literature of Christianity fell into the hands of its opponents, is a matter about which we know next to nothing. Tertullian speaks quite pessimistically on the point (de Testim. i.), and Norden's verdict is certainly true (Kunstprosa, pp. 517 f.): “We cannot form too low an estimate of the number of pagans who read the New Testament. . . . . I believe I am correct in saying that pagans only read the New Testament when they wanted to refute it.” Celsus furnished himself with quite a considerable Christian library, in which he studied deeply before he wrote against the Christians; but it is merely a rhetorical phrase, when Athenagoras assumes (Suppl., ix.) that the emperors knew the Old Testament. The attitude of the apologists to the Scriptures, whether they are quoting them or not, shows that they do not presuppose any knowledge of their contents (Norden, loc. cit.). Writings of Origen were read by the Neoplatonist philosophers, who had also in their hands the Old Testament, the gospels, and the Pauline epistles. We may say the same of Porphyry and Amelius. One great obstacle to the diffusion of the Scriptures lay in the Greek version, which was inartistic and offensive (from the point of view of style),658 but still more in the old Latin version of the Bible, which in many parts was simply intolerable. How repellent must have been the effect produced, for example, by reading (Baruch ii. 29) “Dicens: si non audieritis vocis meae, si sonos magnos hagminis iste avertatur in minima in gentibus, hubi dispergam ibi.”659 Nor could Christianity in the West boast of writers whose work penetrated far into the general literature of the age, at a time when Origen and his pupils were forcing an entrance for themselves. Lactantius, whose evidence is above suspicion,660 observes that in Latin society Christians were still considered “stulti” (Instit., v. 1 f.),661 and personally vouches for the lack of suitable and skilled teachers and authors; Minucius Felix and Tertullian could not secure “satis celebritatis,” whilst, for all his admirable qualities as a speaker and writer, Cyprian “is unable to satisfy those who are ignorant of all but the words of our religion, since his language is mystical and designed only for the ears of the faithful. In short, the learned of this world who chance to become acquainted with his writings are in the habit of deriding him. I myself once heard a really cultured person call him ‘Coprianus' [dung-man] by the change of a single letter in his name, as if he had bestowed on old wives' fables a polished intellect which was capable of better things” (placere ultra verba sacramentum ignorantibus non potest, quoniam mystica hunt quae locutus est et ad id praeparata, ut a solis fidelibus audiantur: denique a doctis huius saeculi, quibus forte scripta eius innotuerant, derideri solet. audivi ego quendam hominen1 sane disertum, qui eum immutata una litera ' Coprianum' vocaret, quasi quod elegans ingenium et melioribus rebus aptum ad aniles fabulas contulisset “).

In the Latin West, although Minucius Felix and Cyprian (ad Donatum) wrote in a well-bred

style, Christian literature had but little to do with the spread of the Christian religion; in the East, upon the contrary, it became a factor of great importance from the third century onwards.

CHAPTER II

METHODS OF THE MISSION: CATECHIZING AND BAPTISM, THE INVASION OF DOMESTIC LIFE

ANYONE who inquires about the missionary methods in general must be referred to what has been said in our Second Book (pp. 86 f.). For the missionary preaching includes the missionary methods. The one God, Jesus Christ as Son and Lord according to apostolic tradition, future judgment and the resurrection—these truths were preached. So was the gospel of the Saviour and of salvation, of love and charity. The new religion was stated and verified as Spirit and power, and also as the power to lead a new moral life, and to practise self-control. News was brought to men of a divine revelation to which humanity must yield itself by faith. A new people, it was announced, had now appeared which was destined to embrace all nations; withal a primitive, sacred book was handed over, in which the world's history was depicted from the first day to the last.

In 1 Cor. i.-ii. Paul expressly states that he gave a central place to the proclamation of the crucified Christ. He summed up everything in this preaching; that is, he proclaimed Christ as the Saviour who wiped sins away. But preaching of this kind implies that he began by revealing and bringing home to his hearers their own impiety and unrighteousness (ἀσέβεια καὶ ἀδικέια). Otherwise the preaching of redemption could never have secured a footing or done its work at all. Moreover, as the decisive proof of men's impiety and unrighteousness, Paul adduced their ignorance regarding God and also regarding idolatry, an ignorance for which they themselves were to blame. To prove that this was their own fault, he appealed to the conscience of his hearers, and to the remnant of divine knowledge which they still possessed. The opening of the epistle to the Romans (chaps. i.-iii.) may therefore be considered to represent the way in which Paul began his missionary preaching. First of all, he brought his hearers to admit "we are sinners, one and all." Then he led them to the cross of Christ, where he developed the conception of the cross as the power and the wisdom of God. And interwoven with all this, in characteristic fashion, lay expositions of the flesh and the Spirit, with allusions to the approaching judgment.

So far as we can judge, it was Paul who first threw into such sharp relief the significance of Jesus Christ as a Redeemer, and made this the central point of Christian preaching. No doubt, the older missionaries had also taught and preached that Christ died for sins (1 Cor. xv. 3); but in so far as they addressed Jews, or people who had for some time been in contact with Judaism, it was natural that they should confine themselves to preaching the imminence of judgment, and also to proving from the Old Testament that the crucified Jesus was to return as judge and as the Lord of the messianic kingdom. Hence quite naturally they could summon men to acknowledge him, to join his church, and to keep his commandments.

We need not doubt that this was the line taken at the outset, even for many people of pagan birth who had already become familiar with some of the contents and characteristics of the Old Testament. The Petrine speeches in Acts are a proof of this. As for the missionary address, ascribed to Paul in ch. xiii., it is plainly a blend of this popular missionary preaching with the Pauline manner; but in that model of a mission address to educated people which is preserved in ch. xvii.,662 the Pauline manner of missionary preaching is perfectly distinct, in spite of what seems to be one vital difference. First we have an exposition of the true doctrine of God, whose main aspects are successively presented (monotheism, spirituality, omnipresence and omnipotence, creation and providence, the unity of the human race and their religious

capacities, spiritual worship). The state of mankind hitherto is described as “ignorance,” and therefore to be repented of; God will overlook it. But the new era has dawned: an era of repentance and judgment, involving faith in Jesus Christ, who has been sent and raised by God and who is at once redeemer and judge.663 Many of the more educated missionaries, and particularly Luke himself, certainly preached in this fashion, as is proved by the Christian apologies and by writings like the “Preaching of Peter.” Christian preaching was bent on arousing a feeling of godlessness and unrighteousness; it also worked upon the natural consciousness of God; but it was never unaccompanied by references to the coming judgment.

The address put into the mouth of Paul by the “Acta Pauli” (Acta Theclæ, v.-vi.) is peculiar and quite un-Pauline (compare, however, the preaching of Paul before Nero). Strictly speaking, it cannot even be described as a missionary address at all.. The apostle speaks in beatitudes, which are framed upon those of Jesus but developed ascetically. A more important point is that the content of Christian preaching is described as “the doctrine of the generation and resurrection of the Beloved” (διδασκαλία τῆς τε γεννήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ ἠγαπημένου), and as “the message of self-control and of resurrection” (λόγος τῆς ἐγκρατείας καὶ ἀναστάσεως).664

The effect of connected discourses, so far as regards the Christian mission, need not be overestimated; in every age a single stirring detail that moves the heart is of greater weight than a long sermon. The book of Acts describes many a person being converted all at once, by a sort of rush. And the description is not unhistorical. Paul was converted, not by a missionary, but by means of a vision. The Ethiopian treasurer was led to believe in Jesus by means of Isaiah liii., and how many persons may have found this chapter a bridge to faith! Thecla was won over from paganism by means of the “word of virginity and prayer” (λόγος τῆς παρθενίας καὶ τῆς προσευχῆςActa Theclæ, ch. vii.), a motive which is so repeatedly mentioned in the apocryphal Acts that its reality and significance cannot be called in question. Asceticism, especially in the sexual relationship, did prevail in wide circles at that period, as an outcome of the religious syncretism. The apologists had good grounds also for declaring that many were deeply impressed and eventually convinced by the exorcisms which the Christians performed, while we may take it for granted that thousands were led to Christianity by the stirring proclamation of judgment, and of judgment close at hand. Besides, how many simply succumbed to the authority of the Old Testament, with the light thrown on it by Christianity! Whenever a proof was required, here was this book all ready.665

The mission was reinforced and actively advanced by the behaviour of Christian men and women. Paul often mentions this, and in 1 Pet. iii. 1 we read that men who do not believe the Word are to be won over without a word by means of the conduct of their wives.666 The moral life of Christians appealed to a man like Justin with peculiar force, and the martyrdoms made a wide impression. It was no rare occurrence for outsiders to be struck in such a way that on the spur of the moment they suddenly turned to Christianity. But we know of no cases in which Christians desired to win, or actually did win, adherents by means of the charities which they dispensed. We are quite aware that impostors joined the church in order to profit by the brotherly kindness of its members; but even pagans never charged Christianity with using money as a missionary bribe. What they did allege was that Christians won credulous people to their religion with their words of doom, and that they promised the heavy-laden a vain support, and the guilty an unlawful pardon. In the third century the channels of the mission among the masses were multiplied. At one moment in the crisis of the struggle against gnosticism it looked as if the church could only continue to exist by prohibiting any intercourse with that devil's courtezan, philosophy; the “simplices et idiotae,” indeed, shut their ears firmly against all

learning.667 But even a Tertullian found himself compelled to oppose this standpoint, while the pseudo-Clementine Homilies made a vigorous attack upon the methods of those who would substitute dreams and visions for instruction and doctrine. That, they urge, is the method668 of Simon Magus! Above all, it was the catechetical school of Alexandria, it was men like Clement and Origen, who by their patient and unwearied efforts won the battle for learning, and vindicated the rights of learning in the Christian church. Henceforward, Christianity used her learning also, in the shape of word and book, for the purpose of her mission (i.e., in the East, for in the West there is little trace of this). But the most powerful agency of the mission during the third century was the church herself in her entirety. As she assumed the form of a great syncretistic religion and managed cautiously to bring about a transformation which gnosticism would have thrust upon her violently, the mere fact of her existence and the influence exerted by her very appearance in history wielded a power that attracted and captivated men.

When a newcomer was admitted into the Christian church he was baptized. This rite ("purifici roris perfusio," Lactant., iv. 15), whose beginnings lie wrapt in obscurity, certainly was not introduced in order to meet the pagan craving for the mysteries, but as a matter of fact it is impossible to think of any symbolic action which would prove more welcome to that craving than baptism with all its touching simplicity. The mere fact of such a rite was a great comfort in itself, for few indeed could be satisfied with a purely spiritual religion. The ceremony of the individual's immersion and emergence from the water served as a guarantee that old things were now washed away and gone, leaving him a new man. The utterance of the name of Jesus or of the three names of the Trinity during the baptismal act brought the candidate into the closest union with them; it raised him to God himself. Speculations on the mystery at once commenced.669 Immersion was held to be a death; immersion in relation to Christ was a dying with him, or an absorption into his death; the water was the symbol of his blood. Paul himself taught this doctrine, but he rejected the speculative notions of the Corinthians (1 Cor. i. 13 f.) by which they further sought to bring the person baptized into a mysterious connection with the person who baptizes. It is remarkable how he thanks God that personally he had only baptized a very few people in Corinth. This is not, of course, to be taken as a depreciation of baptism. Like his fellows, Paul recognized it to be simply indispensable. The apostle is merely recollecting, and recollecting in this instance with satisfaction, the limitation of his apostolic calling, in which no duty was imposed on him beyond the preaching of the word of God. Strictly speaking, baptism does not fall within his jurisdiction. He may perform the rite, but commonly it is the business of other people. In the majority of cases it implies a lengthy period of instruction and examination, and the apostle has no time for that: his task is merely to lay the foundation. Baptism marks therefore not the act of initiation but the final stage of the initiation.

"Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani"; men are not born Christians, but made Christians. This remark of Tertullian (Apol., xviii.)670 may have applied to the large majority even after the middle of the second century, but thereafter a companion feature arose in the shape of the natural extension of Christianity through parents to their children. Subsequently to that period the practice of infant baptism was also inaugurated; at least we are unable to get certain evidence for it at an earlier date.671 But whether infants or adults were baptized, baptism in either case was held to be a mystery which involved decisive consequences of a natural and supernatural kind. The general conviction was that baptism effectually cancelled all past sins of the baptized person, apart altogether from the degree of moral sensitiveness on his own part; he rose from his immersion a perfectly pure and perfectly holy man. Now this sacrament played an extremely important role in the mission of this church. It was an act as intelligible as it was consoling; the ceremony itself was not so unusual as to surprise or scandalize people like circumcision or the taurobolium, and yet it was something tangible, something to which they

could attach themselves.672Furthermore, if one added the story of Jesus being baptized by John—a story which was familiar to everyone, since the gospel opened with it—not merely was a fresh field thrown open for profound schemes and speculations, but, thanks to the precedent of this baptism of Jesus, the baptism to which every Christian submitted acquired new unction and a deeper content. As the Spirit had descended upon Jesus at his own baptism, so God's Spirit hovered now upon the water at every Christian's baptism, converting it into a bath of regeneration and renewal. How much Tertullian has already said about baptism in his treatise de Baptismo! Even that simple Christian, Hermas, sixty years previous to Tertullian, cannot say enough on the topic of baptism; the apostles, he exclaims, went down into the underworld and there baptized those who had fallen asleep long ago.

It was as a mystery that the Gentile church took baptism from the very first,673 as is plain even from the history of the way in which the sacrament took shape. People were no longer satisfied with the simple bath of baptism. The rite was amplified; new ceremonies were added to it; and, like all the mysteries, the holy transaction underwent a development. Gradually the new ceremonies asserted their own independence, by a process which also is familiar. In the treatise I have just mentioned, Tertullian exhibits this development at an advanced stage,674 but on the main issue there was little or no alteration; baptism was essentially the act by which past sins were entirely cancelled.

It was a mysterium salutare, a saving mystery; but it was also a mysterium tremendum, an awful mystery, for the church had no second means of grace like baptism. The baptized person must remain pure, or (as 2 Clem., e.g., puts it) “keep the seal pure and intact.” Certain sects attempted to introduce repeated baptism, but they never carried their point; baptism, it was steadily maintained, could never be repeated. True, the sacrament of penance gradually arose, by means of which the grace lost after baptism could be restored. Despite this, however, there was a growing tendency in the third century to adopt the custom of postponing baptism until immediately before death, in order to make the most of this comprehensive means of grace.

No less important than baptism itself was the preparation for it, here the spiritual aspect of the Christian religion reached its highest expression; here its moral and social force was plainly shown. The Didachê at once corroborates and elucidates the uncertain information which we possess with regard to this point in the previous period. The pagan who desired to become a Christian was not baptized there and then. When his heart had been stirred by the broad outlines of the preaching of the one God and the Lord Jesus Christ as saviour and redeemer, he was then shown the will and law of God, and what was meant by renouncing idolatry. No summary doctrines were laid down, but the “two ways” were put before him in a most comprehensive and thoroughgoing fashion; every sin was tracked to its lurking-place within. He had to renounce all sins and assent to the law of God, nor was he baptized until the church was convinced that he knew the moral code and desired to follow it (Justin, Apol., I. lxvii.: λοῦσαι τὸν πεπεισμένον καὶ συγκατατεθειμένον, “to wash him who is convinced and who has assented to our teaching”).675 The Jewish synagogue had already drawn up a catechism for proselytes and made morality the condition of religion; it had already instituted a training for religion. Christianity took this up and deepened it. In so doing it was actuated by the very strongest motives, for otherwise it could not protect itself against the varied forms of “idolatry” or realize its cherished ideal of being the holy church of God. For over a century and a half it ranked everything almost secondary to the supreme task of maintaining its morality. It recognized no faith and no forgiveness that might serve as a pillow for the conscience, and one reason why the church did not triumph over Gnosticism at an earlier period was simply because she did not like to shut out people who owned Christ as their Lord and led a strictly moral life. Her power lay

in the splendid and stringent moral code of her baptismal training, which at once served as an introduction to the Scriptures;676 moreover, every brother was backed up and assisted in order that he might continue to be fit for the duties he had undertaken to fulfil.677 Ever since the great conflict with gnosticism and Marcionitism, some instruction in the rule of faith was added. People were no longer satisfied with a few fundamental truths about God and Christ; a detailed exposition of the dogmatic creed, based on the baptismal formula, and presented in apologetic and controversial shape, was also laid before the catechumen. At the same time, prior to Constantine, while we have requirements exacted from the catechumens (or those recently baptized), we possess no catechisms of a dogmatic character.

It is deeply to be deplored that the first three centuries yield no biographies depicting the conversion or the inner rise and growth of any Christian personality. It is not as if such documents had perished: they were never written. We do not even know the inner history of Paul up to the day on which he reached Damascus; all we know is the rupture which Paul himself felt to be a sudden occurrence. Justin indeed describes (in his Dialogue with Trypho, i. f.) the steps leading up to his secession to Christianity, his passage through the philosophic schools, and finally his apprehension of the truth which rested on revelation; but the narrative is evidently touched up and it is not particularly instructive. Thanks to Tatian's Oratio, we get a somewhat deeper insight into that writer's inner growth, but here, too, we are unable to form any real idea of the change. Otherwise, Cyprian's little treatise ad Donatum is of the greatest service. What he sought for was a power to free him from an unworthy life, and in the Christian faith he found this power.

How deeply must conversion have driven its wedge into marriage and domestic life! What an amount of strain, dispeace, and estrangement conversion must have produced, if one member was a Christian while another clung to the old religion! “Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: children shall rise up against their parents and have them put to death.” “I came not to bring peace on earth, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He who loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. x. 21, 34-37). These prophecies, says Tertullian (Scorp., ix.), were fulfilled in none of the apostles; therefore they apply to us. “Nemo enim apostolorum aut fratrem aut patrem passus est traditorem, quod plerique iam nostri” (“None of the apostles was betrayed by father or brother, as most of us to-day are”). Cp. ch. xi.: “We are betrayed by our next of kin.” Justin (Dial. xxxv.) says the same “We are put to death by our kindred.” “The father, the neighbour, the son, the friend, the brother, the husband, the wife, are imperilled; if they seek to maintain discipline, they are in danger of being denounced” (Apol., II. i.). “If anyone,” says Clement (Quis Dives, xxii.), “has a godless father or brother or son, who would be a hindrance to faith and an obstacle to the higher life, he must not associate with him or share his position; he must abjure the fleshly tie on account of the spiritual hostility.”678 In the Recognitions of Clement (ii. 29) we read: “In unaquaque domo, cum inter credentem et non credentem coeperit esse diversitas, necessario pugna fit, incredulis quidem contra fidem dimicantibtis, fidelibus vero in illis errorem veterem et peccatorum vitia confutantibus” (“When differences arise in any household between a believer and an unbeliever, an inevitable conflict arises, the unbelievers fighting against the faith, and the faithful refuting their old error and sinful vices”). Eusebius (Theophan., iv. 12) writes, on Luke xii. 51 f.: “Further, we see that no word of man, whether philosopher or poet, Greek or barbarian, has ever had the force of these words, whereby Christ rules the entire world, breaking up every household, parting and separating all generations, so that some think as he thinks whilst others find themselves opposed to him.” A very meagre record of these

tragedies has come down to us. The orator Aristides (Orat., xlvi.) alludes to them in a passage which will come up before us later on. Justin (Apol., II) tells us of an aristocratic couple in Rome who were leading a profligate life. The woman became a Christian, and, unable ultimately to put up with her profligate husband any longer, proposed a divorce; whereupon he denounced her and her teacher to the city prefect as Christians.679 When Thecla became a Christian, she would have nothing to do with her bridegroom—a state of matters which must have been fairly common, like the refusal of converted wives to admit a husband's marital rights. Thecla's bridegroom denounced her teacher to the magistrates, and she herself left her parents' house. Celsus (Orig., adv. Cels., III. liv.) gives a drastic account of how Christian fanatics of the baser classes sowed dispeace in families of their own standing. The picture is at least drawn from personal observation, and on that account it must not be left out here. “As we see, workers in wool and leather, fullers and cobblers, people entirely uneducated and unpolished, do not venture in private houses to say a word in presence of their employers, who are older and wiser than themselves. But as soon as they get hold of young people and such women as are as ignorant as themselves, in private, they become wonderfully eloquent. ‘You must follow us,' they say, ‘and not your own father or teachers; the latter are deranged and stupid; in the grip of silly prejudices, how can they conceive or carry out anything truly noble or good? Let the young people follow us, for so they will be happy and make the household happy also!' If they see, as they talk so, a teacher or intelligent person or the father himself coming, the timorous among them are sore afraid, while the more forward incite the young folks to fling off the yoke. ‘So long as you are with them,' they whisper, ‘we cannot and will not impart any good to you; we have no wish to expose ourselves to their corrupt folly and cruelty, to their abandoned sinfulness and vindictive tempers! If you want to pick up any good, leave your fathers and teachers. Come with your playmates and the women to the women's apartments, or to the cobbler's stall, or to the fuller's shop! There you will attain the perfect life' Such are their wheedling words.” A sketch like this, apart from its malice, was certainly applicable to the time of the Antonines; hardly so, when Origen wrote. Origen is quite indignant that Christian teachers should be mixed up with wool-dressers, cobblers, and fullers, but he cannot deny that young people and women were withdrawn from their teachers and parents. He simply declares that they were all the better for it (III. lvi.).

The scenes between Perpetua680 and her father are most affecting. He tried at first to bring her back by force,681 and then besought her with tears and entreaties (ch. v.)682 The crowd called out to the martyr Agathonikê, “Have pity on thy son!” But she replied, “He has God, and God is able to have pity on his own.” Pagan spectators of the execution of Christians would cry out pitifully: “Et puto liberos habet. nam est illi societas in penatibus coniunx, et tamen nec vinculo pignerum cedit nec obsequio pietatis abductus a proposito suo deficit” (Novat., de Laude Mart., xv.: “Yet I believe the man he has a wife, at home. In spite of this, however, he does not yield to the bond of his offspring, nor withdraw from his purpose under the constraint of family affection”). “Uxorem iam pudicam maritus iam non zelotypus, filium iam subiectum pater retro patiens abdicavit, servum iam fidelem dominus olim mitis ab oculis relegavit” (Tert., Apol., iii.: “Though jealous no longer, the husband expels his wife who is now chaste; the son, now obedient, is disowned by his father who was formerly lenient; the master, once so mild, cannot bear the sight of the slave who is now faithful”). Similar instances occur in many of the Acts of the Martyrs.683 Genesius (Ruinart, p. 312), for example, says that he cursed his Christian parents and relatives. But the reverse also happened. When Origen was young, and in fact little more than a lad, he wrote thus to his father, who had been thrown into prison for his faith: “See that you do not change your mind on our account” (Eus., H.E., vi. 2).684In how many cases the husband was a pagan and the wife a Christian (see below, Book IV. Chap. II.). Such a

relationship may have frequently685 been tolerable, but think of all the distress and anguish involved by these marriages in the majority of cases. Look at what Arnobius says (ii. 5): “Malunt solvi conjuges matrimoniis, exheredari a parentibus liberi quam fidem rumpere Christianam et salutaris militiae sacramenta deponere” (“Rather than break their Christian troth or throw aside the oaths of the Christian warfare, wives prefer to be divorced, children to be disinherited”).

A living faith requires no special “methods” for its propagation; on it sweeps over every obstacle; even the strongest natural affections cannot overpower it. But it is only to a very limited extent that the third century can be regarded in this ideal aspect. From that date Christianity was chiefly influential as the monotheistic religion of mysteries and as a powerful church which embraced holy persons, holy books, a holy doctrine, and a sanctifying cultus. She even stooped to meet the needs of the masses in a way very different from what had hitherto been followed; she studied their traditional habits of worship and their polytheistic tendencies by instituting and organizing festivals, deliverers, saints, and local sacred sites, after the popular fashion. In this connection the missionary method followed by Gregory Thaumaturgus (to which we have already referred on p. 315) is thoroughly characteristic; by consenting to anything, by not merely tolerating but actually promoting a certain syncretism, it achieved, so far as the number of converts was concerned, a most brilliant success. In the following Book (Chap. III., sect. III. 9B) detailed information will be given upon this point.

CHAPTER III

THE NAMES OF CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS

JESUS called those who gathered round him "disciples" (μαθηταί); he called himself the "teacher"686 (this is historically certain), while those whom he had gathered addressed him as teacher,687 and described themselves as disciples (just as the adherents of John the Baptist were also termed disciples of John). From this it follows that the relation of Jesus to his disciples during his lifetime was determined, not by the conception of Messiah, but by that of teacher. As yet the Messianic dignity of Jesus—only to be revealed at his return—remained a mystery of faith still dimly grasped. Jesus himself did not claim it openly until his entry into Jerusalem.

After the resurrection his disciples witnessed publicly and confidently to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, but they still continued to call themselves "disciples"—which proves how tenacious names are when once they have been affixed. The twelve confidants of Jesus were called "the twelve disciples" (or, "the twelve").688 From Acts (cp. i., vi., ix., xi., xiii.-xvi., xviii., xxi.) we learn that although, strictly speaking, "disciples" had ceased to be applicable, it was retained by Christians for one or two decades as a designation of themselves, especially by the Christians of Palestine.689 Paul never employed it, however, and gradually, one observes, the name of of οί μαθηταί (with the addition of τοῦ κυρίον) came to be exclusively applied to personal disciples of Jesus, i.e., in the first instance to the twelve, and thereafter to others, also,690 as in Papias, Irenæus, etc. In this way it became a title of honor for those who had themselves seen the Lord (and also for Palestinian Christians of the primitive age in general?), and who could therefore serve as evidence against heretics who subjected the person of Jesus to a docetic decomposition. Confessors and martyrs during the second and third centuries were also honored with this high title of "disciples of the Lord." They too became, that is to say, personal disciples of the Lord. Inasmuch as they attached themselves to him by their confession and he to them (Matt. x. 32), they were promoted to the same rank as the primitive personal disciples of Jesus; they were as near the Lord in glory as were the latter to him during his earthly sojourn.691

The term "disciples" fell into disuse, because it no longer expressed the relationship in which Christians now found themselves placed. It meant at once too little and too much. Consequently other terms arose, although these did not in every instance become technical.

The Jews, in the first instance, gave their renegade compatriots special names of their own, in particular "Nazarenes," "Galileans," and perhaps also "Poor" (though it is probably quite correct to take this as a self-designation of Jewish Christians, since "Ebionim" in the Old Testament is a term of respect). But these titles really did not prevail except in small circles. "Nazarenes" alone enjoyed and for long retained a somewhat extensive circulation.692

The Christians called themselves "God's people," "Israel in spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα)," "the seed of Abraham," "the chosen people," "the twelve tribes," "the elect," "the servants of God," "believers," "saints," "brethren," and the "church of God."693 Of these names the first seven (and others of a similar character) never became technical terms taken singly, but, so to speak, collectively. They show how the new community felt itself to be heir to all the promises and privileges of the Jewish nation. At the same time, "the elect"694 and "the servants of God"695 came very near being technical expressions.

From the usage and vocabulary of Paul, Acts, and later writings,696 it follows that believers"

(πιστοί) was a technical term. In assuming the name of “believers” (which originated, we may conjecture, on the soil of Gentile Christianity), Christians felt that the decisive and cardinal thing in their religion was the message which had made them what they were, a message which was nothing else than the preaching of the one God, of his son Jesus Christ, and of the life to come.

The three characteristic titles, however, are those of “saints,” “brethren,” and “the church of God,” all of which hang together. The abandonment of the term “disciples” for these self-chosen titles697 marks the most significant advance made by those who believed in Jesus (cp. Weizsäcker, op. cit., pp. 36 f.; Eng. trans., i. pp. 43 f.). They took the name of “saints,” because they were sanctified by God and for God through the holy Spirit sent by Jesus, and because they were conscious of being truly holy and partakers in the future glory despite all the sins that daily clung to them.698 It remains the technical term applied by Christians to one another till after the middle of the second century (cp. Clem. Rom., Hermas, the Didachê, etc.); thereafter it gradually disappears,699 as Christians had no longer the courage to call themselves “saints,” after all that had happened. Besides, what really distinguished Christians from one another by this time was the difference between the clergy and the laity (or the leaders and the led), so that the name “saints” became quite obliterated; it was only recalled in hard times of persecution. In its place, “holy orders” arose (martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and finally—during the third century—the bishops), while “holy media” (sacraments), whose fitful influence covered Christians who were personally unholy, assumed still greater prominence than in the first century. People were no longer conscious of being personally holy;700 but then they had holy martyrs, holy ascetics, holy priests, holy ordinances, holy writings, and a holy doctrine.

Closely bound up with the name of “saints” was that of “brethren” (and “sisters”), the former denoting the Christians' relationship to God and to the future life (or βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, the kingdom of God), the latter the new relationship in which they felt themselves placed towards their fellow-men, and, above all, towards their fellow-believers (cp. also the not infrequent title of “brethren in the Lord”). After Paul, this title became so common that the pagans soon grew familiar with it, ridiculing and besmirching it, but unable, for all that, to evade the impression which it made. For the term did correspond to the conduct of Christians.701 They termed themselves a brotherhood (ἀδελφόης; cp. 1 Pet. ii. 17, v. 9, etc.) as well as brethren (ἀδελφοί), and to realize how fixed and frequent was the title, to realize how truly it answered to their life and conduct,702 one has only to study, not merely the New Testament writings (where Jesus himself employed it and laid great emphasis upon it703), but Clemens Romanus, the Didachê, and the writings of the apologists.704 Yet even the name of “the brethren,” though it outlived that of “the saints,” lapsed after the close705 of the third century; or rather, it was only ecclesiastics who really continued to call each other “brethren,”706 and when a priest gave the title of “brother” to a layman, it denoted a special mark of honor.707 “Brethren” (“fratres”) survived only in sermons, but confessors were at liberty to address ecclesiastics and even bishops by this title (cp. Cypr., Ep. liii.).708

Since Christians in the apostolic age felt themselves to be “saints” and “brethren,” and, in this sense, to be the true Israel and at the same time God's new creation,709 they required a solemn title to bring out their complete and divinely appointed character and unity. As “brotherhood” (ἀδελφότης, see above) was too one-sided, the name they chose was that of “church” or “the church of God” (ἐκκλησία, ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ). This was a masterly stroke. It was the work,710 not of Paul, nor even of.Jesus, but of the Palestinian communities, which must have described themselves as קָהָל. Originally, it was beyond question a collective term;711 it was the most solemn expression of the Jews for their worship712 as a collective body, and as such it was taken over by the Christians. But ere long it was applied to the

individual communities, and then again to the general meeting for worship. Thanks to this many-sided usage, together with its religious colouring ("the church called by God") and the possibilities of personification which it offered, the conception and the term alike rapidly came to the front.713Its acquisition rendered the capture of the term "synagogue"714 a superfluity, and, once the inner cleavage had taken place, the very neglect of the latter title served to distinguish Christians sharply from Judaism and its religious gatherings even in terminology. From the outset, the Gentile Christians learned to think of the new religion as a "church" and as "churches." This did not originally involve an element of authority, but such an element lies hidden from the first in any spiritual magnitude which puts itself forward as at once an ideal and an actual fellowship of men. It possesses regulations and traditions of its own, special functions and forms of organization, and these become authoritative; withal, it supports the individual and at the same time guarantees to him the content of its testimony. Thus, as early as 1 Tim. iii. 15 we read: οἶκος θεοῦ, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας. "Ecclesia mater" frequently occurs in the literature of the second century. Most important of all, however, was the fact that ἐκκλησία was conceived of, in the first instance, not simply as an earthly but as a heavenly and transcendental entity.715 He who belonged to the ἐκκλησία ceased to have the rights of a citizen on earth;716 instead of these he acquired all assured citizenship in heaven. This transcendental meaning of the term still retained vigour and vitality during the second century, but in the course of the third it dropped more and more into the rear.717

During the course of the second century the term ἐκκλησία acquired the attribute of "catholic" (in addition to that of "holy"). This predicate does not contain anything which implies a secularisation of the church, for "catholic" originally meant Christendom as a whole in contrast to individual churches (ἐκκλήία καθολική = πᾶσα ἡ ἐκκλησία). The conception of "all the churches" is thus identical with that of "the church in general." But a certain dogmatic element did exist from the very outset in the conception of the general church, as the idea was that this church had been diffused by the apostles over all the earth. Hence it was believed that only what existed everywhere throughout the church could be true, and at the same time absolutely true, so that the conceptions of "all Christendom," "Christianity spread over all the earth," and "the true church," came to be regarded at a pretty early period as identical. In this way the term "catholic" acquired a pregnant meaning, and one which in the end was both dogmatic and political. As this was not innate but an innovation, it is not unsuitable to speak of pre-catholic and catholic Christianity. The term "catholic church" occurs first of all in Ignatius (Smyrn., viii. 2: ὅπου ἂν φανῇ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω· ὥσπερ ὅπου ἂν ᾖ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία), who writes "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; just as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the catholic church." Here, however, the words do not yet denote a new conception of the church, in which it is represented as an empirical and authoritative society. In Mart. Polyc. Inscr., xvi. 2, xix. 2, the word is probably an interpolation ("catholic" being here equivalent to "orthodox": ἡ ἐν Σμύρνῃ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία). From Iren., iii. 15. 2 ("Valentiniani eos qui sunt ab ecclesia 'communes' et 'ecclesiasticos' dicunt" = "The Valentinians called those who belong to the Church by the name of 'communes' and 'ecclesiastici'") it follows that the orthodox Christians were called "catholics" and "ecclesiastics" at the period of the Valentinian heresy.718 Irenæus himself does not employ the term; but the thing is there (cp. i. 10. 2; ii. 9. 1, etc.; similarly Serapion in Euseb., H.E., v. 19, πᾶσα ἡ ἐν κόσμῳ ἀδελιφότης). After the Mart. Polyc. the term "catholic," as a description of the orthodox and visible church, occurs in the Muratorian fragment (where "catholica" stands without "ecclesia" at all, as is frequently the case in later years throughout the West), in an anonymous anti-Montanist writer (Eus., H.E., v. 16. 9), in Tertullian (e.g., de Præscript., xxvi., xxx.; adv.

Marc., iv. 4, iii. 22), in Clem. Alex (Strom., vii. 17, 106 f.), in Hippolytus (Philos., ix. 12), in Mart. Pionii (2. 9. 13. 19), in Pope Cornelius (Cypr., Epist. xlix. 2), and in Cyprian. The expression "catholica traditio" occurs in Tertullian (de Monog. ii.), "fides catholica" in Cyprian (Ep. xxv.), κανών καθολικός in Mart. Polyc. (Mosq. ad fin.), and Cyprian (Ep. lxx. 1), and "catholica fides et religio" in Mart. Pionii (18). Elsewhere the word appears in different connections throughout the early Christian literature. In the Western symbols the addition of "catholica" crept in at a comparatively late period, i.e., not before the third century. In the early Roman symbol it does not occur.

We now come to the name "Christians," which became the cardinal title of the faith. The Roman authorities certainly employed it from the days of Trajan downwards (cp. Pliny and the rescripts, the "cognitiones de Christianis"), and probably even forty or fifty years earlier (1 Pet. iv. 16; Tacitus), whilst it was by this name that the adherents of the new religion were known among the common people (Tacitus; cp. also the well known passage in Suetonius).

Luke has told us where this name arose. After describing the foundation of the (Gentile Christian) church at Antioch, he proceeds (xi. 26): χρηματίσαι τρώτως ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανούς [Χρηστιανούς]. It is needless to suppose that the name was given immediately after the establishment of the church, but neither need we assume that any considerable interval elapsed between the one fact and the other.719 Luke does not tell us who gave the name, but he indicates it clearly enough.720 It was not the Christians (otherwise he would not have written χρηματίσαι for they simply could not have given it to themselves. The essentially inexact nature of the verbal form precludes any such idea. And for the same reason it could not have originated with the Jews. It was among the pagans that the title arose, among pagans who heard that a lean called "Christ" [Chrestus] was the lord and master of the new sect. Accordingly they struck out721 the name of "Christians," as though "Christ" were a proper name, just as they spoke of "Herodiani," "Marciani," etc.722 At first, of course, Christians did not adopt the title. It does not occur in Paul or anywhere in the New Testament as a designation applied by Christians to themselves, for in the only two passages723 where it does occur it is quoted from the lips of an opponent, and even in the apostolic fathers (so-called) we look for it in vain. The sole exception is Ignatius,724 who employs it quite frequently a fact which serves admirably to corroborate the narrative of Acts, for Ignatius belonged to Antioch725 Thus the name not only originated in Antioch, but, so far as we know, it was there that it first became employed by Christians as a title. By the days of Trajau the Christians of Asia Minor had probably been in possession of this title for a considerable period, but its general vogue cannot he dated earlier than the close of Hadrian's reign or that of Pius. Tertullian, however, employs it as if it had been given by the Christians to themselves.726

A word in closing on the well-known passage from Tacitus (Anal., xv. 44). It is certain that the persecution mentioned here was really a persecution of Christians (and not of Jews), the only doubtful point being whether the use of "Christiani" ("quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat") is not a hysteron proteron. Yet even this doubt seems to me unjustified, If Christians were called by this name in Antioch about 40-45 A.D., there is no obvious reason why the name should not have been known in Rome by 64 A.D., even although the Christians did not spread it themselves, but were only followed by it as by their shadow. Nor does Tacitus (or his source) aver that the name was used by Christians for their own party: he says the very opposite; it was the people who thus described them. Hitherto, however, the statement of Tacitus has appeared rather unintelligible, for he begins by ascribing the appellation of "Christians" to the common people, and then goes on to relate that the "autor nominis," or author of the name, was Christ, in which case the common people did a very obvious and

natural thing when they called Christ's followers “Christians.” Why, then, does Tacitus single out the appellation of “Christian” as a popular epithet? This is an enigma which I once proposed to solve by supposing that the populace gave the title to Christians in an obscene or opprobrious sense. I bethought myself of “crista,” or of the term “panchristarii,” which (so far as I know) occurs only once in Arnobius, ii. 38 “Quid fullones, lanarios, phrygiones, cocos, panchristarios, muliones, lenones, lanios, meretrices (What of the fullers, wool-workers, embroiderers, cooks, confectioners, muleteers, pimps, butchers, prostitutes)?” Tacitus, we might conjecture, meant to suggest this meaning, while at the same time he explained the real origin of the term in question. But this hypothesis was unstable, and in my judgment the enigma has now been solved by means of a fresh collation of the Tacitus MS. (see G. Andresen, Wochenschr. f. klass. Philologie, 1902, No. 28, col. 780 f.), which shows, as I am convinced from the facsimile, that the original reading was “Chrestianos,” and that this was subsequently corrected (though “Christus” and not “Chrestus” is the term employed ad loc.). This clears up the whole matter. The populace, as Tacitus says, called this sect “Chrestiani,” while he himself is better informed (like Pliny, who also writes “Christian”), and silently corrects the mistake in the spelling of the names, by accurately designating its author (actor nominis) as “Christus.” Blass had anticipated this solution by a conjecture of his own in the passage under discussion, and the event has proved that he was correct. The only point which remains to be noticed is the surprising tense of “appellabat.” Why did not Tacitus write “appellat,” we may ask? Was it because he wished to indicate that everyone nowadays was well aware of the origin of the name?727

One name still falls to be considered, a name which of course never became really technical, but was (so to speak) semi-technical; I mean that of στρατιώτης Χριστοὺ (miles Christi, a soldier of Christ).728 With Paul this metaphor had already become so common that it was employed in the most diverse ways; compare the great descriptions in 2 Cor. x. 3-6 (στρατευόμεθα—τὰ ὅπλα τῆς στρατείας—πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων—λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες—αἰχμαλωτίζοντες), and the elaborate sketch in Ephes. vi. 10-18, with 1 Thess. v. 8 and 1 Cor. ix. 7, xi. 8; note also how Paul describes his fellow prisoners as “fellow-captives” (Rom. xvi. 7; Col. iv. 10; Philemon 23), and his fellow-workers as “fellow-soldiers” (Phil. ii. 25; Philemon 2). We come across the same figure again in the pastoral epistles (1 Tim. i. 18: ἵνα στρατεύῃ τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν; 2 Tim. ii. 3 f.: συνκακοπάθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Ἰ. Χ. οὐδεὶς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἀρέσῃ. ἐὰν δὲ ἀθλήσῃ τίς, οὐ στεφανοῦται ἐὰν μὴ νομίμως ἀθλήσῃ; 2 Tim. iii. 6:, αἰχμαλωτίζοντες γυναικάρια). Two military principles were held as fixed, even within the first century, for apostles and missionaries. (1) They had the right to be supported by others (their converts or churches). (2) They must not engage in civil pursuits. Thereafter the figure never lost currency,729 becoming so naturalized,730 among the Latins especially (as a title for the martyrs pre-eminently, but also for Christians' in general), that “soldiers of Christ” (milites Christi) almost became a technical term with them for Christians; cp. the writings of Tertullian, and particularly the correspondence of Cyprian—where hardly one letter fails to describe Christians as “soldiers of God” (milites dei), or “soldiers of Christ” (milites Christi), and where Christ is also called the “imperator” of Christians.731 The preference shown for this figure by Christians of the West, and their incorporation of it in definite representations, may be explained by their more aggressive and at the same time thoroughly practical temper. The currency lent to the figure was reinforced by the fact that “sacramentum” in the West (i.e., any μυστήριον or mystery, and also anything sacred) was an extremely common term, while baptism in particular, or the solemn vow taken at baptism, was also designated a “sacramentum.” Being a military term (= the military oath), it made all Western Christians feel that they must be soldiers of Christ, owing to their sacrament, and the probability is, as has been recently shown (by Zahn,

Neue kirchl. Zeitschrift, 1899, pp. 28 f.), that this usage explains the description of the pagans as “pagani.” It can be demonstrated that the latter term was already in use (during the early years of Valentinian 1; cp. Theodos., Cod. xvi. 2. 18) long before the development of Christianity had gone so far as to enable all non-Christians to be termed “villagers”; hence the title must rather be taken in the sense of “civilians” (for which there is outside evidence) as opposed to “milites” or soldiers. Non-Christians are people who have not taken the oath of service to God or Christ, and who consequently have no part in the sacrament (“Sacramentum ignorantes,” Lactant.)! They are mere “pagani.”732

Pagans in part caught up the names of Christians as they heard them on the latter's lips,733 but of course they used most commonly the title which they had coined themselves, viz., that of “Christians.” Alongside of this we find nicknames and sobriquets like “Galileans,” “ass-worshippers” (Tert., Apol. xvi., cp. Minut.), “magicians” (Acta Theclæ, Tertull.), “Third race,” “filth” (copria, cp. Commod., Carm. Apolog. 612, Lact., v. 1. 27), “sarmenticii” and “semi-axii” (stake-bound, faggot circled; Tert., Apol. i.).734

Closely bound up with the “names” of Christians is the discussion of the question whether individual Christians got new names as Christians, or how Christians stood with regard to ordinary pagan names during the first three centuries. The answer to this will be found in the second Excursus appended to the present chapter.

EXCURSUS I

"FRIENDS" (οἱ φίλοι).

THE name φίλοι (οἰκεῖοι) τοῦ θεοῦ ("amici dei," "cari deo") was frequently used as a self-designation by Christians, though it was not strictly a technical term. It went back735 to the predicate of Abraham, who was called "the Friend of God" in Jewish tradition. It signified that every individual Christian stood in the same relation to God as Abraham736 had done. According to two passages in the gospels,737 Jesus called his disciples his "friends." But in after-years this title (or that of of οἱ γνώριμοι) was rarely used.

The term οἱ φίλοι is to be distinguished from that of φίλοι τοῦ θεοῦ (χριστοῦ). Did Christians also call each other "friends"? We know the significance which came to attach to friendship in the schools of Greek philosophy. No one ever spoke more nobly and warmly of friendship than Aristotle. Never was it more vividly realized than in the schools of the Pythagoreans and the Epicureans. If the former went the length of a community of goods, the Samian sage outstripped them with his counsel, "Put not your property into a common holding, for that implies a mutual distrust. And if people distrust each other, they cannot be friends" (μὴ κατατίθεοθαι τὰς οὐσίας εἰς τὸ κοινὸν· ἀπιστούντων γὰρ τὸ τοιοῦτον· εἰ δ᾽ ἀπίστων, οὐδὲ φίλων). The intercourse of Socrates with his scholars—scholars who were at the same time his friends—furnished a moving picture of friendship. Men could not forget how he lived with them, how he laboured for them and was open to them up to the very hour of his death, and how everything he taught them came home to them as a friend's counsel. The Stoic ethic, based on the absence of any wants in the perfect wise man, certainly left no room for friendship, but (as is often the case) the Stoic broke through the theory of his school at this point, and Seneca was not the only Stoic moralist who glorified friendship and showed how it was a moral necessity to life. No wonder that the Epicureans, like the Pythagoreans before them, simply called themselves "friends." It formed at once the simplest and the deepest expression for that inner bond of life into which men found themselves transplanted when they entered the fellowship of the school. No matter whether it was the common reverence felt for the master, or the community of sentiment and aspiration among the members, or the mutual aid owed by each individual to his fellows—the relationship in every case was covered by the term of "the friends." We should expect to find that Christians also called themselves "the friends." But there is hardly any passage bearing this out. 'In one of the "we" sections in Acts (xxvii. 3) we read that Paul the prisoner was permitted τρὸς τοὺς φίλούς πορευθέντι ἐπιμέλειας τυχεῖν. Probably οἱ φίλοι here means not special friends of the apostle, but Christians in general (who elsewhere are always called in Acts of οἱ ἀδελφοί) . But this is the only passage in the primitive literature which can be adduced. Luke, with his classical culture, has permitted himself this once to use the classical designation. In 3 John 15 (ἀσπάζονταί σε οἱ φιλοι· ἀσπάζου τοὺς φίλους κατ᾽ ὄνομα) it is most likely that special friends are meant, not all the Christians at Ephesus and at the place where the letter is composed. Evidently the natural term οἱ φίλοι did not gain currency in the catholic church, owing to the fact that οἱ ἀδελφοί (cp. above, pp. 405 f.) was preferred as being still more inward and warm. In gnostic circles, on the other hand, which arose subsequently under the influence of Greek philosophy, οἱ φίλοι seems to have been used during the second century. Thus Valentinus wrote a homily περὶ φίλων (cp. Clem., Strom., vi. 6. 52); Epiphanius, the son of Carpocrates, founded a Christian communistic guild after the model of the Pythagoreans, and perhaps also after the model of the Epicurean school and its organization (Clem., Strom. iii. 5-9); while the Abercius-inscription, which is probably gnostic, tells how faith furnished the fish as food for (τοῖς) φίλοις. Clement of Alexandria would have had no objection to describe the true gnostic

circle as “friends.” It is he who preserves the fine saying (Quis Dives, xxxii.): “The Lord did not say [in Luke xvi. 9] give, or provide, or benefit, or aid, but make a friend. And friendship springs, not from a single act of giving, but from invariable relief vouchsafed and from long intercourse” (οὐ μὴ οὐδ᾽ εἶτεν ὁ κύριος, Δος, ἢ Ιαράσχες, ἢ Ἐυεργέτησον, ἢ Βοήθησαν· φίλον δὲ ποιῆσαι· ὁ δὲ φίλος οὐκ ἐκ μίας δόσεως γίνεταί, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ὅλης ἀναπαύσεως καὶ συνουσίας μακρᾶς).

EXCURSUS II

CHRISTIAN NAMES

DOES the use of Christian names taken from the Bible go back to the first three centuries? In answering this question, we come upon several instructive data.

Upon consulting the earliest synodical Acts in our possession, those of the North African synod in 256 A.D. (preserved in Cyprian's works), we find that while the names of the eighty seven bishops who voted there are for the most part Latin, though a considerable number are Greek, not one Old Testament name occurs. Only two are from the New Testament, viz., Peter (No. 72) and Paul (No. 47). Thus, by the middle of the third century pagan names were still employed quite freely throughout Northern Africa, and the necessity of employing Christian names had hardly as yet arisen. The same holds true of all the other regions of Christendom. As inscriptions and writings testify, Christians in East and West alike made an exclusive or almost exclusive use of the old pagan names in their environment till after the middle of the third century, employing, indeed, very often names from pagan mythology and soothsaying. We find Christians called Apollinaris, Apollonius, Heraclius, Saturninus, Mercurius, Bacchylus, Bacchylides, Serapion, Satyrus, Aphrodisius, Dionysius, Hermas, Origen, etc., besides Faustus, Felix, and Felicissimus. “The martyrs perished because they declined to sacrifice to the gods whose names they bore”!

Now this is remarkable! Here was the primitive church exterminating every vestige of polytheism in her midst, tabooing pagan mythology as devilish, living with the great personalities of the Bible and upon their words, and yet freely employing the pagan names which had been hitherto in vogue! The problem becomes even harder when one recollects that the Bible itself contains examples of fresh names being given,738 that surnames and alterations of a name were of frequent occurrence in the Roman empire (the practice, in fact, being legalized by the emperor Caracalla in 212 for all free men), and that a man's name in antiquity was by no means regarded by most people as a matter of indifference.

We may be inclined to seek various reasons for this indifference displayed by the primitive Christians towards names. We may point to the fact that a whole series of pagan names must have been rendered sacred from the outset by the mere fact of distinguished Christians having borne them. We may further recollect how soon Christians got the length of strenuously asserting that there was nothing in a name. Why, from the days of Trajan onwards they were condemned on account of the mere name of “Christian” without anyone thinking it necessary to inquire if they had actually committed any crime! On the other hand, Justin, Athenagoras, and Tertullian, as apologists of Christianity, emphasize the fact that the name is a hollow vessel, that there can be no rational “charge brought against words,”—“except, of course,” adds Tertullian, “when a name sounds barbarian or ill-omened, or when it contains some insult or impropriety!” “Ill-omened”! But had “dæmonic” names like Saturninus, Serapion, and Apollonius no evil connotation upon the lips of Christians, and did not Christians, again, attach a healing virtue to the very language of certain formulas (e.g., the utterance of the name of Jesus in exorcisms), just as the heathen did? No; surely this does not serve to explain the indifference felt by Christians towards mythological titles. But if not, then how are we to explain it?

Hardly any other answer can be given to the question than this, that the general custom of the world in which people were living proved stronger than any reflections of their own. At all times, new names have encountered a powerful resistance in the plea, “There is none of thy

kindred that is called by this name" (Luke i. 61). The result was that people retained the old names, just as they had to endorse or to endure much that was of the world,—so long as they were in the world. It was not worth while to alter the name which one found oneself bearing. Why, everyone, be he called Apollonius or Serapion, had already got a second, distinctive, and abiding name in baptism, the name of "Christian." Each individual believer bore that as a proper name. In the Acts of Carpus (during the reign of Marcus Aurelius) the magistrate asked the accused, "What is thy name?" The answer was, "My first and foremost name is that of 'Christian'; but if thou demandest my wordly name as well, I am called 'Carpus.'" The "worldly" name was kept up, but it did not count, so to speak, as the real name. In the account of the martyrs at Lyons, Sanctus the Christian is said to have withheld his proper name from the magistrate, contenting himself with the one reply, "I am a Christian!"739

This one name satisfied people till about the middle of the third century; along with it they were content to bear the ordinary names of this world "as though they bore them not." Even surnames with a Christian meaning are extremely rare. It is the exception, not the rule, to find a man like Bishop Ignatius calling himself by the additional Christian title of Theophorus at the opening of the second century.740 The change first came a little before the middle of the third century. And the surprising thing is that the change, for which the way had been slowly paved, came, not in an epoch of religious elevation, but rather in the very period during which the church was corning to terms with the world on a larger scale than she had previously done. In the days when Christians bore pagan names and nothing more, the dividing line between Christianity and the world was drawn much more sharply than in the days when they began to call themselves Peter and Paul! As so often is the case, the forms made their appearance just when the spirit was undermined. The principle of "nomen est omen" was not violated. It remained extraordinarily significant. For the name indicates that one has to take certain measures in order to keep hold of something that is in danger of disappearing.

In many cases people may not have been conscious of this. On the contrary, three reasons were operative. One of these I have already mentioned, viz., the frequent occurrence throughout the empire (even among pagans) of alteration in a name, and also of surnames being added, after the edict of Caracalla (in 212 A.D.). The second lay in the practice of infant baptism, which was now becoming quite current. As a name was conferred upon the child at this solemn act, it naturally seemed good to choose a specifically Christian name. Thirdly and lastly, and—we may add—chiefly, the more the church entered the world, the more the world also entered the church. And with the wofd there entered more and snore of the old pagan superstition that "nomen est omen," the dread felt for words, and, moreover, the old propensity for securing deliverers, angels, and spiritual heroes upon one's side, together with the "pious" belief that one inclined a saint to be one's protector and patron by taking his name. Such a form of superstition has never been quite absent from Christianity, for even the primitive Christians were not merely Christians but also Jews, Syrians, Asiatics, Greeks, or Romans. But then it was controlled by other moods or movements of the Spirit. During the third century, however, the local strain again rose to the surface. People no longer called their children Bacchylus or Arphrodisius with the same readiness, it is true. But they began to call themselves Peter and Paul in the same sense as the pagans called their children Dionysius and Serapion.

The process of displacing mythological by Christian names was carried out very slowly. It was never quite completed, for not a few of the former gradually became Christian, thanks to some glorious characters who had borne them; in this way, they entirely lost their original meaning. One or two items from the history of this process may be adduced at this point in our discussion.

At the very time when we find only two biblical names (those of Peter and Paul) in a list of eighty-seven episcopal names, bishop Dionysius of Alexandria writes that Christians prefer to call their children Peter and Paul.741 It was then also that Christian changes742 of name began to be common. It is noted (in Eus., H.E., vi. 30) that Gregory Thaumaturgus exchanged the name of Theodore for Gregory, but this instance is not quite clear.743 We are told that a certain Sabina, during the reign of Decius (in 250 A.D.) called herself Theodota when she was asked at her trial what was her name.744 In the Acta of a certain martyr called Balsamus (311 A.D.), the accused cries "According to my paternal name I am Balsamus, but according to the spiritual, name which I received at baptism, I am Peter."745 Interesting, too, is the account given by Eusebius (Mart. Pal., xi. 7 f.) of five Egyptian Christians who were martyred during the Diocletian persecution. They all bore Egyptian names. But when the first of them was questioned by the magistrate, he replied not with his own name but with that of an Old Testament prophet. Whereupon Eusebius observes, "This was because, they had assumed such names instead of the names given them by their parents, names probably derived from idols; so that one could hear them calling themselves Elijih,746 Jeremiah, Isaiah, Samuel, and Daniel, thus giving themselves out to be Jews in the spiritual sense, even the true and genuine Israel of God, not merely by their deeds, but by the names they bore."

Obviously, the ruling idea here is not yet that of patron saints; the prophets are selected as models, not as patrons. Even the change of name itself is still a novelty. This is borne out by the festal epistles of Athanasius in the fourth century, which contain an extraordinary number of Christian names, almost all of which are the familiar pagan names (Greek or Egyptian). Biblical names are still infrequent, although in one passage, writing.of a certain Gelous Hierakatnmon, Athanasius does remark that "out of shame he took the name of Eulogius in addition to his own name."747

It is very remarkable that down to the middle of the fourth century Peter and Paul are about the only New Testament names to be met with, while Old Testament names again are so rare that the above case of the five Egyptians who had assumed prophetic names must be considered an exception to the rule. Even the name of John, so far as I know, only began to appear within the fourth century, and that slowly. On the other hand, we must not here adduce a passage from Dionysius of Alexandria, which has been already under review. He certainly writes: "In my opinion, many persons [in the apostolic] had the same name as John, for out of love for him, admiring and emulating him, and desirous of being loved by the Lord even as he was, many assumed the same surname, just as many of the children of the faithful are also called Peter and Paul." But what Dionysius says here about the name of John is simply a conjecture with regard to the apostolic age, while indirectly, though plainly enough, he testifies that Christians in his own day were called Peter and Paul, but not John.748 This preference assigned to the name of the two apostolic leaders throughout the East and West alike is significant,749 and it is endorsed by a passage from Eustathius, the bishop of Antioch, who was a contemporary of Athanasius. "Many Jews," he writes, "call themselves after the patriarchs and prophets, and yet are guilty of wickedness. Many [Christian] Greeks call themselves Peter and Paul, and yet behave in a most disgraceful fashion." Evidently the Old Testament names were left as a rule to the Jews, while Peter and Paul continue apparently to be the only New Testament names which are actually in use. This state of matters lasted till the second half of the fourth century.750 As the saints, prophets, patriarchs, angels, etc., henceforth took the place of the dethroned gods of paganism, and as the stories of these gods were transformed into stories of the saints, the supersession of mythological names now commenced in real earnest.751 Now, for the first time, do we often light upon names like John, James, Andrew, Simon, and Mary, besides—though much more rarely is the West—names from the Old

Testament, At the close of the fourth century, Chrysostom, e.g. (cp. Hom. 52, in Matth. Migne, vol. lx. 365), exhorts the believers to call their children after the saints, so that the saints may serve them as examples of virtue. But in giving this counsel he does not mention its, most powerful motive, a motive disclosed by Theodoret, bishop of Cyprus in Syria, thirty years afterwards. It is this: that people are to give their children the names of saints and martyrs, in order to win them the protection and patronage of these heroes.752 Then and thereafter this was the object which determined the choice of names. The result was a selection of names varying with the different countries and provinces; for the calendar of the provincial saints and the names of famous local bishops who were dead were taken into account together with the Bible. As early as the close of the fourth century, e.g., people in Antioch liked to call their children after the great bishop Meletius. Withal, haphazard and freedom of choice always played some part in the choice of a name, nor was it every ear that could grow accustomed to the sound of barbarian Semitic names. As has been observed already, the Western church was very backward in adopting Old Testament names, and this continued till the days of Calvinism.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, AS BEARING UPON THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

CHRISTIAN preaching aimed at winning souls and bringing individuals to God, "that the number of the elect might be made up," but from the very outset it worked through a community and proposed to itself the aim of uniting all who believed in Christ. Primarily, this union was one which consisted of the disciples of Jesus. But, as we have already seen, these disciples were conscious of being the true Israel and the ecclesia of God. Such they held themselves to be. Hence they appropriated to themselves the form and well-knit frame of Judaism, spiritualizing it and strengthening it, so that by one stroke (we may say) they secured a firm and exclusive organization.

But while this organization, embracing all Christians on earth, rested in the first instance solely upon religious ideas, as a purely ideal conception it would hardly have remained effective for any length of time, had it not been allied to local organization. Christianity, at the initiative of the original apostles and the brethren of Jesus, began by borrowing this as well from Judaism, i.e., from the synagogue. Throughout the Diaspora the Christian communities developed at first out of the synagogues with their proselytes or adherents. Designed to be essentially a brotherhood, and springing out of the synagogue, the Christian society developed a local organization which was of double strength, superior to anything achieved by the societies of Judaism.754 One extremely advantageous fact about these local organizations in their significance for Christianity may be added. It was this: every community was at once a unit, complete in itself; but it was also a reproduction of the collective church of God, and it had to recognize and manifest itself as such.755

Such a religious and social organization, destitute of any political or national basis and yet embracing the entire private life, was a novel and unheard of thing upon the soil of Greek and Roman life, where religious and social organizations only existed as a rule in quite a rudimentary form, and where they lacked any religious control of life as a whole. All that people could think of in this connection was one or two schools of philosophy, whose common life was also a religious life. But here was a society which united fellow-believers, who were resident in any city, in the closest of ties, presupposing a relationship which was assumed as a matter of course to last through life itself, furnishing its members not only with holy unction administered once and for all or from time to time, but with a daily bond which provided them with spiritual benefits and imposed duties on them, assembling them at first daily and then weekly, shutting them off from other people, uniting them in a guild of worship, a friendly society, and an order with a definite line of life in view, besides teaching them to consider themselves as the community of God.

Neophytes, of course, had to get accustomed or to be trained at first to a society of this kind. It ran counter to all the requirements exacted by any other cultus or holy rite from its devotees, however much the existing guild-life may have paved the way for it along several lines. That its object should be the common edification of the members, that the community was therefore 'to resemble a single body with many members, that every member was to be subordinate to the whole body, that one member was to suffer and rejoice with another, that Jesus Christ did not call individuals apart but built them up into a society in which the individual got his place—all these were lessons which had to be learnt. Paul's epistles prove how vigorously and unweariedly he taught them, and it is perhaps the weightiest feature both in Christianity and in

the work of Paul that, so far from being overpowered, the impulse towards association was most powerfully intensified by the individualism which here attained its zenith. (For to what higher form can individualism rise than that reached by means of the dominant counsel, “Save thy soul”?) Brotherly love constituted the lever; it was also the entrance into that most wealthy inheritance, the inheritance of the firmly organized church of Judaism. In addition to this there was also the wonderfully practical idea, to which allusion has already been made, of setting the collective church (as an ideal fellowship) and the individual community in such a relationship that whatever was true of the one could be predicated also of the other, the church of Corinth or of Ephesus, e.g., being the church of God. Quite apart from the content of these social formations, no statesman or politician can hesitate to admire and applaud the solution which was thus devised for one of the most serious problems of any large organization, viz., how to maintain intact the complete autonomy of the local communities and at the same time to knit them into a general nexus, possessed of strength and unity, which should embrace all the empire and gradually develop also into a collective organization.

What a sense of stability a creation of this kind must have given the individual! What powers of attraction it must have exercised, as soon as its objects came to be understood! It was this, and not any evangelist, which proved to be the most effective missionary. In fact, we may take it for granted that the mere existence and persistent activity of the individual Christian communities did more than anything else to bring about the extension of the Christian religion.756

Hence also the injunction, repeated over and again, “Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together,”—“as some do,” adds the epistle to the Hebrews (x. 25). At first and indeed always there were naturally some people who imagined that one could secure the holy contents and blessings of Christianity as one did those of Isis or the Magna Mater, and then withdraw. Or, in cases where people were not so short-sighted, levity, laziness, or weariness were often enough to detach a person from the society. A vainglorious sense of superiority and of being able to dispense with the spiritual aid of the society was also the means of inducing many to withdraw from fellowship and from the common worship. Many, too, were actuated by fear of the authorities; they shunned attendance at public worship, to avoid being recognized as Christians.757

“Seek. what is of common profit to all,” says Clement of Rome (c. xlviii.). “Keep not apart by yourselves in secret,” says Barnabas (iv. 10), “as if you were already justified, but meet together and confer upon the common weal.” Similar passages are often to be met with.758 The worship on Sunday is of course obligatory, but even at other times the brethren are expected to meet as often as possible. “Thou shalt seek out every day the company of the saints, to be refreshed by their words” (Did., iv. 2). “We are constantly in touch with one another,” says Justin, after describing the Sunday worship (Apol., I. lxvii.), in order to show that this is not the only place of fellowship. Ignatius,759 too, advocates over and over again more frequent meetings of the church; in fact, his letters are written primarily for the purpose of binding the individual member as closely as possible to the community and thus securing him against error, temptation, and apostasy. The means to this end is an increased significance attaching to the church. In the church alone all blessings are to be had, in its ordinances and organizations. It is only the church firmly equipped with bishop, presbyters, and deacons, with common worship and with sacraments, which is the creation of God.760 Consequently, beyond its pale nothing divine is to be found, there is nothing save error and sin; all clandestine meetings for worship are also to be eschewed, and no teacher who starts up from outside is to get a hearing unless he is certificated by the church. The absolute subordination of Christians to the local community has

never been more peremptorily demanded, the position of the local community itself has never been more eloquently laid down, than in these primitive documents. Their eager admonitions reveal the seriousness of the peril which threatened the individual Christian who should even in the slightest degree emancipate himself from the community; thereby he would fall a prey to the "errorists," or slip over into paganism. At this point even the heroes of the church were threatened by a peril, which is singled out also for notice. As men who had a special connection with Christ, and who were quite aware of this connection, they could not well be subject to orders from the churches; but it was recognized even at this early period that if they became "inflated" with pride and held aloof from the fellowship of the church, they might easily come to grief. Thus, when the haughty martyrs of Carthage and Rome, both during and after the Decian persecution, started cross-currents in the churches and began to uplift themselves against the officials, the great bishops finally resolved to reduce them under the laws common to the whole church.

While the individual Christian had a position of his own within the organization of the church, he thereby lost, however, a part of his autonomy along with his fellows. The so-called Montanist controversy was in the last resort not merely a struggle to secure a stricter mode of life as against a laxer, but also the struggle of a more independent religious attitude and activity as against one which was prescribed and uniform. The outstanding personalities, the individuality of certain people, had to suffer in order that the majority might not become unmanageable or apostates. Such has always been the case in human history. It is inevitable. Only after the Montanist conflict did the church, as individual and collective, attain the climax of its development; henceforth it became an object of desire, coveted by everyone who was on the look-out for power, inasmuch as it had extraordinary forces at its disposal. It now bound the individual closely to itself; it held him, bridled him, and dominated his religious life in all directions. Yet it was not long before the monastic movement originated, a movement which, while it recognized the church in theory (doubt upon this point being no longer possible), set it aside in actual practice.

The progress of the development of the juridical organization from the firmly organized local church761 to the provincial church,762 from that again to the larger league of churches, a league which realized itself in synods covering many provinces, and finally from that league to the collective church, which of course was never quite realized as an organization, though it was always present in idea—this development also contributed to the strengthening of the Christian self-consciousness and missionary activity.763 It was indeed a matter of great moment to be able to proclaim that this church not only embraced humanity in its religious conceptions, but also presented itself to the eye as an immense single league stretching from one side of the empire to another, and, in fact, stretching beyond even these imperial boundaries. This church arose through the co-operation of the Christian ideal with the empire, and thus every great force which operated in this sphere had also its part to play in the building up of the church, viz., the universal Christian idea of a bond of humanity (which, at root, of course, meant no more than a bond between the scattered elect throughout mankind), the Jewish church, and the Roman empire. The last named, as has been rightly pointed out, became bankrupt over the church;764 and the same might be said of the Jewish church, whose powers of attraction ceased for a large circle of people so soon as the Christian church had developed, the latter taking, them over into its own life.765 Whether the Christian communities were as free creations as they were in the first century, whether they set up external ordinances as definite and a union as comprehensive as was the case in the third century— in either case these communities exerted a magnetic force on thousands, and thus proved of extraordinary service to the Christian mission.

Within the church-organization the most weighty and significant creation was that of the monarchical episcopate.766 It was the bishops, properly speaking, who held together the individual members of the churches; their rise marked the close of the period during which charismata and offices were in a state of mutual flux, the individual relying only upon God, himself, and spiritually endowed brethren. After the close of the second century bishops were the teachers, high priests, and judges of the church. Ignatius already had compared their position in the individual church to that of God in the church collective. But this analogy soon gave way to the formal quality which they acquired, first in Rome and the West, after the gnostic controversy. In virtue of this quality, they were regarded as representatives of the apostolic office. According to Cyprian, they were "judices vice Christi" (judges in Christ's room); and Origen, in spite of his unfortunate experience with bishops, had already written that "if kings are so called from reigning, then all who rule the churches of God deserve to be called kings" ("si reges a regendo dicuntur, omnes utique, qui ecclesias dei regunt, reges merito appellabuntur," Hom. xii. 2 in Num., vol. x. p. 133, Lomm.). On their conduct the churches depended almost entirely for weal or woe. As the office grew to maturity, it seemed like an original creation; but this was simply because it drew to itself from all quarters both the powers and the forms of life.

The extent to which the episcopate, along with the other clerical offices which it controlled, formed the backbone of the church,767 is shown by the fierce war waged against it by the state during the third century (Maximinus Thrax, Decius, Valerian, Diocletian, Daza, Licinius), as well as from many isolated facts. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Dionysius of Corinth tells the church of Athens (Eus., H.E., iv. 23) that while it had well-nigh fallen from the faith after the death of its martyred bishop Publius, its new bishop Quadratus had reorganized it and filled it with fresh zeal for the faith. In de Fuga, xi. Tertullian says that when the shepherds are poor creatures the flock is a prey to wild beasts, "as is never more the ease than when the clergy desert the church in a persecution" ("quod nunquam magis fit quam cum in persecutione destituitur a clero"). Cyprian (Ep. lv. 11) tells how in the persecution bishop Trophimus had lapsed along with a large section of the church, and had offered sacrifice; but on his return and penitence, the rest followed him, "qui omnes regressuri ad ecclesiam non essent, nisi cum Trofimo comitante venissent" ("none of whom would have returned to the church, had they not had the companionship of Trophimus"). When Cyprian lingered in retreat during the persecution of Decius, the whole community threatened to lapse. Hence one can easily see the significance of the bishop for the church; with him it fell, with him it stood,768 and in these days a vacancy or interregnum meant a serious crisis for any church. Without being properly a missionary, the bishop exercised a missionary function.769 In particular, he preserved individuals from relapsing into paganism, while any bishop who really filled his post was the means of winning over many fresh adherents. We have instances of this, e.g., in the cruse of Cyprian or of Gregory Thaumaturgus. The episcopal dignity was at once heightened and counterbalanced by the institution of the synods which arose in Greece and Asia (modelled possibly upon the federal diets),770 and eventually were adopted by a large number of provinces after the opening of the third century. On the one hand, this association of the bishops entirely took away the rights of the laity, who found before very long, that it was no use now to leave their native church in order to settle down in another. Yet a synod, on the other hand, imposed restraints upon the arbitrary action of a bishop, by setting itself up as an ecclesiastical "forum publicum" to which he was responsible. The correspondence of Cyprian presents several examples of individual bishops being thus arraigned by synods for arbitrary or evil conduct. Before very long too (possibly from the very outset) the synod, this "representatio totius nominis Christiani," appeared to be a specially trustworthy organ of the holy Spirit. The synods which expanded in the course of the third century from provincial synods to larger councils, and which would seem

to have anticipated Diocletian's redistribution of the empire in the East, naturally gave an extraordinary impetus to the prestige and authority of the church, and thereby heightened its powers of attraction. Yet the entire synodal system really flourished in the East alone (and to some extent in Africa). In the West it no more blossomed than did the system of metropolitans, a fact which was of vital moment to the position of Rome and of the Roman bishop.771

One other problem has finally to be considered at this point, a problem which is of great importance for the statistics of the church. It is this: how strong was the tendency to create independent forms within the Christian communities, i.e., to form complete episcopal communities? Does the number of communities which were episcopally organized actually denote the number of the communities in general, or were there, either as a rule or in a large number of provinces, any considerable number of communities which possessed no bishops of their own, but had only presbyters or deacons, and depended upon an outside bishop? The following Excursus772 is devoted to the answering of this important question. Its aim is to show that the creation of complete episcopal communities was the general rule in most provinces (excluding Egypt) down to the middle of the third century, however small might be the number of Christians in any locality, and however insignificant might be the locality itself.

As important, if not even more important, was the tendency, which was in operation from the very first, to have all the Christians in a given locality united in a single community. As the Pauline epistles prove, house-churches were tolerated at the outset, (we do not know how long),773 but obviously their position was (originally or very soon afterwards) that of members belonging to the local community as a whole. This original relationship is, of course, as obscure to us as is the evaporation of such churches. Conflicts there must have been at first, and even attempts to set up a number of independent Christian θίασοι in a city; the “schisms” at Corinth, combated by Paul, would seem to point in this direction. Nor is it quite certain whether, even after the formation of the monarchical episcopate, there were not cases here and there of two or more episcopal communities existing in a single city. But even if this obtained in certain cases, their number must have been very small; nor do these avail to alter the general stamp of the Christian organization throughout its various branches, i.e., the general constitution according to which every locality where Christians were to be found had its own independent community, and only one community.774 This organization, with its simplicity and naturalness, proved itself extraordinarily strong. No doubt, the community was soon obliged to direct the full force of its anti-pagan exclusiveness against such brethren of its own number as refused submission to the church upon any pretext whatsoever. The sad passion for heresy-hunting, which prevailed among Christians as early as the second century, was not only a result of their fanatical devotion to true doctrine, but quite as much an outcome of their rigid organization and of the exalted predicates of honour, which they applied to themselves as “the church of God.” Here the reverse of the medal is to be seen. The community's valuation of itself, its claim to represent the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ (“the church of God” or “the catholic church” in Corinth, Ephesus, etc.) prevented it ultimately from recognizing or tolerating any Christianity whatever outside its own boundaries.775

EXCURSUS I

ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION AND THE EPISCOPATE (IN THE PROVINCES, THE CITIES, AND THE VILLAGES), FROM PIUS TO CONSTANTINE.

"In 1 Tim. iii. (where only bishops and deacons are mentioned) the apostle Paul has not forgotten the presbyters, for at first the same officials bore the name of 'presbyter' as well as that of 'bishop.' . . . . Those who had the power of ordination and are now called 'bishops' were not appointed to a single church but to a whole province, and bore the name of 'apostles.' Thus St Paul set Timothy over all Asia, and Titus over Crete. And plainly he also appointed other individuals to other provinces in the same way, each of whom was to take charge of a whole province, making circuits through all the churches, ordaining clergy for ecclesiastical work wherever it was necessary, solving any difficult questions which had arisen among them, setting them right by means of addresses on doctrine, treating sore sins in a salutary fashion, and in general discharging all the duties of a superintendent—all the towns, meanwhile, possessing the presbyters of whom I have spoken, men who ruled their respective churches. Thus in that early age there existed those who are now called bishops, but who were then called apostles, discharging functions for a whole province which those who are nowadays ordained to the episcopate discharge for a single city and a single district. Such was the organization of the church in those days. But when the faith became widely spread, filling not merely towns, but also country districts with believers,776then, as the blessed apostles were now dead, came those who took charge of the whole [province]. They were not equal to their predecessors, however, nor could they certify themselves, as did the earlier leaders, by means of miracles, while in many other respects they showed their inferiority. Deeming it therefore a burden to assume the title of 'apostles,' they distributed the other titles [which had hitherto been synonymous], leaving that of 'presbyters' to the presbyters, and assigning that of 'bishops' to those who possessed the right of ordination, and who were consequently entrusted with leadership over all the church. These formed the majority, owing, in the first instance, to the necessity of the case, but subsequently also, on account of the generous spirit shown by those who arranged the ordinations.777 For at the outset there were but two, or at most three, bishops usually in a province—a state of matters which prevailed in most of the Western provinces until quite recently, and which may still be found in several, even at the present day. As time went on, however, bishops were ordained not merely in towns, but also in small districts, where there was really no need of anyone being yet invested with the episcopal office."

So Theodore of Mopsuestia in his commentary upon First Timothy.778 The assertion that "bishop" and "presbyter" were identical in primitive ages occurs frequently about the year 400, but Theodore's statements in general are, to the best of my knowledge, unique; they represent an attempt to depict the primitive organization of the church, and to explain the most important revolution which had taken place in the history of the church's constitution. Theodore's idea is, in brief, as follows. From the outset, he remarks—i.e. in the apostolic age, or by original apostolic institution—there was a monarchical office in the churches, to which pertained the right of ordination. This office was one belonging to the provincial churches (each province possessing a single superintendent), and its title was that of "apostle." Individual communities, again, were governed by bishops (presbyters) and deacons. Once the apostles779 (i.e. the original apostles) had died, however, a revolution took place. The motives assigned for this by Theodore are twofold: in the first place, the spread of the Christian religion, and in the second place, the weakness felt by the second generation of the apostles themselves. The latter therefore resolved (i.) to abjure and thus abolish780 the name of "apostle," and (ii.) to distribute

the monarchical power, i.e., the right of ordination, among several persons throughout a province. Hence the circumstance of two or three bishops existing in the same province—the term “bishop” being now employed in the sense of monarchical authority. That state of matters was the rule until quite recently in most of the Western provinces, and it still survives in several of them. In the East, however, it has not lasted. Partly owing to the requirements of the case (i.e., the increase of Christianity throughout the provinces), partly owing to the “liberality” of the apostles,781 the number of the bishops has multiplied, so that not only towns, but even villages, have come to possess bishops, although there was no real need for such appointments.

We must in the first instance credit Theodore with being sensible of the fact that the organization of the primitive churches was originally on the broadest scale, and only came down by degrees (to the local communities). Such was indeed the case. The whole was prior to the part. That is, the organization effected by the apostles was in the first place universal; its scope was the provinces of the church. It is Judæa, Samaria, Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, etc., that are present to the minds of the apostles, and figure in their writings. Just as, in the missions of the present day, outside sects capture “Brandenburg,” “Saxony,” and “Bavaria” by getting a firm foothold in Berlin, Dresden, Munich, and one or two important cities; just as they forthwith embrace the whole province in their thoughts and in some of the measures which they adopt, so was it then. Secondly, Theodore's observation upon the extension of the term “apostle” is in itself quite accurate. But it is just at this point, of course, that our doubts begin. It is inherently improbable that the apostles, i.e., the twelve together with Paul, appointed the other “apostles” (in the wider sense of the word) collectively; besides, it is contradicted by positive evidence to the contrary,782 and Theodore's statement of it may be very simply explained as due to the preconceived opinion that everything must ultimately run back to the apostles' institution. Further, the idea of each province having an apostle-bishop set over it is a conjecture which is based on no real evidence, and is contradicted by all that we know of the universal ecclesiastical nature of the apostolic office. Finally, we cannot check the statement which would bind up the right of ordination exclusively with the office of the apostle-bishop. In all these respects Theodore seems to have introduced into his sketch of the primitive churches' organization features which were simply current in his own day, as well as hazardous hypotheses. Moreover, we can still show how slender are the grounds on which his conjectures rest. Unless I am mistaken, he has nothing at his disposal in the shape of materials beyond the traditional idea, drawn from the pastoral epistles, of the position occupied by Timothy and Titus in the church, as well as the ecclesiastical notices and legends of the work of John in Asia.783 All this he has generalized, evolving therefrom the conception of a general appointment of “apostles” who are equivalent to “provincial bishops.”784 “Apostles” are equivalent “provincial bishops”; such is Theodore's conception, and the conception is a fantasy. Whether it contains any kernel of historical truth, we shall see later on. Meantime we must, in the first instance, follow up Theodore's statements a little further.

He is right in recognizing that any survey of the origin of the church's organization must be based upon the apostles and their missionary labours. We may add, the organization which arose during the mission and in consequence of the mission, would attempt to maintain itself even after local authorities and institutions had been called into being which asserted rights of their own. But the distinctive trait in Theodore's conception consists in the fact that he knows absolutely nothing of any originally constituted rights appertaining to local authorities. He has no eyes for all that the New Testament and the primitive Christian writings, as a whole, contain upon this point; for even here, on his view, everything must have flowed from some apostolic injunction or concession—i.e., from above to below. He adduces, no doubt, the “weakness” of the “apostles” in the second generation—which is quite a remarkable statement, based on the

cessation of miraculous gifts.785 But it was in virtue of their own resolve that the, apostles withdrew from the scene, distributing their power to other people; for only there could the local church's authority originate! Such is his theory; it is extremely ingenious, and dominated throughout by a magical conception of the apostolate. The local church-authority (or the monarchical and supreme episcopate) within the individual community owed its origin to the "apostolic" provincial authority, by means of a conveyance of power. During the lifetime of the apostles it was quite in a dependent position. Even after their departure, the supreme episcopal authority did not emerge at once within each complete community. On the contrary, says Theodore, it was only two or three towns in every province which at the outset possessed a bishop of their own (i.e., in the new sense of the term "bishop"). Not until a later date, and even then only by degrees, were other towns and even villages added to these original towns, while in the majority of provinces throughout the West the old state of matters prevailed, says Theodore, till quite recently. In some provinces it prevails at present.786

This theory about the origin of the local monarchical episcopate baffles all discussions.787 We may say without any hesitation that Theodore had no authentic foundation for it whatever. Even when he might seem to be setting up at least the semblance of historic trustworthiness for his identification of "apostles" with "provincial bishops," by his reference to Timothy, Titus, and John, the testimony breaks down entirely. We are forced to ask, Who were these retiring apostles? What sources have we for our knowledge of their resignation? How do we learn of this conveyance of authority which they are declared to have executed? These questions, we may say quite plainly, Theodore ought to have felt in duty bound to answer; for in what sources can we read anything of the matter? It was not without reason that Theodore veiled even the exact time at which this great renunciation took effect. We can only suppose that it was conceived to have occurred about the year: 100 A.D.788

At the same time there is no reason to cast aside the statements of Theodore in toto. They start a whole set of questions to which historians have not paid sufficient attention, questions relating to the position of bishops in the local church, territorial or provincial bishops (if such there were), and metropolitans. To state the problem more exactly: Were there territorial (or provincial) bishops in the primitive Period? And was the territorial bishop perhaps older than the bishop of the local, church? Furthermore, did the two disparate systems of organization denoted by these offices happen to rise simultaneously, coming to terms with each other only at a later period? Finally, was the metropolitan office, which is not visible till the second half of the second century, originally an older creation? Can it have been merely the sequel of an earlier monarchical office which prevailed in the ecclesiastical provinces? These questions are of vital moment to the history of the extension of Christianity, and in fact to the statistics of primitive Christianity; for, supposing that it was the custom in many provinces to be content with one or two or three bishoprics for several generations, it would be impossible to conclude from the small number of bishoprics in certain provinces that Christianity was only scantily represented in these districts. The investigation of this question is all the more pressing, as Duchesne has recently (Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule, i., 1894, pp. 86 f.) gone into it, referring—although with caution—to the statements of Theodore, and deducing far-reaching conclusions with regard to the organization of the churches in Gaul. We shall require, in the first instance, to make ourselves familiar with his propositions789 (pp. 1-59). I give the main conclusion in his own words.

P. 32: "Dans les pays situés à, quelque distance de la Mediterranée et de la basse vallée du Rhône, il ne s'est fondé aucune église (Lyon exceptée) avant le milieu du IIIe siècle environ."

Pp. 38 f.: “Il en résulte que, dans l'ancienne Gaule celtique, avec ses grandes subdivisions en Belgique, Lyonnaise, Aquitaine et Germanie, une seule église existait au IIe siècle, celle de Lyon . . . . ce que nos documents nous apprennent, c'est que l'église de Lyon était, en dehors de la Narbonnaise, non la première, mais la seule. Tous les chrétiens épars depuis le Rhin jusqu' aux Pyrénées790 ne formaient qu'une seule communauté; ils reconnaissaient un chef unique, l'évêque de Lyon.”

P. 59: “Avant la fin du IIIe siècle—sauf toujours la région du bas Rhône et de la Méditerranée —peu d'évêches en Gaule et cela seulement dans les villes les plus importantes, A l'origine, au premier siécle chrétien pour notre pays (150-250), une seule église, celle de Lyon, réunissant dans un même cercle d'action et de direction tous les groupes chrétiens épars dans les diverses provinces de la Celtique.”

Duchesne reaches this conclusion by means of the following observations:—

1. No reliable evidence for a single Gallic bishopric, apart from that of Lyons, goes back beyond the middle of the third century.791 Nor do the episcopal lists, so far as they are relevant in this connection, take us any farther back. Verus of Vienne, e.g., who was present at the council of Arles in 314 A.D., is counted as the fourth bishop in these lists; which implies that the bishopric of Vienne could hardly have been founded before ± 250 A.D.

2. The heading of the well-known epistle from Vienne and Lyons (Eus., H.E., v. 1) runs thus: οἱ ἐν Βιέννῃ καὶ Λουγδούνῳ τῆς Γαλλίας παροικοῦντες δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ (“the servants of Christ sojourning at Vienne and Lyons”). This heading resembles others, such as Κόρινθον, Φιλίππους, Σμύρναν, etc. (“the church of God sojourning at Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Smyrna'” etc.), and consequently represents both churches as a unity—at least upon that reading of the words which first suggests itself.792

3. In this epistle “Sanctus, deacon from Vienne, is mentioned—a phrase which would hardly be intelligible if it alluded to one of the deacons of the bishop of Vienne, but which is perfectly natural if Sanctus was the deacon who managed the inchoate church of Vienne, as a delegate of the Lyons bishop. In that event Vienne had no bishop of its own.

4. Irenæus in his great work speaks of churches in Germany and also among the Iberians, the Celts, and the Libyans. Now it is a well-established fact that there were no organized churches, when he wrote, in Germany (i.e., in the military province, for free Germany is out of the question). When Irenæus speaks of churches, he must therefore mean churches which were not episcopal churches.793

5. Theodore testifies that till quite recently there had been only two or three bishops in the majority of the Western provinces, and that this state of matters still lasted in one or two of them. Now, as a large number of bishoprics can be shown to have existed in southern and middle Italy, as well as in Africa, we are thrown back upon the other countries of the West. Strictly speaking, it is true, Theodore's evidence only covers his own period; but it fits in admirably with our first four arguments, and it is in itself quite natural, that bishoprics were less numerous in the earlier than in the later period.

6. Eusebius mentions a letter from “the parishes in Gaul over which Irenæus presided” (τῶν κατὰ Γαλλίαν παροικιῶν ἃς Εἰρηναῖος ἐπεσκόπει, H.E., v. 23). Now although, παροικία usually means the diocese of a bishop, in which sense Eusebius actually employs it in this very chapter, we must nevertheless attach another meaning to it here. “Le verbe ἐπισκοπεῖν ne saurait s'entendre d'une simple présidence comme serait celle d'un métropolitain à la tête de son

concile. Cette dernière situation est visée dans le même passage d'Eusèbe; en parlant de l'évêque Théophile, qui présida celui du Pont, il se sert de l'expression προὐτέτακτο." In the present instance, then, παροικίαι denote "groupes détaches, dispersés, d'une même grande église"—"plusieurs groupes de chrétiens, épars sur divers points du territoire, un seul centre ecclésiastique, un seul évêque, celui de Lyon."

7. Analogous phenomena (i.e., the existence of only one bishop at first and for some time to come) occur also in other large provinces, but the proof of this would lead us too far afield.794 Duchesne contents himself with adducing a single instance which is especially decisive. The anonymous anti-Montanist who wrote in 192-193 A.D. (Eus., H.E. v. 16) relates how on reaching Ancyra in Galatia he found the Pontic church (τὴν κατὰ Πόντον ἐκκλησίαν) absorbed and carried away by the new prophecy. Now Ancyra does not lie in Pontus, and—"ce n'est pas des nouvelles de l'église du Pont qu'il a eues à Ancyre, c'est l'église elle-même, l'église du Pont, qu'il y a rencontrée." Hence it follows in all likelihood795 that the church of Pontus had still its "chef-lieu" in Ancyra during the reign of Septimius Severus (c. 200 A.D.).796

8. The extreme slowness with which bishoprics increased in Gaul is further corroborated by the council of Arles (314 A.D.), at which four provinces (la Germaine I., la Séquanaise, les Grées et Pennines, les Alpes Maritimes) were unrepresented. may be assumed that as yet they contained no autonomous churches whatever.797

Before examining these arguments in favour of the hypothesis that episcopal churches were in existence, which covered wide regions and a number of cities, and in fact several provinces together, let me add a further series of statements which appear also to tell in favour of it.

(1) Paul writes . . . . τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ (2 Cor. i. 1).

(2) In the Ignatian epistles (c. 115 A.D.) not only is Antioch called ἡ ἐν Συρίᾳ ἐκκλησία ("the church in Syria," Rom. ix., Magn. xiv., Trall. xiii.) absolutely, but Ignatius even describes himself as "the bishop of Syria" (ὁ ἐπίσκοπος Συρίας, Rom. ii.).

(3) Dionysius of Corinth writes a letter "to the church sojourning at Gortyna, with the rest of the churches in Crete, commending Philip their bishop" (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ παροικούσῃ Γορτύναν ἅμα ταῖς λοιπαῖς κατὰ Κρήτην, Φίλιππον ἐπίσκοπον αὐτῶν ἀποδεχόμενος—Eus., H.E., iv. 23. 5).

(4) The same author (op. cit., iv. 23. 6) writes a letter to the church sojourning in Amastris, together with those in Pontus, in which he alludes to Bacchylides and Elpistus as having incited him to write . . . . and mentions their bishop Palmas by name" (τῇ ἐκκλησία τῇ παροικούσῃ Ἄμαστριν ἅμα ταῖς κατὰ Πόντον, Βακχυλίδου μὲν καὶ Ἐλπίστου ὡσὰν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ γράψαι προτρεψάντων μεμνημένος . . . . ἐπίσκοπον αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Πάλμαν ὑποσημαίνων).

(5) In Eus., H.E., iii. 4. 6, we read that "Timothy is stated indeed to have been the first to obtain the episcopate of the parish in Ephesus, just as Titus did over the churches in Crete"; (Τιμοθεός γε μὴν τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ παροικίας ἱστορεῖται πρῶτος τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν εἰληχέναι, ὡς καὶ Τίτος τῶν ἐπὶ Κρήτης ἐκκλησιῶν).

(6) "In the name of the brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, Irenæus sent despatches," etc. (ὁ Εἰρηναῖος ἐκ προσώπου ὧν ἡγεῖτο κατὰ τὴν Γαλλίαν ἀδελφῶν ἐπιστείλας, Eus., H.E., v. 24. 11); cp. vi. 46: Διονύσιος τοῖς κατὰ Ἀρμενίαν ἀδελφοῖς ἐπιστέλλει, ὧν ἐπεσκόπευε Μερουζάνης ("Dionysius despatched a letter to the brethren in Armenia over whom Merozanes presided").

(7) “Demetrius had just then obtained the episcopate over the parishes in Egypt, in succession to Julian” (τῶν δὲ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ παροικιῶν τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν νεωστὶ τότε μετὰ Ἰουλιανὸυ Δημήτριος ὑπειλήφει—Eus., H.E., vi. 2. 2).

(8) “Xystus . . . . was over the church of Rome, Demetrianus . . . . over that of Antioch, Firmilianus over Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and besides these Gregory and his brother Athenodorus over the churches in Pontus” (τῆς μὲν Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησΐας . . . . Ξύστος, τῆς δὲ ἐπ᾽ Ἀντιοχείας . . . . Δημητριανός, Φιρμιλιανὸς δέ Καισαρείας τῆς Καππαδοκῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις τῶν κατὰ Πόντον ἐκκλησιῶν Γρηγόριος καὶ ὁ τούτου ἀδελφὸς Ἀθηνόδωρος.—Eus., H.E., vii. 14).

(9) “Firmilianus was bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Gregory and his brother Athenodorus were pastors of the parishes in Pontus, and besides these Helenus of the parish in Tarsus, with Nicomas of Iconium,” etc. (Φιρμιλιανὸς μὲν τῆς Καππαδοκῶν Καισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ἦν, Γρηγόριος δὲ καὶ Ἀθηνόδωρος ἀδελφοὶ τῶν κατὰ Πόντον παροικιῶν ποιμένες, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις Ἕλενος τῆς ἐν Τάρσῳ παροικίας, καὶ Νικομᾶς τῆς ἐν Ἰκονίῳ, etc.—Eus., H.E., vii. 28).

(10) “Meletius, bishop of the churches in Pontus” (Μελέτιος τῶν κατὰ Πόντον ἐκκλησιῶν ἐπίσκοπος.—Eus., H.E., vii. 32. 26).

(11) “Basilides, bishop of the parishes in Pentapolis” (Βασιλείδης ὁ κατὰ τὴν Πενεάπολιν παροικῶν ἐπίσκοπος.—Eus., H.E., vii. 26. 3).

(12) Signatures to council of Nicæa (ed. Gelzer et socii): “Calabria—Marcus of Calabria; Dardania—Dacus of Macedonia; Thessaly—Claudianus of Thessaly and Cleonicus of Thebes; Pannonia—Domnus of Pannonia; Gothia—Theophilus of Gothia; Bosporus—Cadmus of Bosporus (Καλαβρίας· Μάρκος Κ.—Δαρδανίας· Δάκος Μακεδονίας.—Θεσσαλίας· Κλαυδιανὸς Θ., Κλέονικος Θηβῶν.—Παννονίας· Δόμνος Π.—Γοτθίας· Θεόφιλος Γ.—Βοσπόρου· Κάδμος Β.).

(13) Apost. Constit., vii. 46: Κρήσκης τῶν κατὰ Γαλατίαν ἐκκλησιῶν, Ἀκύλας δέ καὶ Νικήτης τῶν κατὰ Ἀσίαν παροικιῶν (“Crescens over the churches in Galatia, Aquila and Nicetes over the parishes in Asia”).798

(14) Sozomen (vii. 19) declares that the Scythians had only a single, bishop, although their country contained many towns (cp. also Theodoret, H.E., iv. 31, where Bretanio is called the high priest, of all the towns in Scythia).

On, 1. I note that Duchesne's first argument is an argument from silence. Besides, it must be added that we have no writings in which any direct notice of the early Gothic bishoprics could be expected, so that the argument from silence hardly seems worthy of being taken into account in this connection. The one absolutely reliable piece of evidence (Cypr., Ep. lxviii.)799 for the history of the Gothic church, which reaches us from the middle of the third century, is certainly touched upon by Duchesne, but he has not done it full justice. This letter of Cyprian to the Roman bishop Stephen, which aims at persuading the latter to depose Marcian, the bishop of Arles, who held to Novatian's ideas, opens with the words: “Faustinus, our colleague, residing at Lyons, has repeatedly sent me information which I know you also have received both from him and also from he rest of our fellow-bishops established in the same province” (“Faustinus collega noster Lugduni consistens semel adque iterum mihi scripsit significans ea quae etiam vobis scio utique nuntiata tam ab eo quam a ceteris coepiscopis nostris in eadem provincia constitutis”). It is extremely unlikely that by “eadem provincia” here we are meant to understand the provincia Narbonensis. For, in the first place, Lyons did not lie in that province; in the

second place, had the bishops of Narbonensis been themselves opponents of Marcian and desirous of getting rid of him, Cyprian's letter would have been couched in different terms, and it would hardly have been necessary for the three great Western bishops of Lyons, Carthage, and Rome to have intervened; thirdly, Cyprian writes in ch. ii. ("Quapropter facere te oportet plenissimas litteras ad coepiscopos nostros in Gallia constitutos, ne ultra Marcianum pervicacem et superbum . . . . collegio nostro insultare patiantur"): "Wherefore it behoves you to write at great length to our fellow-bishops established in Gaul, not to tolerate any longer the wanton and insolent insults heaped by Marcian . . . . upon our assembly"; and in ch. iii. ("Dirigantur in provinciam et ad plebem Arelate consistentem a te litterae quibus abstento Marciano alius in loco eius substituatur"): "Let letters be sent by you to the province and to the people residing at Arles, to remove Marcian, and put another person in his place." Obviously, then, it is a question here of two (or three) letters, i.e., of one addressed to the bishops of Gaul, and of a second (or even a third) addressed not only to the "plebs Arelate consistens," but also to the "provincia" (which can only mean the provincia Narbonensis, in which Arles lay). It follows from this that the "coepiscopi nostri in Gallia constituti" (ii.) are hardly to be identified with the bishops of Narbonensis, which leads to the further conclusion that these "coepiscopi" are the bishops of the provincia Lugdunensis—a conclusion which in itself appears to be the most natural and obvious explanation of the passage. The provincia Lugdunensis thus had several bishops in the days of Cyprian, who were already gathered into one Synod,800and corresponded with Rome. We cannot make out from this passage how old these bishoprics were, but it is at any rate unlikely that all of them had just been founded. In this connection Duchesne also refers to the fact that bishop Verus of Vienne, who was present at the council of Arles in 314, is counted in one ancient list as the fourth bishop of Vienne; which makes the origin of the local bishopric fall hardly earlier than ± 250 A.D. But the list is not ancient. Besides, it is a questionable authority. And, even granting that it were reliable, it is quite arbitrary to assume a mean term of eighteen years as the duration of an individual episcopate; while, even supposing that such a calculation were accurate, it would simply follow that Vienne (although situated. in the provincia Narbonensis, where even Duchesne admits that bishoprics had been founded in earlier days) did not receive her bishopric till later. No inference could be drawn from this regarding the town of Lyons.

On 2. Duchesne holds that the heading of the letter (in Eus., H.E., v. 1: οἱ ἐν Βιέννῃ καὶ Λουγδούνῳ τῆς Γαλλίας παροικοῦντες δοῦλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ) seems to describe the Christians of Vienne and Lyons as if they were a single church. But if such were the case, one would expect Lyons to be put first, since it was Lyons and not Vienne which had a bishop. Besides, the letter does not speak of ἐκκλησίαι or ἐκκλησία but of δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ, just as the address of the letter mentions "the brethren in Asia and Phrygia" (οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ Φρυγίαν ἀδελφοί) and not "churches" at all. Hence nothing at all can be gathered from this passage regarding the organization of the local Christians. Though Vienne and Lyons belonged to different provinces, they lay very close together; and as the same calamity had befallen the Christians of both places, one can quite understand how they write a letter in common on that subject.

On 3. "Their whole fury was aroused exceedingly against Sanctus the deacon from Vienne" (ἐνέσκηψεν ἡ ὀργὴ πᾶσα ἐις Σάγκτον τὸν801 διάκονον ἀπὸ Βιέννης). It is possible to take this, with Duchesne, as referring to a certain Sanctus who managed the inchoate church of Vienne as a delegate of the Lyons bishop. But the explanation is far from certain. This sense of ἀπό is unusual (though not intolerable),802 and the words may quite well be rendered, "the deacon who came from Vienne" [sc. belonging to the church of Lyons].803 But even supposing that Sanctus was described here as the deacon of Vienne, it seems to me hasty and precarious to infer, with Duchesne, that Vienne had only a single deacon and no bishop (not even a

presbyter) at all. Surely this is to build too much upon the article before διάκονον. Of course, it may be so; we shall come back to this passage later on. Meantime, suffice it to say that the explicit description of Pothinus in the letter as “entrusted with the bishopric of Lyons” (τὴν διακονίαν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς τῆς ἐν Λουγδούνῳ πεπιστευμένος), instead of as “our bishop” or even “the bishop,” does not tell in favour of the hypothesis that Lyons alone, and not Vienne, had a bishop at that period.

On 4. The passage from Iren., i. 10. 2 (καὶ οὔτε αἱ ἐν Γερμανίαις ἱδρυμέναι ἐκκλησίαι ἄλλως πεπιστεύκασιν ἤ ἄλλως παραδιδόασιν, οὔτε ἐν ταῖς Ἰβηρίαις, οὔτε ἐν Κελτοῖς, οὔτε κατὰ τὰς ἀνατολὰς οὔτε ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, οὔτε ἐν Λιβύῃ οὔτε αἱ κατὰ μέσα τοῦ κόσμου ἱδρυμέναι = Nor did the churches planted in Germany hold any different faith or tradition, any more than do those in Iberia or in Gaul or in the East or in Egypt or in Libya or in the central region of the world) remains neutral if we read it and interpret it very sceptically. The language affords no clue to the way in which the churches in Germany and among the Celts were organized. But the most obvious interpretation is that these “churches” were just as entire and complete in themselves as the churches of the East, of Egypt, of Libya, and of all Europe, which are mentioned with them on the same level. At any rate, nothing can be inferred from this passage in support of Duchesne's opinion. It is a pure “petitio principii” to hold that complete churches could not have existed in Germany.

On 5. No weight attaches to Theodore's evidence regarding the primitive age. Yet even he presupposes that after the exit of the “apostles” (= provincial bishops) each separate province had two or three bishops of its own, while Duchesne would prove that the three Gauls had merely one bishop between them or about a hundred years.

On 6. At first sight, this argument seems to be particularly conclusive, but on a closer examination it proves untenable, and in fact turns round in exactly an opposite direction. The expression τῶν κατὰ . . . . ἐπεσκόπει cannot, we are told, be understood to mean episcopal dioceses over which Irenæus resided as metropolitan; it merely denotes scattered groups of Christians (though in the immediate context ἡ παροικία does mean an episcopal diocese), as ἐπισκοπεῖν need only imply direct episcopal functions. Yet in H.E., vii. 26. 3, Eusebius describes Basilides as ὁ κατὰ τὴν Πεντάπολιν παροικιῶν ἐπίσκοπος (see 11)), and Meletius (H.E., vii. 32. 26; cp. (10)) as τῶν κατὰ Πόντον ἐκκλησιῶν ἐπίσκοπος, and it is quite certain—even on the testimony of Eusebius himself—that there were several bishoprics at that period in Pentapolis and Pontus.804Ἐπίσκοπος παροικιῶν, therefore, denotes in this connection the position of naetropolitan,805 and it is in this sense that παροικίας ἐπισκοιπεῖν must also be understood with reference to Irenæus. The latter, Eusebius meant, was metropolitan of the episcopal dioceses in Gaul. So far from proving, then, that about 100 A.D. there was only one bishop in Gaul, our passage proves the existence of several bishops.806

On 7. This argument is quite untenable. The church of Pontus, we are told, had its episcopal headquarters in the Galatian Ancyra about 200 A.D.! But about 190 A.D. it already had a metropolitan of its own, for Eusebius mentions a writing sent during the Paschal controversy by “the bishops of Pontus over whom Palmas, as their senior, presided” (τῶν κατὰ Πόντον ἐπισκόπων, ὧν Πάλμας ὡς ἀρχαιότατος προὐτέτακτο, H.E., v. 23). How Duchesne could overlook this passage is all the more surprising, inasmuch as a little above he quotes from this very chapter. Besides, this Palmas, as we may learn from Dionysius of Corinth (in Eus., H.E., iv. 23. 6; see below, p. 463), seems to have stayed not in Ancyra but in Amastris. Furthermore, in the passage in question τόπον (so Schwartz) must be read807 instead of Πόντον, despite the Syriac version. Πόντον is meaningless here, even if the territorial bishop of Pontus resided at

that time in Ancyra. Thus it is not in Pontus, but in Phrygia and Gaul, that we hear of Montanist agitations, and, moreover, one could not possibly have got acquainted with the church of Pontus in Ancyra, even if the latter place had been the residence of that church's head. Can one get acquainted in Alexandria nowadays with the church of Abyssinia?

On 8. Duchesne's final argument proves nothing, because it is uncertain whether the four recent provinces mentioned here had still no bishops by 314 A.D. Nothing can be based on the fact that they were not represented at Arles, for the representation of churches at the great synods was always an extremely haphazard affair. But even supposing that these provinces were still without bishops of their own, this proves nothing with regard to Lyons.

I have added to Duchesne's reasons fourteen other passages which appear to favour his hypothesis. Three of these (6), (10), (11) have been already noticed under 6., and our conclusion was that they were silent upon provincial bishops, being concerned rather with metropolitans. It remains for us to review briefly the other eleven.

We must not infer from 2 Cor. i. 1 that, when Paul wrote this epistle, all the Christians of Achaia belonged to the church of Corinth. In Rom. xvi. 1 f. Paul mentions a certain Phoebê, διάκονος τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς, speaking highly of her as having been a προστάτις πολλῶν καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ, so that, while many Christians scattered throughout Achaia may have also belonged to the church at Corinth at that period, there was nevertheless a church at Cencheæ besides, which we have no reason to suppose was not independent.

Ignatius's description of himself as “bishop of Syria,” and his description of the church of Antioch as ἡ ἐν Συρίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ, appear to prove decisively that there was only one bishop then in Syria, viz., at Antioch (2). Yet in ad Phil. x. we read how some of the neighbouring churches sent bishops, others presbyters and deacons, to Antioch (ὡς καὶ αἱ ἔγγιστα ἐκκλησίαι ἔπεμψαν ἐπισκόπους, αἱ δὲ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ διοκόνους), which shows that there were bishoprics808 in Syria, and indeed in the immediate vicinity of Antioch, c. 115 A.D. The bishop of Antioch called himself “bishop of Syria” on account of his metropolitan position.

From Eus., H.E., iv. 23. 5-6, it would appear that there was only a single bishop (3), (4), in Crete and in Pontus c. 170 A.D., inasmuch as Dionysius of Corinth designates Philip as bishop of Gortyna and the rest of the churches in Crete, and Palmas bishop of Amastris and the churches of Pontus. But whether the expression be attributed to Dionysius himself, or ascribed, as is more likely, to Eusebius, the fact remains that the same collection of the letters of Dionysius contained one to the church of Cnossus in Crete, or to its bishop Pinytus (loc cit., § 7), while, as we have already seen (on 7), Palmas was not the sole bishop in Pontus. Philip and Palmas were therefore not provincial bishops but metropolitans, with other bishops at their side.

The statement of Eusebius (5) that Titus was bishop of the Cretan churches is an erroneous inference from Titus i. 5; it is destitute of historical value.

According to the habitual terminology of Eusebius (7), τῶν δὲ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ παροικιῶν τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν τότε Δημήτριος ὑπειλήφει describes Demetrius as a metropolitan, not as a provincial bishop (see above, on (6)). Other evidence, discussed by Lightfoot (in his Commentary on Philippians, 3rd ed., pp. 228 f.), would seem to render it probable that Demetrius was really the only bishop (in the monarchical sense) in Egypt in 188-189 A.D.; but this fact is no proof whatever that the Alexandrian bishop was a “provincial” bishop, for it does not preclude the possibility that, while Demetrius was the first monarchical bishop in Alexandria itself, Egypt in general did not contain any churches up till then except those which were

superintended by presbyters or deacons. The whole circumstances of the situation are of course extremely obscure. Nevertheless, it does look as if Demetrius and his successor Heraclas were the first bishops (in the proper sense of the term), and as if they ordained similar bishops (Demetrius ordained three, and Heraclas twenty) for Egypt. It is perfectly possible, no doubt, but at the same time it is incapable of proof, that the Egyptian churches were in a dependent position towards the Alexandrian church at a time when Alexandria itself had as yet no bishop of its own.

In both of the passages (8) and (9) where Gregory and Athenodorus are described as bishops of the Pontic church, the dual number shows that we have to do neither with provincial nor with metropolitan bishops. Eusebius is expressing himself vaguely, perhaps because he did not know the bishoprics of the two men.

In Eus., H.E., viii. 13. 4-5, two bishops who happen to bear the same name ("Silvanus") are described as bishops of the churches "round Emesa," or round "Gaza" (12). There can be no question of provincial bishops here however; as we know that these districts contained a large number of bishoprics. The position of matters can be understood from the history of Emesa and Gaza, both of which long remained pagan towns; we are told that they would not tolerate a Christian bishop. Bishops, therefore, were unable to reside in either place. But as the groups of Christian villages in the vicinity had bishops or themselves (so essential did the episcopal organization seem to Eastern Christians), there were probably bishops in partibus infidelium for Emesa and Gaza, although otherwise they were territorial bishops, over quite a limited range of territory.

As regards provincial bishops, it seems possible to cite the signatures to the council of Nicaea (13), viz., the five instances in which the name of the province accompanies that of the bishop. These are Calabria, Thessaly, Pannonia, Gothia, and the Bosphorus.809 But in the case of Thessaly, bishop Claudianus of Thessaly is accompanied by bishop Cleonicus of Thebes, so that the former was not a provincial bishop but a metropolitan. Besides, it is quite certain that Calabria and Pannonia had more than one bishop in 325 A.D., although only the metropolitans of these provinces were present at Nicæa (as indeed was also the case with Africa, whose metropolitan alone was in attendance). Thus only Gothia and the Bosphorus are left. But as these lay outside the Roman Empire, and as quite a unique set of conditions prevailed throughout these regions, the local situation there cannot form any standard for estimating the organization of churches inside the empire. The bishops above mentioned may have been the only bishops there.

No value whatever attaches to the statements of the Apost. Constit. (14) and of the Liber Predestinatus. The former are based, so far as regards the first half of them, upon an arbitrary deduction from 2 Tim. iv. 10, while their second half is utterly futile, since several Asiatic city bishoprics are mentioned in the context. The latter statement is a description of metropolitans (i.e., so far as any idea whatever can be ascribed to the forger), as is proved abundantly by the entry, "Basilius, bishop of Cappadocia." Finally, the communication of Sozomen (15), which he himself describes as a curiosity, refers to a barbarian country.

The result is, therefore, that the alleged evidence for the hypothesis of provincial bishops instead of local (city) bishops and metropolitans throughout the empire, yields no proof at all. Out of all the material which we have examined, nothing is left to support this conjecture. The sole outcome of it is the unimportant possibility that in 178 A.D. (and even till about the middle of the third century), Vienne had no independent bishop of its own. Even this conjecture, as has been shown, is far from necessary, while it is opposed by the definite testimony of Eusebius,

who knew of a letter from the parishes of Gaul c. 190 A.D.810 And even supposing it were to the point, we should have to suppose that the Christians in Vienne were numbered, not by hundreds, but merely by dozens, about the year 178, i.e., some decades later still.

It is certain (cp. pp. 432 f.) that an internal tension prevailed between two forms of organization during the first two generations of the Christian propaganda. These forms were (1) the church as a missionary church, created by a missionary or apostle, whose work it remained; and (2) the church as a local church, complete in itself, forming thus an image and expression of the church in heaven. As the creation of an apostolic missionary, the church was responsible to its founder, dependent upon him, and obliged to maintain the principles which he invariably laid down in the course of his activity as a founder of various churches. As a compact local church, again, it was responsible for itself, with no one over it save the Lord in heaven. Through the person of its earthly founder, it stood in a real relationship to the other churches which he had founded but as a local church it stood by itself, and any connection with other churches was quite a voluntary matter.

That the founders themselves desired the churches to be independent, is perfectly clear in the case of Paul, and we have no reason to believe that other founders of churches took another view (cp. the Roman church). No doubt they still continued to give pedagogic counsels to the churches, and in fact to act as guardians to them. But this was exceptional; it was not the rule. The Spirit moved them to such action, and their apostolic authority justified them in it, while the unfinished state of the communities seemed to demand it.811 And in the primitive decision upon the length of time that an apostle could remain in a community, as in similar cases, the communities secured, ipso facto, a means of self-protection within their own jurisdiction. Probably the perfected organization of the Jerusalem church became, mutatis mutandis, a pattern for all and sundry Christian communities were not “churches of Paul” or “of Peter” (ἐκκλησίαι Παύλου, Πέτρου); each was a “church of God” (ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ).

The third epistle of John affords one clear proof that conflicts did occur between the community and its local management upon the one hand and the “apostles” on the other. This same John (or, in the view of many critics, a different person) does not impart his counsels to the Asiatic communities directly. He makes the “Spirit” utter them. He proclaims, not his own coming with a view to punish them, but the coming of the Lord as their judge. But we need not enter more particularly into these circumstances and conditions. The point is that the apostolic authority soon faded; nor was it transmuted as a whole, for all that passed over to the monarchical episcopate was but a limited portion of its contents. The apostolic authority and praxis meant a certain union of several communities in a single group. When it vanished, this association also disappeared. But another kind of tie was now provided for the communities of a single province by their provincial association, and proofs of this are given by the Pauline epistles and the Apocalypse of John. The epistle to the Galatians, addressed to all the Christian communities of Galatia, falls to be considered in this aspect, and much more besides, Paul's range of missionary activity was regulated by the provinces; Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, etc., were ever in his mind's eye. He prosecutes the great work of his collection by massing together the communities of a single province, and the so-called epistle “to the Ephesians” is addressed, as many scholars opine, to a large number of the Asiatic communities. John writes to the churches of Asia.812 Even at an earlier period a letter had been sent (Acts xv.) from Jerusalem to the churches of Syria and Cilicia.813 The communities of Judaea were so closely bound up with that of Jerusalem, as to give rise to the hypothesis (Zahn, Forschungen, vi. p. 800) that the ancient episcopal list of Jerusalem, which contains a surprising number of names, is a conflate list of the Jerusalem bishops and of those from the other Christian communities in Palestine.

Between the apostolic age and c. 180 A.D., when we first get evidence of provincial church synods, similar proofs of union among the provincial churches are not infrequent. Ignatius is concerned, not only for the church of Antioch, but for that of Syria; Dionysius of Corinth writes to the communities of Crete and to those in Pontus; the brethren of Lyons write to those in Asia and Phrygia; the Egyptian communities form a sphere complete in itself, and the churches of Asia present themselves to more than Irenæus as a unity.

Not in all cases did a definite town, such as the capital, become the headquarters which dominated the ecclesiastical province. No doubt Jerusalem (while it lasted), Antioch,814 Corinth,815 Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria formed not merely the centres of their respective provinces, but in part extended heir sway still more widely, both in virtue of their importance as large cities, and also on account of the energetic Christianity which they displayed.816 Yet Ephesus, for example, did not become for a long while the ecclesiastical metropolis of Asia in the full sense of the term; Smyrna and other cities competed with it for this honor.817 In Palestine, Aelia (Jerusalem) and Cæsarea stood side by side. Certain provinces, like Galatia and extensive, districts of Cappadocia, had no outstanding towns at all, and when we are told that in the provinces of Pontus; Numidia, and Spain the oldest bishop always presided at the episcopal meetings, the inference is that no single city could have enjoyed a position of superiority to the others from the ecclesiastical standpoint.

But the question now arises, whether the "metropolitans,"818 who had been long in existence before they were recognized by the law of the church or attained their rights and authority, in any way repressed the tendency towards the increase of independent communities within a province; and further, whether, in the interests of their own power, the bishops also made any attempt to retard the organization of new independent communities under episcopal government. In itself, such a course of action would not be surprising. For wherever authority and rights develop, ambition and the love of power invariably are unchained.

In order to solve this problem, we must first of all premise that the tendency of early Christianity to form complete, independent communities, under episcopal government, was extremely strong.819Furthermore, I do not know of a single case, from the first three centuries; which would suggest any tendency, either upon the part of metropolitans or of bishops, to curb the independent organization of the churches. Not till after the opening of the fourth century does the conflict against the chor-episcopate820 commence; at least there are no traces of it, so far as I know, previous to that period. Then it is also that—according to our sources—the bishops begin their attempt to prohibit the erection of bishoprics in the villages, as well as to secure the discontinuance of bishoprics in small neighbouring townships—all with the view of increasing their own dioceses.821

Furthermore, we have not merely an "argumentum e silentio" before us here. On the contrary, after surveying (as we shall do in Book IV.) the Christian churches which can be traced circa 325 A.D., we see that it is quite impossible for any tendency to have prevailed throughout the large majority of the Roman provinces which checked the formation of bishoprics, inasmuch as almost all the churches in question can be proved to have been episcopal. We conclude, then, that wherever communities, episcopally governed, were scanty, Christians were also scanty upon the whole; while, if a town had no bishop at all, the number of local Christians was insignificant. Certainly during the course of the Christian mission, in several cases, whole decades passed without more than one bishop in a province or in an extensive tract of country. We might also conjecture, a priori, that wherever a district was uncultivated or destitute of towns—as on the confines of the empire and beyond them—years passed without a

single bishop being appointed, the scattered local Christians being superintended by the bishop of the nearest town, which was perhaps far away. It is quite credible that, even after a fully equipped hierarchy had been set up in such an outlying district, this bishop should have retained certain rights of supervision—for it is a question here, not simply of personal desire for power, but of rights which had been already acquired. Still, it is well-nigh impossible for us nowadays to gain any clear insight into circumstances of this kind, since after the second century all such cases were treated and recorded from the standpoint of a dogmatic theory of ecclesiastical polity—the theory that the right of ordination was a monopoly of the original apostles, and consequently that all bishoprics were to be traced back, either directly to them, or to men whom they had themselves appointed. The actual facts of the great mission promoted by Antioch (as far as Persia, eastwards), Alexandria (into the Thebais, Libya, Pentapolis, and eventually Ethiopia), and Rome seemed to corroborate this theory. The authenticated instances from ancient history (for we have no detailed knowledge of the Bosphorus or of Gothia) permit us to infer, e.g., that the power of ordination possessed by the bishop of Alexandria extended over four provinces. Still, as has been remarked already, the original local conditions remain obscure. It is relevant also at this point to notice the tradition, possibly an authentic one, that the first bishop of Edessa was consecrated by the bishop of Antioch (Doctr. Addæi, p. 50), and that the Persian church was for a long while dependent upon the church of Antioch, from which it drew its metropolitans.822 When this was in force, the imperial church had already firmly embraced the theory that episcopal ordination could only be perpetuated within the apostolic succession.

There are also instances, of course, in which, during the third century (for, apart from Egypt, no sure proofs can be adduce at an earlier period), Christian communities arose in country districts which were superintended by presbyters or even by deacons alone, instead of by a bishop. Such cases, however, are by no means numerous.823 They are infrequent till in and after the age of Diocletian.824 Previous to that period, so far as I know, there was but one large district in which presbyterial organization was indeed the rule, viz., Egypt. Yet, as has been already observed, the circumstances of Egypt are extremely obscure. It is highly probable that for a considerable length of time there were no monarchical bishops at all in that country, the separate churches being grouped canton-wise and superintended by presbyters. Gradually the episcopal organization extended itself during the course of the third century, yet even in the fourth century there were still large village churches which had no bishop. We must, however, be on our guard against drawing conclusions from Egypt and applying them to any of the other Roman provinces. It has been inferred, from the subscriptions to the Acts of the synod of Elvira, that some Spanish towns, which were merely represented by presbyters at the synod, did not possess any bishops of their own. This may so, but the very Acts of the synod clearly show how precarious is the inference; for, while many presbyters subscribed, these Acts, it can be proved that in almost every case the town churches which they represented did possess a bishop. The latter was prevented from being present at the synod, and, like the Roman bishop, he had himself represented by a presbyter or deputation of the clergy. Nevertheless it is indisputable, on the mind of the sixty-seventh canon of Elvira ("si quis diaconus gens plebem sine episcopo vel presbytero," etc.), that there were churches in Spain which had not a bishop or even a presbyter, although we know as little about the number of such churches as about the conditions which prevented the appointment of a bishop or presbyter. In any case, the management of church by a deacon must have always been the exception mainly an emergency measure in the days of persecution), since was unlawful for him to perform the holy sacrifice (see the fifteenth canon of Arles). It is impossible to decide whether the ἐπιχώριοι πρεσβύτεροι mentioned in the thirteenth canon of Neo-Cæsarea mean independent presbyters

in country churches, or presbyters who had a chor-episcopus over them. Possibly the latter is the true interpretation, since we must assume a specially vigorous development of the chor-episcopate in the neighbouring country of Cappadocia, which sent no fewer than five chorepiscopi to the council of Nicæa. On the other hand, it follows from the Testament of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste that there were churches in the adjoining district of Armenia which were ruled by a presbyter, and in which no chor-episcopate seems to have existed (cp. Gillmann, p. 36). Armenia, however, was a frontier province, and we cannot transfer its peculiar circumstances en masse to the provinces of Pontus and Cappadocia. The "priests in the country," mentioned in the eighth canon of Antioch (341 A.D.), are certainly priests who had supreme authority in their local spheres, but the synod of Antioch was held in the post-Constantine period, and the circumstances of 341 A.D. do not furnish any absolute rule for those of an earlier age. It is natural to suppose that the contemporary organization of the cantons in Gaul,825 which hindered the development of towns, proved also an obstacle to the thorough organization of the episcopal system; hence one might conjecture that imperfectly organized churches were numerous in that country (as in England). But on this point we know absolutely nothing. Besides, even in the second century there was a not inconsiderable number of towns in Gaul where the local conditions were substantially the same as those which prevailed in the other Roman towns.826

It is impossible, therefore, to prove that for whole decades there were territorial or provincial bishops who ruled over a number of dependent Christian churches in the towns; we thus rather assume that if bishops actually did wield episcopal rights in a number of towns, it was in towns where only an infinitesimal number of Christians resided within the walls. Anyone who asserts the contrary with regard to some provinces cannot be refuted. I admit that. But the burden of proof rests with him. The assertion, for example, that Autun, Rheims, Paris, etc., had a fairly large number of Christians by the year 240 or thereabouts, while the local Christian churches had no bishop, cannot be proved incorrect, in the strict sense of the term. We have no materials for such a proof. But all analogy favours the conclusion: if the Christians in Autun, Rheims, Paris, etc., were so numerous circa 240 A.D., then they had bishops; if they had no bishops, then they were few and far between. In my opinion, we may put it thus: (1) It is quite possible, indeed it is extremely likely (cp. the evidence of Cyprian), that before the middle of the third century there were already some other episcopal, churches in Gaul, even apart from the "province"; (2) if Lyons was really the sole episcopal church of the country, then there was only an infinitesimal number of Christians in Gaul outside that city.

We come back now to one of Theodore's remarks. "At the outset," he wrote, "there were but two or three bishops, as a rule, in a province—a state of matters which prevailed in most of the Western provinces till quite recently, and which may still be found in several, even at the present day." This is a statement which yields us no information whatever. Theodore did not know any more than we moderns know about the state of matters "at the outset." The assertion that there were not more than two or three' bishops in the majority of the Western provinces "till quite recently," is positively erroneous, and it only proves how small was Theodore's historical knowledge of the Western churches; finally, while the information that several Western provinces even yet had no more than two or three bishops, is accurate, it is irrelevant, since we know, even apart from Theodore's testimony, that the number of bishoprics in the Roman provinces adjoining the large northern frontier of the empire, as well as in England, was but small. But this scantiness of contemporary bishoprics did not denote an earlier (and subsequently suspended) phase of the church's organization tenaciously maintaining itself. What it denoted was a result of the local conditions of the population and also the rarity of Christians in those districts. So far, of course, these local circumstances resembled those in

which Christianity subsisted from the very outset over all the empire, when the Christians—and the Romans—of the region lived still in the Diaspora.

At this point we might conclude by saying that the striking historical paragraph of Theodore does not cast a single ray of truth upon the real position of affairs. But in the course of our study we have over and again touched upon the special position of the metropolitan or leading bishop of the province.827It is perfectly clear, from a number of passages, that the metropolitan was frequently described in the time of Eusebius simply as "the bishop of the province." The leading bishop was thus described even as early as Dionysius of Corinth or Ignatius himself. With regard to the history of the extension of Christianity—in so far as we are concerned to determine the volume of tendency making for the formation of independent churches—the bearing of this fact is really neutral. But it is not neutral with regard to our conception of the course taken by the history of ecclesiastical organization. Unluckily our sources here fail us for the most part. The uncertain glimpses they afford do not permit us to obtain any really historical idea of the situation, or even to reconstruct any course of development along this line. How old is the metropolitan? Is his position connected with a power of ordination which originally parse from one man to another in the province? Does the origin of the metropolitan's authority go back to a time when the apostles still survived? Was there any connection between them? And are we to distinguish between one bishop and another, so that in earlier age there would be bishops who did not ordain, or who were merely the vicars of a head bishop?828 To all these questions we are probably to return a negative answer in general, though an affirmative may perhaps be true in one or two cases. Certainty we cannot reach. At least, in spite of repeated efforts, I have not myself succeeded in gaining any sure footing. Frequently the facts of the situation may have operated quite as strongly as the rights of the case; i.e., an individual bishop may have exercised rights at first, and for a considerable period, without possessing any title thereto, but simply as the outcome of a strong position held either on personal grounds or on account of the civic repute and splendour of his town churches.829 The state provincial organization and administration, with the importance which it lent to individual towns, may have also begun here and there to affect the powers of individual bishops in individual provinces by way of aggranizenient.830 But all this pertains, probably, to the sphere of those elements in the situation which we may term "irrational," elements which do not admit of generalization or of any particular application to ecclesiastical rights and powers within the primitive age. No evidence for the definition of the metropolitan's right of jurisdiction can be found earlier than the age in which the synodal organization had defined itself, and presupposition of such a right lay in the sturdy independence, the substantial equality, and the closely knit union of all the bishops in any given province. All the "preliminary stages" lie enveloped in mist. And the scanty rays which struggle through may readily prove deceptive will-o'-the-wisps.

These investigations into the problems connected with the History of the extension of Christianity lead to the following result, viz., that the number of bishoprics in the individual provinces of the Roman empire affords a criterion, which is essentially reliable, for estimating the strength of the Christian movement. The one exception is Egypt. Apart from that province, we may say that Christian communities, not episcopally organized, were quite infrequent throughout the East and the West alike during the years that elapsed between Antoninus Pius and Constantine.831 Not only small towns, but villages also had bishops. Cyprian was practically right when he wrote to Antonian (Ep. lv. 24): "Iam pridem per omnes provincias et per urbes singulas ordinati sunt episcopi" ("Bishops have been for long ordained throughout all the provinces and in each city")832 And what was unique in the age of Sozomen (H.E., vii. 19), viz., that only one bishop ruled in Scythia, though it had many towns833—this would also have been unique a century and a half earlier.

In conclusion, it must be remembered that the whole of this investigation relates solely to the age between Pius and Constantine, not to the primitive period during which the monarchial episcopate first began to develop. During this period—which lasted in certain provinces till Domitian and Trajan, and in many other still longer—a collegiate government of the individual church, by means of bishops and deacons (or by means of a college of presbyters, bishops and deacons) was normal. How this passed over into the other (i.e. the monarchic control) we need not ask in this connection. But the hypothesis that wherever communities which are not episcopally organized are to be found throughout the third century, they are to be considered as having retained the primitive organization—this hypothesis, I repeat, is not merely incapable of proof, but incorrect. Such non-episcopal village churches are plainly recent churches, which are managed, not by a college of presbyters, but by one or two presbyters. They are "country parishes" whose official "presbyters" have nothing in common with the members of the primitive college of presbyters except the name. Here I would again recall how Egypt forms the exception to the rule, inasmuch as large Christian churches throughout Egypt still continue to be governed by the collegiate system down to the middle of the third century. Nothing prevents us, in this connection, from supposing that these churches did hold tenaciously to the primitive form of ecclesiastical organization. Yet alongside of the presbyters in Egypt, even διδάσκαλοι would seem also to have had some share in the administration of the churches (Dionys. Alex., in Eus., H.E., vii. 24).

EXCURSUS II

THE CATHOLIC CONFEDERATION AND THE MISSION

BEFORE general synods and patriarchs arose within the church, prior even to the complete development of the metropolitan system, there was a catholic confederation which embraced the majority of the Christian churches in the East and the West alike. It came into being during the gnostic controversies; it assumed a relatively final shape during the Montanist controversy; and its headquarters were at Rome. The federation had no written constitution. It did not possess one iota of common statutes. Nevertheless, it was a fact. Its common denominator consisted of the apostles' creed, the apostolic canon, and belief in the apostolical succession of the episcopate. Indeed, long before these were generally recognized as the common property of the churches, the maintenance of this body of doctrine constituted a certain unity by itself. Externally, this unity manifested itself in inter-communion, the brotherly welcome extended to travellers and wanderers, the orderly notification of any changes in ecclesiastical offices, and also the representation of churches at synods beyond the bounds of their own provinces and the forwarding of contributions. What was at first done spontaneously—and as a result of this, in many cases, both arbitrarily and uselessly—became a matter of regular prescriptive right, carried out along fixed lines of its own.

The fact of this catholic federation was of very great moment to the spread of the church. The Christian was at home everywhere, and he could feel himself at home, thanks to this inter-communion. He was protected and controlled wherever he went. The church introduced, as it were, a new franchise among her members. In the very era when Caracalla bestowed Roman citizenship upon the provincials—a concession which amounted to very little, and which failed to achieve its ends—the catholic citizenship became a significant reality.

EXCURSUS III

THE PRIMACY OF ROME IN RELATION TO THE MISSION

FROM the close of the first century the Roman church was in a position of practical primacy over Christendom. It had gained this position as the church of the metropolis, as the church of Peter and Paul, as the community which had done most for the catholicizing and unification of the churches, and above all as the church which was not only vigilant and alert but ready834 to aid any poor or suffering church throughout the empire with gifts.835 The question now rises, Was this church not also specially active in the Christian mission, either from the first or at certain epochs of the pre-Constantine period? Our answer must be in the negative. Any relevant evidence on this point plainly belongs to legends with a deliberate purpose and of late origin. All the stories about Peter founding churches in Western and Northern Europe (by means of delegates and subordinates) are pure fables. Equally fabulous is the mass of similar legends about the early Roman bishops, e.g., the legend of Eleutherus and Britain. The sole residuum of truth is the tradition, underlying the above-mentioned legend that Rome and Edessa were in touch about 200 A.D. This fragment of information is isolated, but, so far as I can see, it is trustworthy. We must not infer from it, however, that any deliberate missionary movement had been undertaken by Rome. The Christianizing of Edessa was a spontaneous result. Abgar the king may indeed have spoken to the local bishop when he was at Rome, and a letter which purports to be from Eleutherus to Abgar might also be historical. The Roman bishop may perhaps have had some influence in the catholicizing of Edessa and the bishops of Osrhoene. But a missionary movement in any sense of the term is out of the question. Furthermore, if Rome had undertaken any organized mission to Northern Africa (or Spain, or Gaul, or Upper Italy) we would have found echoes of it, at least in Northern Africa. Yet in the latter country, when Tertullian lived, people only knew that while the Roman church had an apostolic origin, their own had not; consequently the “auctoritas” of the former church must be recognized. Possibly this contains a reminiscence of the fact that Christianity reached Carthage by way of Rome, but even this is not quite certain. Unknown sowers sowed the first seed of the Word in Carthage also; they were commissioned not by man but by God. By the second century their very names had perished from men's memory.

The Roman church must not be charged with dereliction of duty on this score. During the first centuries there is no evidence whatever for organized missions by individual churches; such were not on the horizon. But it was a cardinal duty to “strengthen the brethren,” and this duty Rome amply discharged.

CHAPTER V

COUNTER-MOVEMENTS

I

WE have already discussed (pp. 57 f.) the first systematic opposition offered to Christianity and its progress, viz., the Jewish counter-mission initiated from Jerusalem. This expired with the fall of Jerusalem, or rather, as it would seem, not earlier than the reign of Hadrian. Yet its influence continued operate for long throughout the empire, in the shape of malicious charges levelled by the Jews against the Christians. The synagogues, together with individual Jews, carried on the struggle against Christianity by acts of hostility and by inciting hostility.836

We cannot depict in detail the counter-movements on the part of the state, as these appear in its persecutions of the church.837 All that need be done here is to bring out some of the leading points, with particular reference to the significance, both negative and positive, which the persecutions possessed for the Christian mission.

Once Christianity presented itself in the eyes of the law and the authorities as a religion distinct from that of Judaism, its character as a religio illicita was assured. No express decree was needed to make this plain. In fact, the "non licet" was rather the presupposition underlying all the imperial rescripts against Christianity. After the Neronic persecution, which was probably838 instigated by the Jews (see above, p. 58), though it neither extended beyond Rome nor involved further consequences, Trajan enacted that provincial governors were to use their own discretion, repressing any given case,839 but declining to ferret Christians out.840 Execution was their fate if, when suspected of lèse-majesté as well as of sacrilege841 they stubbornly refused to sacrifice before the images of the gods of the emperor, thereby avowing themselves guilty of the former crime. On the cultus of the Cæsars, and on this point alone, the state and the church came into collision.842 The apologists are really incorrect in asserting that the Name itself ("nomen ipsum") was visited with death. At least, the statement only becomes correct when we add the corollary that this judicial principle was adopted simply because the authorities found that no true adherent of his sect would ever offer sacrifice.843 He was therefore an atheist and an enemy of the state.

Down to the closing year of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the imperial rescripts with which we are acquainted were designed, not to protect the Christians, but to safeguard the administration of justice and the police against the encroachments of an anti-Christian mob,844 as well as against the excesses of local councils who desired to evince their loyalty in a cheap fashion by taking measures against Christians. Anonymous accusations had been already prohibited by Trajan. Hadrian had rejected the attempts of the Asiatic diet, by means of popular petitions, to press governors into severe measures against the Christians. Pius in a number of rescripts interdicted all "novelties" in procedure; beyond the injunctions that Christians were not to be sought out ("quaerendi non sunt"), and that those who abjured their faith were to go scot-free, no step was to be taken. During this period, accusations preferred by private individuals came to be more and more restricted, both in criminal procedure as a whole, and in trials for treason. Even public opinion845 was becoming more and more adverse to them. And all this told in favour of Christianity. Most governors or magistrates recognized that there was no occasion for them to interfere with Christians; convinced of their real harmlessness, they let them go their own way. Naturally, the higher any person stood in public life, the greater risk he ran of coming into collision with the authorities on the score of his Christian faith. Only on the

lowest level of society, in fact, did this danger become at all equally grave, since life was not really of very much account to people of that class. People belonging to the middle classes, again, were left unmolested upon the whole; that is, unless any conspiracy succeeded in haling them before a magistrate. Down to the middle of the third century, this large middle class furnished but a very small number of martyrs. Irenæus writes (about 185 A.D.; see above: p. 369): “Mundus pacem habet per Romanos, et nos [Christiani] sine timore in via ambulamus et navigamus quocumque voluerimus.” Soldiers, again, were promptly detected whenever they made any use of their Christian faith in public. So were all Christians who belonged to the numerous domains of the emperors.

Apart from the keen anti-Christian temper of a few proconsuls and the stricter surveillance of the city-prefects, this continued to be the prevailing attitude of the state down to the days of Decius, i.e., to the year 249. During this long interval, however, three attempts at a more stringent policy were made. “Attempts” is the only term we can use in this connection, for all three lost their effect comparatively soon. Marcus Aurelius impressed upon magistrates and governors the duty of looking more strictly after extravagances in religion, including those of Christianity. The results of this rescript appear in the persecution of 176-180 A.D.; but when Commodus came to the throne, the edict fell into abeyance.—Then, in 202 A.D., Septimius Severus forbade conversions to Christianity, which of course involved orders to keep a stricter watch on Christians in general. As the persecutions of the neophytes and catechumens in 202-203 attest, the rescript was not issued idly; yet before long it too was relaxed. Finally, Maximinus Thrax ordered the clergy to be executed, which implied the duty of hunting them out —in itself a fundamental innovation in the imperial policy. Outside Rome, however, it is unlikely that this order was put into practice, save in a few provinces, although we do not know what were the obstacles to its enforcement. Down to the days of Maximinus Thrax the clergy do not appear to have attracted much more notice than the laity, and the edict of Maximinus did not strike many of them down. Still, it was significant. Plainly, the state had now become alive to the influential position occupied by the Christian clergy.

These attempts at severity were of brief duration. But the comparative favour shown to Christianity, upon the other hand, by Commodus, Alexander Severus, and Philip the Arabian led to a steady improvement in the prospects of Christianity with the passage of every decade.

Viewed externally, then, the persecutions up to the middle of the third century were not so grave as is commonly represented. Origen expressly states that the number of the martyrs during this period was small; they could easily be counted.846 A glance at Carthage and Northern Africa (as seen in the writings of Tertullian) bears out this observation. Up till 180 A.D. there were no local martyrs at all; up to the time of Tertullian's death there were hardly more than a couple of dozen, even when Numidia and Mauretania are included in the survey. And these were always people whom the authorities simply made an example of. Yet it would be a grave error to imagine that the position of Christians was quite tolerable. No doubt they were able, as a matter of fact, to settle down within the empire, but the sword of Damocles hung over every Christian's neck, and at any given moment he was sorely tempted to deny his faith, since denial meant freedom from all molestation. The Christian apologists complained most of the latter evil, and their complaint was just. The premium set by the state upon denial of one's faith was proof positive, to their mind, that the administration of justice was controlled by demonic influence.

Despite the small number of martyrs, we are not to underrate the courage requisite for becoming a Christian and behaving as a Christian. We are specially bound to extol the staunch

adherence of the martyrs to their principles. By the word or the deed of a moment, they might have secured exemption from their punishment, but they preferred death to a base immunity.847

The illicit nature of Christianity unquestionably constituted a serious impediment to its propaganda, and it is difficult to say whether the attractiveness of all forbidden objects and the heroic bearing of the martyrs compensated for this drawback. It is an obstacle which the Christians themselves rarely mention; they dwell all the more upon the growth which accrued to them ever and anon from the martyrdoms.848 All over, indeed, history shows us that it is the "religio pressa" which invariably waxes strong and large. Persecution serves as an excellent means of promoting expansion.849

From the standpoint of morals, the position of living under a sword which fell but rarely, constituted a serious peril. Christians could go on feeling that they were a persecuted flock. Yet as a rule they were nothing of the kind. Theoretically, they could credit themselves with all the virtues of heroism, and yet these were seldom put to the proof. They could represent themselves as raised above the world, and yet they were constantly bending before it. As the early Christian literature shows, this unhealthy state of matters led to undesirable consequences.850

The development went on apace between 259 and 303. From the days when Gallienus ruled alone, Gallienus who restored to Christianity the very lands and churches which Valerian had confiscated, down to the nineteenth year of Diocletian, Christians enjoyed a halcyon immunity which was almost equivalent to a manifesto of toleration.851 Aurelian's attempt at repression never got further than a beginning, and no one followed it up; the emperor and his officials, like Diocletian the reformer subsequently, had other business to attend to. It was during this period that the great expansion of the Christian religion took place. For a considerable period Christians had held property and estates (in the name, I presume, of men of straw); now they could come before the public fearlessly,852 as if they were a recognized body.853

Between 249 and 258, however, two chief and severe persecutions of Christians took place, those under Decius and Valerian, while the last and fiercest began in February of 303. The former lasted only for a year, but they sufficed to spread fearful havoc among the churches. The number of the apostates was much larger, very much larger indeed, than the number of the martyrs. The rescript of Decius, a brutal stroke which was quite unworthy of any statesman, compelled at one blow all Christians, including even women and children, to return to their old religion or else forfeit their lives. Valerian's rescripts were the work of a statesman. They dealt merely with the clergy, with people of good position, and with members of the court; all other Christians were let alone, provided that they refrained from worship. Their lands and churches were, however, confiscated.854 The tragic fate of both emperors "mortes persecutorum!") put a stop to their persecutions. Both had essayed the extirpation of the Christian church, the one by the shortest possible means, the other by more indirect methods.855 But in both cases the repair of the church was effected promptly and smoothly, while the wide gaps in its membership were soon filled up again, once the rule was laid down that even apostates could be reinstated.

The most severe and prolonged of all the persecutions was the last, the so-called persecution under Diocletian. It lasted longest and raged most fiercely in the east and south-east throughout the domain of Maximinus Daza; it burned with equal fierceness, but for a shorter period, throughout the jurisdiction of Galerius; while over the domain of Maximianus and his successors its vigour was less marked, though it was still very grievous. Throughout the West it came to little. It began with imperial rescripts, modelled upon the statesman like edict of

Valerian, but even surpassing it in adroitness. Presently, however, these degenerated into quite a different form, which, although covered by the previous edicts of Decius, outdid them in pitiless ferocity throughout the East. Daza alone had recourse to preventive measures of a positive character. He had Acts of Pilate fabricated and circulated in all directions (especially throughout schools), which were drawn up in order to misrepresent Jesus;856 on the strength of confessions extorted from Christians, he revived the old, abominable charges brought against them, and had these published far and wide in every city by the authorities (Eus., H.E., i. 9; ix. 5. 7); he got a high official of the state to compose a polemical treatise against Christianity;857 he invited cities to bring before him anti-Christian petitions;858 finally—and this was the keenest stroke of all—he attempted to revive and reorganize all the cults, headed of course by that of the Cæsars, upon the basis of the new classification of the provinces, in order to render them a stronger and more attractive counterpoise to Christianity.859 "He ordered temples to be built in every city, and enacted the careful restoration of such as had collapsed through age; he also established idolatrous priests in all districts and towns, placing a high priest over them in every province, some official who had distinguished himself in some line of public service. This man was also furnished with a military guard of honor." Eus., H.E., viii. 14; see ix. 4: "Idolatrous priests were now appointed in every town, and Maximinus further appointed high priests himself. For the latter position he chose men of distinction in public life, who had gained high credit in all the offices they had filled. They showed great zeal, too, for the worship of those gods." Ever since the close of the second century the synodal organization of the church, with its metropolitans, had been moulded on the provincial diets of the empire—i.e., the latter formed the pattern of the former. But so much more thoroughly had it been worked out, that now, after the lapse of a century, the state attempted itself to copy this synodal organization with its priesthood so firmly centralized and so distinguished for moral character. Perhaps this was the greatest, at any rate it was the most conspicuous, triumph of the church prior to Constantine.

The extent of the apostasy which immediately ensued is unknown, but it must have been extremely large. When Constantine conquered Maxentius, however, and when Daza succumbed before Constantine and Licinius, as did Licinius in the end before Constantine, the persecution was over.860 During its closing years the churches had everywhere recovered from their initial panic; both inwardly and outwardly they had gained in strength. Thus when Constantine stretched out his royal hand, he found a church which was not prostrate and despondent but well-knit, with a priesthood which the persecution had only served to purify. He had not to raise the church from the dust, otherwise that politician would have hardly stirred a finger: on the contrary, the church confronted him, bleeding from many a wound, but unbent and vigorous. All the counteractive measures of the state had proved of no avail besides, of course, these were no longer supported by public opinion at the opening of the fourth century, as they had been during the second. Then, the state had to curb the fanaticism of public feeling against the Christians; now, few were to be found who countenanced hard measures of the state against the church. Gallienus himself had, on his deathbed, to revoke the edicts of persecution, and his rescript, which was unkindly phrased (Eus., H.E., viii. 17), was ultimately replaced by Constantine's great and gracious decree of toleration (Eus., H.E., x. 5; Lact., de Mort. xlviii.).

II

Several examples have been already given (in Book II., Chapters IV. And VI.) of the way in which Christians were thought of by Greek and Roman society and by the common people during the second century.861 Opinions of a more friendly nature were not common. No doubt,

remarks like these were to be heard: “Gaius Seius is a capital fellow. Only, he's a Christian!”—“I'm astonished that Lucius Titius, for all his knowledge, has suddenly turned Christian” (Tert., Apol. iii.).—“So-and-so thinks of life and of God just as we do, but he mingles Greek ideas with foreign fables” (Eus., H.E., vi. 19).862 They were reproached with being inconceivably credulous and absolutely devoid of judgment, with being detestably idle (“contemptissma inertia”) and useless for practical affairs (“infructuositas in negotiis”).863 These, however, were the least serious charges brought against them. The general opinion was that Christian doctrine and ethics, with their absurdities and pretensions,864 were unworthy of any one who was free and cultured (so Porphyry especially).865The majority, educated and uneducated alike, were still more hostile in the second century. In the foreground of their calumnies stood the two charges of Œdipodean incest and Thyestean banquets, together with that of foreign, outlandish customs, and also of high treason. Moreover, there were clouds of other accusations in the air. Christians,866 it, was reported, were magicians and atheists; they worshipped a god with an ass's head, and adored the cross, the sun, or the genitalia of their priests (Tert., Apol. xvi., and the parallels in Minucius).867 It was firmly believed that they were magicians, that they had control over wind and weather, that they commanded plagues and famines, and had influence over the sacrifices.868 “Christians to the lions”—this was the cry of the mob.869 And even when people were less rash and cruel, they could not get over the fact that it seemed mere pride and madness to abandon the religion of one's ancestors.870 Treatises against Christianity were not common in the second or even in the third century, but there may have been controversial debates. A Cynic philosopher named Crescens attacked Justin in public, though he seems to have done no more than echo the popular charges against Christianity. Fronto's attack moved almost entirely upon the same level, if it be the case that his arguments have been borrowed in part by the pagan Cæcilius in Minucius Felix. Lucian merely trifled with the question of Christianity. He was no more than a reckless, though an acute, journalist. The orator Aristides, again, wrote upon Christianity with ardent contempt,871 while the treatise of Hierocles, which is no longer extant, is described by Eusebius as extremely trivial. Celsus and Porphyry alone remain, of Christianity's opponents.872 Only two men; but they were a host in themselves.

They resembled one another in the seriousness with which they undertook their task, in the pains they spent on it, in the loftiness of their designs, and in their literary skill. The great difference between them lay in their religious standpoint. Celsus's interest centres at bottom in the Roman Empire.873 He is a religious man because the empire needs religion, and also because every educated man is responsible for its religion. It is hard to say what his own conception of the world amounts to. But for all the hues it assumes, it is never coloured like that of Cicero or of Seneca. For Celsus is an agnostic above all things,874so that he appreciates the relative validity of idealism apart from any stiffening of Stoicism, just as he appreciates the relative validity of every national religion, and even of mythology itself. Porphyry,875 on the other hand, is a thinker pure and simple, as well as a distinguished critic. And he is not merely a religious philosopher of the Platonic school, but a man of deeply religious temperament, for whom all thought tends to pass into the knowledge of God, and in that knowledge to gain its goal.

Our first impression is that Celsus has not a single good word to say for Christianity. He re-occupies the position taken by its opponents in the second century; only, he is too fair and noble an adversary to repeat their abominable charges. To him Christianity, this bastard progeny of Judaism876—itself the basest of all national religions—appears to have been nothing but an absurd and sorry tragedy from its birth down to his own day. He is perfectly aware of the internal differences between Christians, and he is familiar with the various stages of development in the

history of their religion. These are cleverly employed in order to heighten the impression of its instability. He plays off the sects against the Catholic Church, the primitive age against the present, Christ against the apostles, the various revisions of the Bible against the trustworthiness of the text, and so forth, although, of course, he admits that the whole thing was quite as bad at first as it is at present. Even Christ is not exempted from this criticism. What is valuable in his teaching was borrowed from the philosophers; the rest, i.e., whatever is characteristic of himself, is error and deception, so much futile mythology. In the hands of those deceived deceivers, the apostles, this was still further exaggerated; faith in the resurrection rests upon nothing better than the evidence of a deranged woman, and from that day to this the mad folly has gone on increasing and exercising its power—for the assertion, which is flung out at one place, that it would speedily be swept out of existence, is retracted on a later page. Christianity, in short, is an anthropomorphic myth of the very worst type. Christian belief in providence is a shameless insult to the Deity—a chorus of frogs, forsooth, squatting in a bog and croaking, "For our sakes was the world created"!

But there is another side to all this. The criticism of Celsus brings out some elements of truth which deserve to be considered; and further, wherever the critic bethinks himself of religion, he betrays throughout his volume an undercurrent of feeling which far from being consonant with his fierce verdict. For although he shuts his eyes to it, apparently unwilling to admit that Christianity could be, and had already been, stated reasonably, he cannot get round that fact; indeed—unless we are quite deceived—he has no intention whatever of concealing it from the penetrating, reader. Since there has really to be such a thing as religion, since it is really a necessity, the agnosticism of Celsus leads him to make a concession which does not differ materially from the Christian conception of God. He cannot take objection to much in the ethical counsels of Jesus—his censure of them as a plagiarism being simply the result of perplexity. And when Christians assert that the Logos is the Son of God, what can Celsus do but express his own agreement with this dictum? Finally, the whole book culminates in a warm patriotic appeal to Christians not to withdraw from the common regime, but to lend their aid in order to enable the emperor to maintain the vigour of the empire with all its ideal benefits.877 Law and piety must be upheld against their inward and external foes! Surely we can read between the lines. Claim no special position for yourselves, says Celsus, in effect, to Christians! Don't rank yourselves on the same level as the empire! On these terms we are willing to tolerate you and your religion. At bottom, in fact, the "True Word" of Celsus is nothing more than a political pamphlet, a thinly disguised overture for peace.878

A hundred years later, when Porphyry wrote against the Christians, a great change had come over the situation. Christianity had become a power. It had taken a Greek shape, but "the foreign myths" were still retained, of course, while in most cases at least it had preserved its sharp distinction between the creator and the creation, or between God and nature, as well as its doctrine of the incarnation and its paradoxical assertions of an end for the world and of the resurrection. This was where Porphyry struck in, that great philosopher of the ancient world. He was a pupil of Plotinus and Longinus. For years he had been engaged in keen controversy at Rome with teachers of the church and gnostics, realizing to the full that the matter at stake was God himself and the treasure possessed by mankind, viz., rational religious truth. Porphyry knew nothing of political ideals. The empire had indeed ceased to fill many people with enthusiasm. Its restorer had not yet arrived upon the scene, and religious philosophy was living meanwhile in a State which it wished to begin and rebuild. Porphyry himself retired to Sicily, where he wrote his fifteen books "Against the Christians." This work, which was "answered" by four leading teachers of the church (Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinarius, and Philostorgius), perished, together with his other polemical treatises, owing to the victory of the church and by

order of the emperor. All that we possess is a number of fragments, of which the most numerous and important occur in Macarius Magnes. For I have no doubt whatever that Porphyry is the pagan philosopher in that author's “Apocriticus.”879

This work of Porphyry is perhaps the most ample and thoroughgoing treatise which has ever been written against Christianity. It earned for its author the titles of πάντων δυσμενέστατος καὶ πολεμώτατος (“most malicious and hostile of all”), “hostis dei, veritatis inimicus, sceleratarum artium magister” (God's enemy, a foe to truth, a master of accursed arts), and so forth.880 But, although our estimate can only be based on fragments, it is not too much to say that the controversy between the philosophy of religion and Christianity lies to-day in the very position in which Porphyry placed it. Even at this time of day Porphyry remains unanswered. Really he is unanswerable, unless one is prepared first of all to agree with him and proceed accordingly to reduce Christianity to its quintessence. In the majority of his positive statements he was correct, while in his negative criticism of what represented itself in the third century to be Christian doctrine, he was certainly as often right as wrong. In matters of detail he betrays a good deal of ignorance, and he forgets standards of criticism which elsewhere he has at his command.

The weight which thus attaches to his work is due to the fact that it was based upon a series of very thoroughgoing studies of the Bible, and that it was undertaken from the religious standpoint. Moreover, it must be conceded that the author's aim was neither to be impressive nor to persuade or take the reader by surprise, but to give a serious and accurate refutation of Christianity. He wrought in the bitter sweat of his brow—this idealist, who was convinced that whatever was refuted would collapse. Accordingly, he confined his attention to what he deemed the cardinal points of the controversy. These four points were as follows:—He desired to demolish the myths of Christianity, i.e., to prove that, in so far as they were derived from the Old and New Testaments, they were historically untenable, since these sources were themselves turbid and full of contradictions. He did not reject the Bible in toto as a volume of lies. On the contrary, he valued a great deal of it as both true and divine. Nor did he identify the Christ of the gospels with the historical Christ.881 For the latter he entertained a deep regard, which rose to the pitch of a religion. But with relentless powers of criticism he showed in scores of cases that if certain traits in the gospels were held to be historical, they could not possibly be genuine, and that they blurred and distorted the figure of Christ. He dealt similarly with the ample materials which the church put together from the Old Testament as “prophecies of Christ.” But the most interesting part of his criticism is unquestionably that passed upon Paul. If there are any lingering doubts in the mind as to whether the apostle should be credited, in the last instance, to Jewish instead of to Hellenistic Christianity, these doubts may be laid to rest by a study of Porphyry. This critic, a Hellenist of the first water, feels keener antipathy to Paul than to any other Christian. Paul's dialectic is totally unintelligible to him, and he therefore deems it both sophistical and deceitful. Paul's proofs resolve themselves for him into flat contradictions, whilst in the apostle's personal testimonies he sees merely an unstable, rude, and insincere rhetorician, who is a foe to all noble and liberal culture. It is from the hostile criticism of Porphyry that we learn for the first time what highly cultured Greeks found so obnoxious in the idiosyncrasies of Paul. In matters of detail he pointed to much that was really offensive; but although the offence in Paul almost always vanishes so soon as the critic adopts a different standpoint, Porphyry never lighted upon that standpoint.882

Negative criticism upon the historical character of the Christian religion, however, merely paved the way for Porphyry's full critical onset upon the three doctrines of the, faith which he regarded as its most heinous errors. The first of these was the Christian doctrine of creation, which separated the world from God, maintained its origin within time, and excluded any

reverent, religious view of the universe as a whole. In rejecting this he also rejected the doctrine of the world's overthrow as alike irrational and irreligious; the one was involved in the other. He then directed his fire against the doctrine of the Incarnation, arguing that the Christians made a false separation (by their doctrine of a creation in time) and a false union (by their doctrine of the incarnation) between God and the world. Finally, there was the opposition he offered; to the Christian doctrine of the resurrection.

On these points Porphyry was inexorable, warring against Christianity as against the worst of mankind's foes; but in every other respect he was quite at one with the Christian philosophy of religion, and was perfectly conscious of this unity. And in his day the Christian philosophy of religion was no longer entirely inexorable on the points just mentioned; it made great efforts to tone down its positions for the benefit of Neoplatonism, as well as to vindicate its scientific (and therefore its genuinely Hellenic) character.

How close883 the opposing forces already stood to one another! Indeed, towards the end of his life Porphyry seems to have laid greater emphasis upon the points which he held in common with the speculations of Christianity;884 the letter he addressed to his wife Marcella might almost have been written by a Christian.885

In the work of Porphyry Hellenism wrote its testament with regard to Christianity—for Julian's polemical treatise savoured more of a retrograde movement. The church managed to get the testament ignored and invalidated, but not until she had four times answered its contentions. It is an irreparable loss that these replies have not come down to us, though it is hardly a loss so far as their authors are concerned. We have no information regarding the effect produced by the work, beyond what may be gathered from the horror displayed by the fathers of the church. Yet even a literary work of superior excellence could hardly have won the day. The religion of the church had become a world-religion by the time, that Porphyry wrote, and no professor can wage war successfully against such religions, unless his hand grasps the sword of the reformer as well as the author's pen.

The daily intercourse of Christians and pagans is not to be estimated, even in Tertullian's age, from the evidence supplied by episodes of persecution. It is unnecessary to read between the lines of his ascetic treatises, for numerous passages show, involuntarily but unmistakably, that as a rule everything went on smoothly in their mutual relationships. People lived together, bought and sold, entertained each other, and even intermarried. In later days it was certainly not easy to distinguish absolutely between a Christian and a non-Christian in daily life. Many a Christian belonged to “society” (see Book IV. Chap. II.), and the number of those who took umbrage at the faith steadily diminished. Julius Africanus was the friend of Alexander Severus and Abgar. Hippolytus corresponded with the empress. Origen had a position in the world of scholarship, where he enjoyed great repute. Paul of Samosata, who was a bishop, formed an influential and familar figure in the city of Antioch. The leading citizens of Carthage—who do not seem to have been Christians—were friends of Cyprian, according to the latter's biography (ch. xiv.), and even when he lay in prison they were true to him. “Meantime a large number of eminent people assembled, people, too, of high rank and good family as well as of excellent position in this world. All of these, for the sake of their old friendship with Cyprian, advised him to beat a retreat. And to make their advice substantial, they further offered him places to which he might retire” (“Conveniebant interim plures egregii et clarissimi ordinis et sanguinis, sed et saeculi nobilitate generosi, qui propter amicitiam eius antiquam secessum subinde suaderent, et ne parum esset nuda suadela, etiam loca in quae secederet offerebant”). Arnobius, Lactantius, and several others were philosophers and teachers of repute. Yet all this cannot

obscure the fact that, even by the opening of the fourth century, Christianity still found the learning of the ancient world, so far as that survived, in opposition to itself. One swallow does not make a summer. One Origen, for all his following, could not avail to change the real posture of affairs. Origen's Christianity was passed over as an idiosyncrasy; it commended itself to but a small section of contemporary scholars; and while people learned criticism, erudition, and philosophy from him, they shut their eyes to his religion. Nor were matters otherwise till the middle of the fourth century. Learning continued to be “pagan.” It was the great theologians of Cappadocia and, to a more limited extent, those of Antioch (though the latter, judged by modern standards, were more scientific than the former), who were the first to inaugurate a change in this respect, albeit within well-defined limits. They were followed in this by Augustine. Throughout the East, ancient learning really never came to terms at all with Christianity, not even by the opening of the fifth century; but, on the other hand, it was too weak to be capable of maintaining itself side by side with the church in her position of privilege, and consequently it perished by degrees. By the time that it died, however, Christianity had secured possession of a segment, which was by no means inconsiderable, of the circle of human learning.

CONCLUSION

Hergenröther (Handbuch der allgem. Kirchengesch., i. pp. 109 f.) has drawn up, with care and judgment, a note of twenty causes for the expansion of Christianity, together with as many causes which must have operated against it. The survey is not without value, but it does not clear up the problem. If the missionary preaching of Christianity in word and deed embraced all that we have attempted to state in Book II., and if it was allied to forces such as those which have come under our notice in Book III., then it is hardly possible to name the collective reasons for the success, or for the retardation, of the movement. Still less can one think of grading them, or of determining their relative importance one by one. Finally, one has always to recollect not only the variety of human aptitudes and needs and culture, but also the development which the missionary preaching of Christianity itself passed through, between the initial stage and the close of the third century.

Reflecting more closely upon this last-named consideration, one realizes that the question here has not been correctly put, and also that it does not admit of any simple, single answer. At the opening of the mission we have Paul and some anonymous apostles. They preach the unity of God and the near advent of judgment, bringing tidings to mankind of Jesus Christ, who ad recently been crucified, as the Son of God, the Judge, the Saviour. Almost every statement here seems paradoxical and upsetting. Towards the close of our epoch, there was probably hardly one regular missionary at work. The scene was occupied by a powerful church with an impressive cultus of its own, with priests, and with sacraments, embracing a system of doctrine and a philosophy of religion which were capable of competing on successful terms with any of their rivals. This church exerted a missionary influence in virtue of her very existence, inasmuch as she came forward to represent the consummation of all previous movements in the history of religion. And to this church the human race round the basin of the Mediterranean belonged without exception, about the year 300, in so far as the religion, morals, and higher attainments of these nations were of any consequence. The paradoxical, the staggering elements in Christianity were still there. Only, they were set in a broad frame of what was familiar and desirable and “natural”; they were clothed in a vesture of mysteries which made people either glad to welcome any strange, astonishing item in the religion, or at least able to put up with it.886

Thus, in the first instance at any rate, our question must not run, “How did Christianity win over so many Greeks and Romans as to become ultimately the strongest religion in point of numbers?” The proper form of our query must be, “How did Christianity express itself, so as inevitably to become the religion for the world, tending more and more to displace other religions, and drawing men to itself as to a magnet?” For an answer to this question we must look partly to the history of Christian dogma and of the Christian cultus. For the problem does not lie solely within the bounds of the history of Christian missions, and although we have kept it in view throughout the present work, it is impossible within these pages to treat it exhaustively.

One must first of all answer this question by getting some idea of the particular shape assumed by Christianity as missionary force about the year 50, the year 100, the year 150, the year 200, the year 250, and the year 300 respectively before we can think of raising the further question as to what, forces may have been dominant in the Christian propaganda at any one of these six epochs. Neither, of course, must we overlook the difference between the state of matters in the East and in the West, as well as in several groups of provinces. And even were one to fulfil all these preliminary conditions, one could not proceed to refer to definite passages as authoritative for a solution of the problem. All over, one has to deal with considerations which are of a purely general character. I must leave it to others to exhibit these considerations—with the caveat that it is easy to disguise the inevitable uncertainties that meet us in this field by means of the pedantry which falls back on rubrical headings. The results of any survey will be trustworthy only in so far as they amount to such commonplaces as, e.g., that the distinctively religious element was a stronger factor in the mission at the outset than at a later period, that a similar remark applies to the charitable and economic element in Christianity, that the conflict with polytheism attracted some people and offended others, that the same tray be said of the rigid morality, and so forth.

From the very outset Christianity came forward with a spirit of universalism, by dint of which it laid hold of the entire life of man in all its functions, throughout its heights and depths, in all its feelings, thoughts, and actions. This guaranteed its triumph. In and with its universalism, it also declared that the Jesus whom it preached was the Logos. To him it referred everything that could possibly be deemed of human value and from him it carefully excluded whatever belonged to the purely natural sphere. From the very first it embraced humanity and he world, despite the small number of the elect whom it contemplated. Hence it was that those very powers of attraction, by means of which it was enabled at once to absorb and to subordinate the whole of Hellenism, had a new light thrown upon them. They appeared almost in the light of a necessary feature in that age. Sin and foulness it put far from itself. But otherwise it built itself up by the aid of any element whatsoever that was still capable of vitality (above all, by means of a powerful organization). Such elements it crushed as rivals and conserved as materials of its own life. It could do so for one reason—a reason which no one voiced, and of which no one was conscious, yet which every truly pious member of the church expressed in his own life. The reason was that Christianity, viewed in its essence, was something simple, something which could blend with coefficients of the most diverse nature, something which, in fact, sought out all such coefficients. For Christianity, in its simplest terms, meant God as the Father, the Judge and the Redeemer of men, revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

And was not this religion bound to conquer? Alongside of other religions it could not hold its own for any length of time; still less could it succumb. Yes, victory was inevitable. It had to prevail. All the motives which operated in its extension are as nothing when taken one by one, in face of the propaganda which it exercised by means of its own development from Paul to Origen, a development which maintained withal an exclusive attitude towards polytheism and

idolatry of every kind.

ADDENDA TO VOLUME I

P. 57, note 2, adds: “We cannot at this point enter into the very complicated question of Paul's reputation in the Gentile church. The highest estimate of him prevailed among the Marcionites. Origen, after declaring that they held that Paul sat on Christ's right hand in heaven, with Marcion on his left, adds: ‘Porro alii legentes: Mittam vobis advocatum spiritum veritatis, volunt intellegere apostolum Paulum' (Hom. xxv. in Lucam, vol. v. pp. 181 f., ed. Lomm.). Even were these people supposed to belong to the Catholic Church—which I think unlikely—this conception would not be characteristic of the great church. It would be rather abnormal.”

P. 57, line 5 from top, add the following note: “The persecution of king Herod now began. It was directed against the twelve (Acts xii.). He made an example of James the son of Zebedee, whom he caused to be executed (why, we do not know). Then he had Peter put in prison, and, although the latter escaped death, he had to leave Jerusalem. This took place in the twelfth year after the death of Christ. Thereafter only individual apostles are to be found at Jerusalem. Peter was again there at the Apostolic Council (so called). Paul makes his agreement not with the eleven, however, but simply with Peter, James the Lord's brother, and John. Where were the rest? Were they no longer in Jerusalem? or did they not count on such an occasion?”

P. 355, line 23 from top, after “Hermas” add: “A whole series of teachers is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, in a passage (Strom., i. 11) which also shows how international they were: ‘My work is meant to give a simple outline and sketch of those clear, vital discourses and of those blessed and truly notable men whom I have been privileged to hear. Of these, one, an Ionian, was in Greece; two others were in Magna Græcia—one of them came from Cœle-Syria, the other from Egypt. Others, again, I met in the East: one came from Assyria; the other was a Hebrew by birth, in Palestine. When I came across the last (though in importance he was first of all), I found rest. I found him concealed in Egypt, that Sicilian bee.’”