

## THE CLEMENTINE LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>.

SOME apology is I think due for asking your attention to a subject which is only a bypath of Church history. My excuse must be that when I received the kind invitation of your Divinity Professors, the Clementine literature happened to be the work on which I was engaged; and although in my opinion this literature is out of the current of the main Church life, and although, as Prof. Harnack insists, it has had little influence on the development of Christian doctrine or life, yet it has been raised into adventitious importance by much modern speculation, and it is necessary for every investigator of early Christianity to decide for himself what historical value these documents may possess. These lectures, then, make little pretence to originality; they have not the excuse of representing either profound study or new discoveries or original views; they simply aim at formulating such tentative conclusions as I have been able to arrive at after a still incomplete and only half-finished study of these very curious documents as part of the remains of the early Christian Church.

The works we are studying form a portion of the very numerous apocryphal writings ascribed to Clement of Rome. They contain a considerable amount of doctrinal teaching presented in the shape of a religious novel or romance, in which are narrated the story of the wanderings of Clement in search of truth, the preaching and missionary journeys of Simon Peter, his contests with Simon Magus, and the reunion of Clement with the lost members of his family—with his father, mother, and two brothers. These narratives we possess in the following documents.

<sup>1</sup> The following article is the first of two lectures delivered at Trinity College, Dublin, at the kind invitation of the Divinity Professors. It seemed best to publish it as it was delivered, with the correction of a few errors. The second lecture dealt almost exclusively with Simon Magus. The matter of it forms the basis of the article under that heading in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* vol. iv.

i. The *Clementine Homilies* in Greek (Κλήμεντος τῶν Πέτρου ἐπιδημίων κηρυγμάτων ἐπιτομή) in twenty books, of which at present there are two MSS known.

ii. The *Clementine Recognitions*, at present divided into ten books. Only the Latin translation, made by Rufinus about the year 400, is now extant. Of this there are numerous MSS; every monastery of any size possessed a copy, but no edition has been yet published making any wide use of the materials.

iii. A *Syriac Version* containing three books of the *Recognitions* and five of the *Homilies*, but in an order different from that of our other authorities. The MS which contains them seems to date from the year 411.

iv. Two later *Greek Epitomes*, of little value for the text.

v. Late *Arabic Epitomes*, published in *Studia Sinaitica*, vol. v.

Of these we need for the present only concern ourselves with the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. But it may be remarked that among the steps necessary for the proper study of the *Clementine literature* is the formation of adequate editions making use of all available material.

It will be convenient first of all to give a short abstract of the contents of the *Homilies*, and then to state the main divergences of the *Recognitions*.

The *Homilies* begin with an account of Clement and of his early religious and moral impulses, of the unsatisfying character of the current philosophic teaching, of the rumours that reach Rome concerning the new Prophet who has arisen in the East. Inspired by this rumour and by some unknown teacher, Clement sails to Alexandria; there he meets Barnabas, and at his suggestion follows him to Caesarea, where he finds Peter. Peter is preparing to contend with Simon Magus, but first of all gives some preliminary instruction to Clement on the right use of scripture: the scriptures have been corrupted, and passages which speak against God are to be rejected as spurious. Then two former disciples of Simon, Nicetas and Aquila, give an account of his origin and teaching, and after that comes the dispute between Peter and Simon, Simon undertaking to prove from the scriptures that there is more than one God, and that he whom Peter called God is not the highest God, for he is without foresight, imperfect,

incomplete, and exposed to every form of human passion. The disputation is stated to last three days, but as a matter of fact only one day's dispute is given. At the end it is found that Simon has fled by night to Tyre, and is there deceiving the people by his magic. Clement and some others of the companions of Peter are sent to Tyre, and Simon flees to Sidon, leaving behind some of his disciples.

At Tyre a long dispute takes place between Clement and Apion, a follower of Simon, which is an elaborate condemnation of the unreality of the popular mythology. Peter comes to Tyre and Sidon; Simon goes to Berytus; Peter follows him, and after a slight altercation Simon goes to Tripolis; Peter again follows him, and Simon flees into Syria.

At Tripolis Peter remains a long time. We have several discourses in which he puts forward various curious speculations. There Clement is baptized, and then they go on towards Antioch in Syria, by Orthosia and Antaradus. Then comes the story of Clement's 'recognitions' of the various members of his family. Their story must be shortly related:—Clement's father, Faustus, was of noble birth, a relative of the emperor; his mother's name was Mattidia. Faustus had two twin sons, Faustinus and Faustianus, and afterwards Clement. Mattidia has a vision that unless she and her two elder sons leave Rome for ten years they will all perish. They are sent to Athens for educational purposes, but are never heard of again. After making many inquiries Faustus himself goes after them, and he too disappears. Since then Clement has heard nothing of any of his relations.

As Peter and his companions are on the way to Antioch, permission is given by the apostle for a day's excursion to the island of Aradus, in order to see some remains of the works of Phidias. There they meet an old beggar woman; Peter engages in conversation with her, and discovers that she is Clement's mother. The 'recognition' follows. It appears that the story she had told of the vision had been a fiction. It had been invented in order to procure for her the means of escaping from the adulterous attentions of her husband's brother. On the voyage she and her two sons had been shipwrecked, and they had been drowned. When the whole party meet once more, and the story is told, another 'recognition' follows. Nicetas and

Aquila prove to be the two brothers of Clement, who had been saved from the wreck and sold into slavery by their captors. Mattidia is shortly afterwards baptized. After the baptism they all retire to bathe and pray: they are watched by an old man who undertakes to prove to Peter that all his time has been wasted, that there is no such thing as God or Providence, that all things are the result of fate (*γένησις*), being dependent upon the action of the stars. This theory is refuted partly by a long discourse, partly (although only in the Recognitions) by actual fact. The old man tells the story of how his wife had been born under an horoscope which had compelled her to commit adultery, and to end her days by a death at sea. This he said had actually happened. She had been guilty of adultery with one of her slaves, as he had learnt from his brother, had invented a story of a vision so that she might escape without detection, and in a voyage to Athens had been drowned with her two sons. Needless to say that this is Faustus, that Peter has the happy fortune both to disprove the astrological theories and to unite Faustus to the lost members of his family, who had been separated from him by the devices of the wicked brother-in-law.

The whole party now proceed to Laodicea by Balaneae, Paltus, and Gabala. Simon Magus reappears on the scene, and a long dispute takes place between him and Peter concerning the unity of the Godhead and the existence of evil. Then Faustus, the newly discovered father of Clement, goes to see Simon. Simon by his magical arts succeeds in making the face of Faustus like his own, and then departs to Antioch, where he accuses Peter of being a magician. Cornelius the centurion has been ordered by the emperor to arrest all magicians. It is for this reason that Simon has made the face of Faustus like his own, and has thus been able to escape to Judaea. Faustus then goes to Antioch, and uses the appearance which Simon has given him to destroy the influence of the latter. The people think that he is Simon: in Simon's name he recants, confesses his deceit and impostures, and Peter is sent for to come to Antioch.

The story as told in the Recognitions covers largely the same ground, but there are important differences. Omitting many minor details and postponing the question of variations in doctrine, these are as follows:—

(a) In the Homilies, as we have seen, there are two disputes with Simon—one at Caesarea, the other at Laodicea. In the Recognitions there is only one—that at Caesarea—and in that the same ground is covered as in the two disputes of the Homilies.

(b) In the Recognitions the journey along the coast to Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus is very much curtailed, and the part of Simon is throughout much attenuated.

(c) The dispute between Clement and Apion is entirely omitted in the Recognitions, but a large part of the subject-matter is preserved in other contexts.

(d) The discourses of Peter at Tripolis are in the Recognitions fuller and more complete.

The first question we must necessarily ask, with these two versions before us, is, What is their relation to one another? Which of the two is the earlier? There have been various opinions. One set of writers has maintained that the Recognitions are the original, another that the Homilies are. This much may quite safely be maintained, that neither of them could have been produced out of the other. Both have marks of priority. The diversity of opinion among critics is itself a proof that some wider solution must be found than either of those suggested. Both documents, in the form in which they at present exist, must be modifications of some common original.

Before we go any further it will be convenient to ask here what external information we may possess which will help to guide us.

1. Prefixed to the Homilies are three documents: (1) a letter of Peter to James; (2) a Protestation to be made by any one who receives a copy of the work; (3) a letter of Clement to James. The origin of these documents has been, like much else, a subject of discussion, and it has been maintained that they are later than the writing to which they are attached. If I may express my own personal opinion, they seem to me to come from exactly the same source as the Homilies and Recognitions themselves. They deal with the same subject-matter. Both the letters were known to Photius, that of Clement was known to Rufinus. The latter thought it later—later, that is, than the time of Clement, which no one would doubt—but had translated it elsewhere. The attestation therefore is good, and

the arguments by which a date later than that of the literature has been supported do not seem to me cogent. The letter of Peter to James begins 'Peter to James, the Lord and Bishop of the Holy Church.' It refers to books of his preaching, βιβλοὶ τῶν ἐμῶν κηρυγμάτων, which he has sent and which have to be carefully guarded. They are not to be trusted to any one, either Jew or Gentile, until he has been tested. The letter also refers to a falling away that has been caused by a certain ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος, who has taught a creed full of lawlessness and levity. The second document contains the Protestation which James imposes on any who are to receive copies of the book. The 'preachings of Peter' are only to be given to one who has been tested for six years, has been baptized, and has made a solemn promise (for it is unlawful to take an oath), by all the elements, that he will preserve the books secret and inviolate. The third document is addressed as follows:—'Clement to James, the Lord and Bishop of Bishops, who ruleth Jerusalem, the Holy Church of the Hebrews.' It relates the death of Peter, his ordination of Clement, and a series of directions which he has given for the government of the Church. At the end, Clement relates how he was bidden to send an epitome of his own thoughts from childhood, and of the discourses and acts of Peter from city to city (τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ [sc. Peter] κηρυχθέντων λόγων τε καὶ πράξεων), also of Peter's death. So Clement concludes by saying that he is sending an epitome of the preaching of Peter, which the latter had already written down.

These letters seem to me to be simply intended as an elaborate attestation of the documents which we possess. The charge of secrecy is of course intended to explain why nothing has been known about them for 150 years or so. Peter himself is made to attest his own teaching, and to refer to what we shall see are the two great subjects of his discourses, *μοναρχία* and *πολιτεία*. Clement gives an account of his acts and journeys, and through him, as is fitting, the rules as to organisation are made to come. The work or works thus attested would be (1) the preachings of Peter, with some reference to Simon Magus; (2) a story of Clement; (3) acts and preachings of Peter from city to city. We may note further that the book is always referred to in the plural, as βιβλοὶ.

2. Prefixed to his translation of the Recognitions is a preface by Rufinus. He tells us that there were two editions of the ἀναγνώσεις (*sic*) or Recognitions, and that the story of the transformation of Simon (he means, I presume, Faustus) is not found in one collection. He admits that he has not preserved the order of the original, and that there are several things which he has omitted. He has left out a dissertation *de ingenito Deo genitoque*, and some other things which clearly went beyond his intelligence. Although he says that in other matters he gave not only the subject-matter but even the words of the original, we may safely conclude that his excisions were considerable. As he had two versions of the work before him, he would feel at liberty to use matter from either; and he would omit anything which he thought dull, unedifying, or unorthodox. We may notice that he too speaks not of a single book, but of a collection of books—*corpora librorum*.

3. Coming now to direct external testimony, the first writer that it is important to mention is Origen<sup>1</sup>. In the commentary on Genesis, he quotes a passage which is contained in the tenth book of the Recognitions as containing the words which Clement spoke to his father in the fourteenth book of the *περίοδοι* (ἐν Λαοδικεῖα ἐν ταῖς περιόδοις). Also in the commentary on Matthew<sup>2</sup> he quotes *Recogn.* vii 38, but not exactly. Both of these are later works of Origen. They show that he had before him a work at any rate partially identical in subject-matter with our Recognitions, but with a different division into books, and perhaps a different arrangement. This book he calls the *περίοδοι*.

4. Eusebius<sup>3</sup> unfortunately looks upon this literature with the contempt that he always felt for anything that did not come up to his own standard of orthodoxy. He tells us that besides the Epistles there existed under the name of Clement other lengthy and verbose writings, that they were of quite recent origin, that they contained dialogues of Peter and Apion, and that they were very unorthodox. Considerable difficulty has been made about these dialogues of Peter and Apion, because as

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *Philoc.* 23. [It should be noted, however, that Robinson *Philocalia of Origen*, p. 1, gives reasons for supposing that the quotation was really made by Basil and Gregory in illustration of Origen.] All necessary quotations will be found in Harnack, *Altchristliche Literatur* p. 219 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, in *Matth. Comm. series* 77 [Delarue iii 894].

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *H. E.* iii 38.

a matter of fact the only Apion dialogues we possess are between Clement and Apion. But it may be noticed that the expression is not 'dialogue' but 'dialogues,' and I do not see why it should not refer to different dialogues in which Peter and Apion respectively take part, in both cases with Clement: there was no need to mention the latter because he is the subject of the chapter. We may notice that Jerome as usual quotes Eusebius and as usual inaccurately, and that his inaccuracies are followed by most other writers.

5. Epiphanius tells us that the Ebionites<sup>1</sup> made use of books that are called the 'Journeys of Peter,' written by Clement (*ταῖς περιόδοις καλουμέναις Πέτρου, ταῖς διὰ Κλήμεντος γραφείσαις*). He assumes that they were genuine works which had been very much corrupted by these heretics, and gives a list of their errors.

6. The last testimony that it is necessary to quote is that of Photius<sup>2</sup>. He knew a work under the name of 'The Recognition of Clement the Roman' or 'The Acts of Peter.' To some copies there were prefixed a letter of Peter, to others a letter of Clement. He conjectures that this would imply two different recensions, but does not as a matter of fact appear to have found them. The contents were (1) the work called 'The Acts of the Apostle Peter'; (2) the dialogues with Simon the Sorcerer; (3) the 'Recognition' of Clement and his father and his other brothers. He also refers to a dialogue between Peter and Apion, but this information seems to come straight from Eusebius.

As far as the arrangement and plan of the work goes, we may now suggest some tentative conclusions, first saying two things by way of preface. In the first place we must recognise what is a common characteristic of apocryphal and heretical works. They have no fixed standard of text. Their aim was in all cases speculation or interest, not orthodoxy, and the copies therefore might vary indefinitely. Anything interesting might be inserted, anything that appeared prolix or unattractive might be omitted. Any change or improvement which might occur to the copyist might be made. Hence such documents will always present a very complicated problem, and any solution must be tentative.

<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxx 15.

<sup>2</sup> Photius, *Bibliotheca* codd. 112, 113.



A second reason for hesitation and diffidence is the example of our predecessors. The number of critics who have attempted anything beyond the simplest problems, and have been justified by success, is very small: we have an instance in connexion with Simon Magus of the way in which late discoveries have completely disproved the conjectures of even a competent critic. Asking you, then, to believe that I make these suggestions with becoming modesty, I would put before you the following conclusions.

(i) It may be admitted that, as far as regards the dispute with Simon, the Recognitions have preserved the original form of the work. The original narrative contained a three days' dispute at Caesarea only, concerning the one God and the origin of evil, and probably represented Simon as fleeing to Rome as the result of it.

(ii) But we can trace part of the reason why the alteration in the Homilies was made. The story of Simon and Faustus was no part of the original work. It was, we may suppose, an Antiochene legend, introduced as a later embellishment. The addition of this made a connexion between the two necessary, and so the contests during the journey to Antioch were introduced—in a very attenuated form in the Recognitions, in a fuller form in the Homilies. But they were no part of the original work.

(iii) The dialogue between Clement and Apion is out of place where it occurs in the Homilies; whether its present form is due to the author of the Homilies, or whether it belonged to the original collection, we have no means of ascertaining.

(iv) The original form consisted rather of a collection of works than of a single book, works not connected together as ours are. We may notice that almost all the writers whom we have quoted speak of a collection of books: and the story, as we have it, falls into some four well-marked divisions;—the complete story of Clement, *Recogn.* i and vii-x; the dispute with Simon; the journeys and discourses of Peter; the dialogues of Clement and Apion.

(v) To these different parts some of the different names in the various passages quoted may have been appropriated, and have passed from one part to the whole. The letter of Peter may have belonged originally to one part, the letter of James to another. But as I hope to show as we proceed, they are all

products of one design and plan, coming from one writer or group of writers, and we have no need to inquire about older sources which in all probability did not exist.

Let us pass on to the further and more important subject—the doctrine and ecclesiastical system of the work. We may, I think, group the writer's ideas under three headings:—

1. Monotheism : the divine *μοναρχία*.
2. A somewhat strict morality (*πολιτεία*).
3. A curiously heterogeneous ecclesiastical system.

1. The main idea of the writer is the unity of the Godhead. 'The true word is that there is one God, the Creator of the world, who is just, and will render to every man according to his works.' In these words we have put before us the purpose which controls the whole of the work, and everything else, whether philosophy or speculation, is subordinate to it. Negatively we find the writer defending this creed against the cultivated heathen, against the heathen crowd, against astrology and fatalism, against every form of what the writer believes to be Christian heresy. There is a certain amount of literary propriety in the choice of characters. Apion, the old adversary of the Jews, is made the representative of cultivated polytheism, and his opponent is Clement. The heresy attacked is mainly that of Marcion and the belief in two Gods: Simon Magus, the only heretic of the New Testament, who was believed to be the origin and source of all heresies, is here made the antagonist. There is also a passage to which we shall refer later in which the belief that the Son of God must be God is disputed.

So far negatively—now positively. What, to begin with, is the source of knowledge? It is Revelation. A comparison is made between the Revelation which comes from prophecy and Greek philosophy. Philosophy is uncertain, the mere result of opinion, constantly changing. Any one is able to believe just what he likes. But Revelation is certain. The test of truth is the power of prophecy. Any one is able to judge whether a person has rightly foretold future events. If he finds such a person, he must believe him implicitly. If he finds a mistake, he must hold that he has not rightly understood him. To a certain extent Revelation is contained in the scriptures,

that is, in the Old Testament. But not every one can use them, for they are interpolated. This it is not safe to confess publicly, but the true believer must be taught the mystery of the scriptures (*τὸ μυστήριον τῶν γραφῶν*), i. e. that those things are true which tell us what are the true things about God. *Γίνεσθε τραπεζίται δόκιμοι*, 'Be ye good money-changers,' is the maxim given. The Law as a matter of fact did not come from Moses, for it tells us of the death of Moses. The way to distinguish the true from the false is by the authority of the true Prophet, who was Himself foretold by the Law. As He had said that not one jot or tittle of the Law should pass away, it was obvious that anything He had destroyed was not the Law. All this is a somewhat bold and arbitrary way of dealing with difficulties, but it helps to remind us how acute the Old Testament difficulty then was. Marcion had put clearly before the Christian world the antithesis of the Old and New Testaments, and was really only stating in an impossible way exactly what we should say in a possible way. He saw that the conception of God in the Old Testament was different from that in the New Testament. The habit of mind of the time compelled him to assume a different entity for every different conception, and he felt it necessary to suppose the existence of two Gods. We accept exactly the same facts, but speak of the historical evolution of the idea of God or of a progressive revelation. So again, the writer of the Clementines says that those parts of the Law which Jesus accepted are genuine. We say that the Old Testament must be interpreted through the New, which has taken to itself the permanent elements of the Law.

Our ultimate authority is the true Prophet. But how are we to find Him? The fulfilment of prophecy is our criterion. To Peter He has been revealed by a sudden inspiration. But also He may be learnt by the knowledge of syzygies or antitheses. There are the celestial antitheses, in which the better precedes the worse, heaven and earth, day and night, sun and moon, life and death, light and dark, Adam and Eve. Then in their terrestrial counterparts, owing to the existence of free-will, i. e. sin, the worse precedes the better, i. e. God corrects what is done wrong by the perverseness of man. Here the order is Cain and Abel, the raven and the dove, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and

Jacob, Aaron and Moses, Elijah and John, Simon and Peter, Antichrist and Christ. The main cause of all error is, we are told, the imperfect apprehension of the doctrine of antitheses. Simon is the left-handed power of God, and of those that have not God. Peter was sent second, since first comes disease, then healing. This is one of the strange speculative elements of the work, yet its meaning is never made clear. But behind it, and behind so much Gnostic speculation, is the attempt to explain how error could exist. A similar explanation must be given of some curious speculations about male and female prophecy, the element of error coming into life through what is feminine and imperfect.

At any rate Christ is the true Prophet who will enable us to distinguish what is true from what is false in the scriptures, and the name by which He is habitually known is 'the Prophet' or 'the Prophet of Truth.' He is the Son of God, but not God. He distinctly said that there were no Gods apart from the Creator of the world; He never announced that He Himself was God, but pronounced those blessed who recognise Him as the Son of God who made all things. He is only God in the sense that all men are. Yet the miraculous birth appears to be accepted, and the Jews are mistaken who said that Christ was Son of David but not Son of God. He had been incarnate before in Adam and Moses, and was the last of the line of prophets. We have not time to develop and repeat a great deal of curious speculation that occurs about the origin of evil, about the two kingdoms, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of the world to come, about the fall of man through the female principle, about the law that children born at certain times of the year are necessarily evil.

Another element which pervades these writings is the belief in the existence of magic and witchcraft, and consequently a doctrine of demonology. It is difficult for us to realise what a prominent element the belief in magic was in the early days of Christianity. It was probably the most powerful of all the forms of false teaching which the Church had to combat. Its reality was believed in equally by its devotees and by the Christian preacher who denounced it, only the latter considered it the work of evil spirits, and that Christ was stronger than they were. Recent discoveries of papyri, and investigations like those of Frazer in the *Golden*

*Bough* have brought home to us the strength and persistency of magical beliefs. Their sway is universal, they are the most subtle and persistent opponents of higher creeds. In his dealing with magic as elsewhere, therefore, our writer reflects his own times. An elaborate demonology helps to explain the existence of evil. Simon the typical false teacher is also the magician who practises every form of black art. All right opinion is opposed to him, but the reality of his power and of the existence of the demons is unquestioned. The angels of the lower heavens, grieved at the revolt of men, came upon earth to win them back. But they themselves were won over, married the daughters of men, and taught them magic and the art of healing. Hence sprang the giants, their spirits became demons, and the demons have power over men if they eat of the tables of demons. It illustrates very clearly the current ideas connected with the sacrifices when we are told how these demons have no power except on those who worship them in some way, and that it is by eating of the table of demons, i.e. of course by partaking of the sacrificial feast in the idol temples, or eating of any unclean food, that a man is in danger from them. Baptism alone will cleanse from all such evil.

It is not, I think, wise to go into further detail on the subject of the teaching, because by doing so we are liable to obscure the main object of the work, i.e. the defence of the Divine Unity or Monotheism. All the curious superstitions, or the fragments of philosophy, where the writer vacillates between sublime truths imperfectly worked out and trifling fancies, are introduced simply to defend his main theories. The various difficulties of his time, the value of the Old Testament, the origin of evil, the existence of error and ignorance, are treated more or less satisfactorily, but the ultimate aim of all is the defence and establishment of what we may call an Historical Unitarianism. And the further aim is to find a common basis for Judaism and Christianity. 'There are two Prophets, Jesus and Moses, and God accepts any one who believes in and carries out the teaching of either.'

One point now must be touched on in concluding this section of our subject—the relation to St. Paul. The writer evidently knew St. Paul's Epistles. He was clearly prohibited, by the date at which he put his narrative, from any open reference to the

Apostle, but—with the possible exception of one passage—there is not the slightest sign of anti-Paulinism, and nowhere is there any opposition to St. Paul. No doctrine which St. Paul preached is attacked; but on the other hand there is a complete absence of any idea of Redemption or Atonement. St. Paul's particular teaching has had absolutely no influence on the writer. Any one acquainted with the Gnostic systems knows how largely the idea of Redemption has influenced their speculations. Our writer, like the Gnostics, is fond of speculation, but he is untouched by the idea of Redemption. Christ is a prophet, and only a prophet.

2. But we must be passing on to our next point, the ethical teaching: side by side with the canon of unity is the canon of life (*κανὼν τῆς πολιτείας*). The writer has a strict, in some directions a very strict, rule of life: an ideal morality and formal regulations are curiously mingled together. The service pleasing to God is summed up as follows:—To worship God only, and to believe only in the Prophet of truth; to be baptized unto the remission of sins, and thus by the most holy birth to be born again to God through the water of salvation; to take no part in the table of demons, that is in things offered to idols, or dead, or strangled, or captured by beasts; not to live impurely; to observe the times of purification; to be temperate, given to good works, doing no wrong to any; to look for life eternal from God who is all-powerful; to seek it by prayers and supplications. In one word, to keep 'the law of the Jews,' to do to another all that a man wishes for himself, to practise philanthropy. God is invisible, but man is made in His image. The image of God is man, not idols, and we must honour God by doing good to man who is made in His image. Absolute poverty is to be the rule of life, because man, if he wishes to enjoy the future kingdom, ought—by a curious idea of the just balance of good and evil—to have no share in the present kingdom: therefore *πᾶσι τὰ κτήματα ἁμαρτήματα*. Wine and meat are apparently forbidden, but marriage is enjoined; for it again is an instance of the greatness of 'unity.' The only passage in which the writer approaches eloquence is in the eulogy on the chastity of the faithful wife.

There are two kingdoms. The Prophet of truth, when He came

among us, taught us that the God and Maker of all things gave to two persons, as it were, two kingdoms, to the good man and to the evil, giving to the evil man the kingdom of the present world with law, so as to have power to punish the unjust, but to the good, the eternal life which is to be . . . For those who have decided to win the things of the kingdom which is to come it is not right to have any share in the things of this kingdom, except water alone and bread, and these just sufficient for life (since it is not lawful for any one willingly to die), and also one garment, 'for it is not permitted to stand naked, because of the sun that seeth all things.'

The various difficult moral questions are discussed, just as are the difficulties of theology—how far is a belief in goodness consistent with the distribution of rewards and punishments in this life, the need of immortality, and so on.

There is in the moral teaching just the same curious relation to Judaism as in the theology. The writer claims to be the defender of the law—*εἰς θεός, εἰς νόμος, μία ἐλπὶς* is his motto—but it is not the Jewish law. The Jewish law is a forgery. The true law was that delivered by tradition from Moses to the Seventy, the law of Christ which the true prophet has taught. This is described and spoken of as the law of the Jews, but the writer really knows nothing at all about Judaism. He never has been a Jew or brought in contact with Jews. He has been brought up in a curious moral atmosphere in which a Christian morality has been combined by tradition with some strange and curious customs. As in theology, he is attempting to put forward a compromise in which Judaism and Christianity may meet.

3. The third main idea on which he insists is that of certain points of Church order. He is a strenuous maintainer of Episcopacy, and in accordance with ecclesiastical tradition he makes Clement the mouthpiece through whom the apostolic ordinances are given. The letter of Clement narrates how he was made bishop by Peter, and gives an address of Peter describing the order and functions of the ministry. At each place that Peter visits we are told how he organises the church and appoints the bishop. Episcopacy is to the writer another instance of the value of unity, as are Monotheism and Monogamy.

Side by side with Church order, very great stress is laid upon

baptism. 'For thus did the Prophet swear to us, saying, Verily I say unto you, unless ye be born again with living water into the name of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Ghost, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Do not think that if you are the most pious man that was ever born, but are unbaptized, you can have any hope. By baptism a man is free from evil spirits, and has power over evil spirits in others.

So far the writer adopts the current ecclesiastical system, but he adds a habit or custom of daily washing. The Eucharist with him is with bread and salt and probably water; there is also a curious oath by the four elements which each initiated member of the Church has to take.

Enough detail has been given to show the curious jumble in the writer's mind. Whence did all these elements come?

The source of certain of them is known. About the year 322, a certain Alcibiades of Apamea appeared in Rome with a book called the 'Book of Elkesai'—so Hippolytus tells us; and the doctrine which it taught is also known from a fragment of Origen and from the account of some obscure heretics—Ebionites Ossenes or Sampsæans—described by Epiphanius. A large number of the more curious customs and speculations of the Clementines are clearly identical with tenets of these heretics, and may reasonably be believed to have the same source: such are the successive incarnations of Christ, abstinence from meat, repeated washings, discouragement of virginity, the oaths by the powers of nature, the Eucharist in bread and water. The same heretics also taught the doctrine of the two kingdoms, and called Christ the Prophet of truth.

Now is all this an original element in the Clementines? It is necessary to ask this question because a theory has been propounded by Dr. Bigg<sup>1</sup>, that the original elements were orthodox and the Ebionite or Elkesaite element was a later addition or corruption. His object is to account for the curious combination of episcopal orthodoxy and heretical teaching. But it seems to me that his theory can hardly be accepted, and that he is really turning the documents upside down. The answer to him is, I think, simply this, that in the more orthodox form of the work—the Recognitions—the orthodoxy has been gained by the elimination

<sup>1</sup> *Studia Biblica* vol. ii p. 157.



of what is most clearly unorthodox, and the general phraseology is still Ebionite; for instance, Christ is always called the Prophet or the Prophet of truth. Moreover Elkesaite or Ebionite doctrines are found in passages which do not belong to the Homilies. Personally I have no doubt that the heretical elements form part of the original form of the work. How then do we account for the growth of the work with its Catholic elements? I would make the following suggestions.

(1) We know that there was a body of Jewish Christians who accepted the doctrine of the Virgin birth, and who in the time of Justin were considered by him sufficiently orthodox to be members of the Church. Now our author accepts the Virgin birth, he calls Christ the Son of God, he accepts too the Trinitarian formula for baptism. All this might suggest that he belonged to some such community. Moreover his Judaism is very slight. He accepts the compromise of Acts xv, and he carefully avoids any attacks on St. Paul, although he has not learnt much from him.

(2) Being a member of such a body, he would naturally accept the Church order of the day, and his organisation is just that which would belong to the end of the second or beginning of the third century.

(3) He has no desire to form a sect. He wishes to guide the teaching of the Church. This again will exactly harmonise with the date we have mentioned. We know it as the period of the Monarchian Controversies. It was the time when the Church had to defend the divine unity against Gnosticism and Polytheism, and when it had to answer the question, How is your belief in the divinity of the Son consistent with this unity? Tradition made Christ the Son of God, and gave Him divine honours. When the question was asked, there were ultimately only two solutions: on the one side the doctrine of the Trinity, on the other Unitarianism. Our author shares the traditional belief of the Church that Christ is the Son of God, and he has the baptismal formula; but he goes back from these. In an acceptance of the divine unity he will find a common standing for Judaism and Christianity. And so he defends Unitarianism against the Church teaching that the Son of God must be God, as well as against Polytheism and Marcionism.

The following points then seem to me clear:—There is a distinct doctrinal unity about the whole collection of works. This represents not so much a sect as an individual, although an individual brought up under peculiar conditions. Whatever the exact form which the work originally took, it was, like a very different series of works, the Leucian Acts, the creation of the imagination of the author. Some traditions may have given him hints, the customs and usages of the sect in which he was brought up suggested some less important elements; but for our purpose, whether as regards doctrine or ecclesiastical organisation, it is the product of a curious, versatile, unequally developed mind, writing at the close of the second or beginning of the third century. As a story the work was a success, as a contribution to serious thought it was a failure. Harnack is right in setting it aside in working out the development of Christian thought. It is not important as preserving old traditions, nor as contributing much to the future. But it has an interest, and a very definite one, as a picture and representation of the age. Its very superstition, its very inequality, its curious want of selection and proportion, its combinations of elevated philosophy imperfectly understood with a somewhat degraded imagination, make it an admirable reflex of much of the thought of the time. Magic, Astrology, Fatalism, Platonism, Stoicism, scraps from the Universities and scraps from the gutter, made a typical picture of what many people thought and believed when Christianity was striving to introduce a more healthy rule of life and thought. The Clementine literature is outside the current of Church life; it did little to help the development of Christian thought: but it reflects and represents many phases of the times of failing heathenism which our imagination would quite fail to realise without its assistance.

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