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*A PURITAN AND A BROAD CHURCHMAN IN
THE SECOND CENTURY.*

THOSE who have paid any attention to the Christian literature of the post-apostolic age must have been struck with the immense contrast between it and the earlier Christian writings. Take the epistles of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, the Shepherd of Hermas—what interest they have is mainly historical, showing what was the state of thought and feeling and life in the early Church. Clement impresses us by his simple goodness, Ignatius by his passionate enthusiasm; but, short as they are, we have probably found it something of a task to read with attention their epistles to the end, while Hermas and the apocryphal writers are full of puerilities and absurdities. The truth of St. Paul's statement is continually forced upon us, that not many wise or learned are to be found among the immediate successors of the Apostles. Intellect is suspected as dangerous, and not without reason: for, as yet, there is no fixed rule of faith, and the new wine is bursting the old bottles. Those who had been trained in Greek wisdom, a Marcion, a Valentinus, a Basilides, are seizing one or another portion of the revealed word, and working it up into one-sided or fantastic systems. The infant Church is threatened alike with persecution from without and heresy from within. This extremity of peril calls out new powers of defence. The calumnies and cruelties of the heathen are met by reasoned apologies addressed to the Emperors: the aberrations of the heretics by more thorough examination of the teaching of the Bible, by more careful statement and more exact definition of Christian doctrine. Thus the

powers of thought and expression were gradually developed in what was beginning to be known as the "Catholic" Church. In order to meet the misrepresentations or misunderstandings of heathen or half Christian writers, the defenders of the faith had to familiarize themselves with modes of thought alien to the earlier Christianity.

Among these defenders we may distinguish two different types: one that of men like Tatian and Tertullian, who followed in the steps of the sons of Zebedee, and were ready to call down fire from heaven on their opponents; the other that of men like Justin and Clement of Alexandria, who were actuated by the spirit which prompted St. Peter, when he said that "God was no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him," and by St. Paul, when he declared to the Athenians the unknown God, whom already they ignorantly worshipped. I propose in this paper to draw out very briefly the contrast between the two types in their leading representatives, Tertullian and Clement. Both were born about 150 A.D., both brought up as heathen; Clement was probably converted about 180, Tertullian some fifteen years later; Clement died about 212, Tertullian perhaps in 230; both were possessed of great natural ability as well as of great learning. As a writer and an orator Tertullian stands foremost. He is a master in that great rhetorical school of Rome, of which Seneca may be called the founder, and of which Lucan, Tacitus and Juvenal are the most conspicuous examples. Their great excellence lies in their condensed force. Strictly speaking, no one man deserves the credit of creating this weighty and impressive style. It is not Seneca; it is Rome—the Roman spirit and the Roman power—which speaks out in such full-charged sentences as Virgil's

Tu regere imperio populos Romam memento,
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,

not less than in Juvenal's "Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas," and Tacitus' "Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant." Not unworthy to be placed by the side of these "jewels which, on the stretched forefinger of all time, sparkle for ever," are the well known sentences of Tertullian: "Semen est sanguis Christianorum" (*Apol.* 50), "O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae" (*De Test. An.* c. 2), "Christus veritas est, non consuetudo" (*De Virg. Veland.* 1). But the delight in framing these brilliant aphorisms (*sententiae* the Romans called them) had its own disadvantages. Accuracy had sometimes to be sacrificed to effect. A telling phrase would be spoilt by qualifications: no neutral tints were admissible. So we have the defiant scream, "Sepultus resurrexit: credo quia impossibile" (*De Carm. Christi.* 5), where Roman sobriety is lost in African fervour.

Clement's style is the very contrary of all this. He has the Greek many-sidedness and openness of mind: showing what splendid possibilities are involved in Juvenal's contemptuous description of "the starveling *Graeculus*. Humani nihil—or rather, according to Bishop Westcott's magnificent expansion of the phrase—nihil in rerum natura a se alienum putat." Only in one point does his Greek resemble Tertullian's Latin—both are very hard; but the Greek is lacking in the vehemence and the animation of the Latin. As Munro points out in his edition of Lucretius, the later Greek is far more cumbrous and awkward than the contemporary Latin. The sentences are long, the constructions loose, participles are often substituted for verbs, and the meanings of the words are forced and strained to give an appearance of novelty. Notwithstanding there is hardly any patristic writer, the study of whom is more to be commended to those who have leisure, than Clement. There is no one who is more filled with the spirit of love towards God and man, no one who cherishes higher hopes for man-

kind, or who has a more absolute trust in God's providential guiding, not only of the world at large, but of each individual soul. Of modern writers, the one who reminds me most of him, from this point of view, though of course far inferior in ability, is Erskine of Linlathen. Even the slovenly sentences at times take form and breathe and glow under the stress of some generous enthusiasm; just as Browning's rough jolting verses are fused into splendid harmony when he is fired by some great thought.

I proceed now to point out the relations between Tertullian and Clement, and shall then consider how far and in what respects they may be regarded as representing respectively the Puritan and the Broad Church tone of mind.

Clement, the head of the Catechetical School or Christian University of Alexandria, was no doubt a much more conspicuous person than Tertullian of Carthage, the quondam lawyer. There is no evidence, as far as I know, that the former was acquainted with the writings of the latter, nor indeed that he could read Latin. On the other hand, Tertullian wrote several treatises in Greek, and Nöldechen, in an article in the *Jahrb. f. protest. Theologie*, vol. xii. 279, has collected many references in his treatises to the tenets and writings of Clement. In the treatise *De cultu Feminarum* many remarks (such as those on the use of purple, on dyeing the hair and on false hair) are taken from the *Paedagogus* of Clement. The attendance at the games is condemned on the same ground by both: thus Tertullian (*Spect.* c. 3) follows Clement (*Paed.* iii. § 76) in referring to it, Ps. i. 1, where our version has "sitting in the seat of the scornful," but Tertullian has "*in cathedra pestium non sedit*," in accordance with the LXX. *καθέδραν λοιμῶν*, given by Clement. The use of garlands for the head is condemned alike by both as opposed to common sense, since neither smell nor sight is gratified when the flowers are put out of the way of both organs. Again, garlands are used for idols and for the dead:

the Christian should have nothing to do with the ornaments of devils or of death. The only crown for him in this life is his Master's crown of thorns (*Paed.* ii. § 70 foll.; *De Cor.* 5, 10, 14).

But, though Tertullian in his earlier writings often follows Clement, we find a growing opposition in more important points, e.g., as to the interpretation of the words "Seek and ye shall find." Clement applies this to the Christian's advance in knowledge; as in *Str.* i. § 51, "The Word does not wish him who has believed to be idle." So *Str.* v. pp. 650, 654; *Str.* viii. p. 914 *init.*, "The righteous man will seek the discovery which flows from love." Tertullian on the other hand limits it to the unconverted. When Christianity has once been chosen, there is no room for further search, which only leads to heresy (*De Praescr.* 8 foll.). Another important difference is as to the way in which persecution should be met. In *Str.* iv. § 76 foll. Clement quotes our Lord's words, "When they persecute you in this city flee to another," and says that he who disobeys this command is rash and foolhardy. Above all, if he uses provocation, he becomes partly guilty of the sin of the persecutor. By telling us to give up our coat to him who has seized the cloak, Christ means us to propitiate the wrath of our persecutors and not stir them up to blaspheme the Holy Name. Tertullian (in his very interesting treatise *De fuga in Persecutione*, 6) seems to allude to this when he says "that some persons have tried to excuse their cowardice by pleading the Lord's command 'to flee to another city,' but this (he says) was intended only for exceptional persons and exceptional times and circumstances. If the Apostles had been cut off, it must, humanly speaking, have precluded the spread of Christianity. Later on, we find St. Paul going to meet persecution at Jerusalem, and the disciples agreeing to it as the will of the Lord. And the same lesson is confirmed by many other texts: 'Blessed are they which are

persecuted for righteousness sake,' 'Fear not them that kill the body,' etc. This applies especially to those who are in prominent positions. It is the bad shepherd who flies and leaves his sheep to the wolf." Here Tertullian seems to refer directly to Clement as a *fugitivus*¹ in the words "sic enim voluit quidam, sed et ipse fugitivus, argumentari"; for we know (from Eus. *H.E.* vi. 3 and 11) that, on the outbreak of the persecution under Severus in 202, Clement acted on the principles he had avowed, and left Egypt for Syria, where his services to the Church are highly spoken of by the Bishop, Alexander.

Another point of disagreement is asceticism. Clement defends the moderate use of God's gifts, and praises the marriage state as giving wider experience and a larger field for the exercise of virtue, and also as carrying out the will of the Creator and following the example of some of the Apostles. On all these points his views are controverted by Tertullian. While Clement deprecates second marriage unless under special circumstances,² Tertullian condemns it altogether in the most unmeasured terms as hardly better than adultery, and "would certainly have enforced a total abstinence from marriage, if the human species could have been continued without it, as he would have prohibited eating and drinking, if the life of man could have been sustained without food."³

Turning now to the broad differences between Tertullian and Clement, in characterizing the tone of mind and thought of the former as puritan, I do not mean that he held, for instance, the same precise views as Calvin or John Knox, but that he had the same rigidity, the same determination, the same undoubting confidence in himself, the same stern condemnation of all who held different views of Christian truth. He had eminently the qualities of a good hater.

¹ See *Str.* vii. 874, 869; iii. 550, 551.

² *Str.* iii. 547 foll.

³ Kaye's *Tert.* p. 198.

For moderate Christians he had no mercy. The follower of Christ must give up all for Him. He must literally renounce the world and all that is in the world, its pleasures, its comforts, its honours, its ideas, its wisdom, even its virtues. All these belonged to the Evil One. Towards the end of his life he became so dissatisfied with the lukewarm spirit of the Catholics, whom he stigmatized as "psychical," that he joined the enthusiastic sect of the Montanists, whom he distinguishes as "spiritual," and accepted the visions and prophecies of the haeresiarch and his followers as being an actual revelation from the Paraclete, so that he even quotes their utterances as authoritative, both in practice, as in regard to the lawfulness of second marriages, and in doctrine, as in regard to the corporeity of the soul.¹

Tertullian's attitude towards Greek learning and science is seen in the *De Praescriptionibus*, c. 7, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? the Academy with the Church?" (*Ib.* 14), "Let curiosity yield to faith. There is no truth outside the Church, no error in the Church. What is novel is false. Doctrines and practices are not to be introduced at the fancy of individuals." It is strange that one who put Church authority so high, should afterwards desert the Catholic Church and claim the right of private judgement to join a body condemned by the Bishop of Rome, declaring that the dictum of three spiritual men was of more weight than that of all the psychical bishops.

One point on which Tertullian laid great stress was discipline, as to which he seems to have quite lost sight of the principles laid down in the parable of the tares and wheat, and to have done his best to quench smoking flax. In his writings we first find a list of seven mortal sins, as distinguished from venial. He held that one who had committed mortal sin by denying the faith in time of persecution, could not again be restored to the Church, but must be left to the

¹ *De Anima*, 9; *De Monog.* 1, 14.

judgement of God. He condemns in the strongest terms the laxity of the Bishop of Rome, who granted absolution to those who had been guilty of fornication, and afterwards repented. It is vain to argue that the Lord does not desire the death of a sinner, for that is spoken of one who has not been baptized. The puritan objection, answered by Hooker, to practices which are not ordained in Scripture, is set forth in two sentences of Tertullian, "Prohibetur quod non ultro permissum est" (*De corona*, 2); "Negat Scriptura quod non notat" (*Monogamia*, c. 4). The contrast between their own methods and those of the Catholics is expressed in the words, "What you call perversity, I call reason; what you call cruelty, I call kindness" (*Scorpiace*, 5).

I will close this part of my subject with the famous sketch of future judgement which winds up the treatise on the Spectacles of the amphitheatre. "If you love spectacles, look forward to the greatest of all spectacles, the final judgement of the universe. How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs and fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord melting in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many famous poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians now singing of their own sufferings." "This spectacle, this triumph, far transcending those of any earthly amphitheatre, is already assured to us by faith, without the leave of consul or praetor or high-priest."

I think what has been said represents fairly the general tone and drift of Tertullian's writings, though passages may no doubt be found which are hardly consistent with it, as especially in the beautiful treatise on the Testimony of the Soul. While Tertullian thus narrows within the strictest

limits the operation and influence of the Divine Spirit, and sees nothing here but a world lying in wickedness by the side of a lukewarm Church and a little flock of the spiritual; while he looks forward to a future, lurid with the flames of Divine vengeance, to be for ever exacted from the unrepentant mass of humanity, Clement on the other hand beholds God, everywhere and at all times, as the all-loving Father and Teacher of mankind, training them, often by severe discipline carried on, both in this world and the next, for eventual perfection. Faith, hope, and love are alike conspicuous in Clement, but the two latter graces have small place in the gloomy soul of Tertullian.

JOSEPH B. MAYOR.

(To be concluded.)

BARNABAS AND HIS GENUINE EPISTLE.

THE last few years have seen excellent work on the Epistle to the Hebrews, the great anonymous hortatory letter of the New Testament. But we have hardly reached anything like agreement on the subject. It remains wrapped in much mystery, like the Apocalypse of John. And largely for a similar reason, our failure to imagine a completely convincing historical situation to which the argument may be seen to be truly relevant. But the materials for such a fresh interpretation have been steadily accumulating, though the first effect of a perception of some hitherto neglected aspects of the situation implied has been to send certain scholars off on a wrong scent and lead to reactionary theories. Such is the theory that the Epistle was not addressed to Jewish Christians, but to certain believers in danger of apostasy from religion altogether; also the view, springing largely from the same minimizing of the working of old Judaic influences upon