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Early Christian witnesses,  
or, Testimonies of the





EARLY CHRISTIAN WITNESSES.

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# EARLY CHRISTIAN WITNESSES;

OR

TESTIMONIES OF THE FIRST CENTURIES TO  
THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

JAMES FLEMING, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIAN SUNSETS," ETC.

LONDON:

C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1878.

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## PREFACE.

MY object in the following papers is to give the reader some idea of men who are frequently referred to by writers and speakers on the claims of Christianity. The references often fail of force, from the want of all knowledge of those to whom they are made. That knowledge I have endeavoured to furnish in the accompanying sketches. How far I have succeeded will be best judged of by those for whom the book is intended; but I have aimed at so presenting the men, in the circumstances they occupied, the educational advantages they enjoyed, the opportunities they had for getting the information they sought, and the character

they exemplified, as to show that they possessed peculiar qualifications for giving the testimony they bore, and are fully entitled to be regarded as trust-worthy witnesses.

Though anxious to meet the cases of those who desire such knowledge as is here given, but who, in these days of over-taxed brain and limb, have no time to master folio volumes, I have yet confined myself to examples only of early Christian writers, and to the more prominent traits of their characters and events of their lives.

My obligations for help in the preparation of the work are due to Drs Lardner, Stanley, De Pressensé, Newman, Donaldson, Scrivener, and Kennedy; also to Canon Westcott, Neander, Mosheim, Milner, Isaac Taylor, and Alford; and further to Messrs Clark's Edition of the Anti-Nicene Fathers, and the Dictionary of Christian Biography.

May He who has continued His Word amid

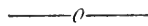
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all the efforts which men have, from age to age, used to destroy it, and made it the means of light and life to as many as have believed its records and trusted in the Saviour it reveals, graciously use this small fruit of Christian labour, to keep in the faith, and strengthen the belief of some who specially need such help!

KENTISH TOWN, 1878.



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## INTRODUCTION.

THERE have always been men who have held the Christian writers of the first centuries of little account, and their testimony to the genuineness of the Gospels of no importance. Others have taken an opposite view of them, and of the value attaching to their productions. The truth lies, no doubt, between these extremes.

Few will go so far as to say, that those who followed the Apostles and Evangelists in the ministry of the Word, made any approach to them in moral and intellectual stature. One has only to compare the writings of the two to see how immensely superior the authors of the New Testament were to those who suc-

ceeded them as the teachers and pastors of the Church.

Yet humble as were generally the Christian Fathers of the first two hundred years in education and birth, "It may be doubted whether the Church has ever since possessed a more faithful, or a more successful band of spiritual labourers. They loved the Gospel with an intense ardour of soul, toiled day and night to extend the knowledge of it among men, and in not a few instances gave their lives in testimony to the truth of it. Whether in action or in endurance, they sustained nobly the credit of the Christian name, and showed that a new power was let down upon the world, which did not depend on individual men, or demand the possession of splendid gifts as the condition of its exercise. In Clement's epistle to the Corinthians, Pliny's letter to Trajan, and other documents relating to this period, the glimpses which are given us of the state of the



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Church, reflect the highest honour on those simple pastors to whose guidance its interests were committed, and by whose ministry its members were trained."

Looked at from amid the clearer light and higher advantages of modern times, much may appear in their teachings and practices, even to their greatest admirers, to be regretted, but they testified to many things which it is important to know, and which afford evidence of the truth of the New Testament.

#### I.—THE EARLY SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

The first propagators of the Gospel were not only unlettered and obscure persons, but men who had arrayed against them the united power of secular authority and religious intolerance. Yet they went on with the rehearsal of their simple and divine message, and saw people in every city and land they visited

welcoming their announcement, and associating themselves with them as the subjects and worshippers of the Son of God. Many years accordingly did not elapse before myriads were found acknowledging the claims of Christ, truth occupying the throne which error had long held, and the symbol of salvation adorning the capitol of the world's metropolis.

But such triumphs on the part of a religion opposed to all the natural likings of men, dependent on such advocates as it had for propagation, and with such tremendous odds against it, have ever been regarded as evidence of its divinity and truth.

But the question will be asked, as it often has been, where is the proof that such diffusion existed? It is furnished by the pages of the writers here referred to. There was no land as they assure us, to which the Gospel was not carried, and where its conquests were not numerous and permanent.

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*Justin Martyr* speaks of Christianity as triumphing *among all nations*; *Irenæus* refers to Churches in *Germany, Spain, Gaul*, and the *far East*, all marked for the same faith and customs; *Hegesippus* records that *wherever he went* in his extended travels *he found believers* in the Lord Jesus Christ; *Tertullian* says that it was a matter of lamentation that *every sex and age*, and *condition*, and *rank* were passing over to the Christians, who were forming the *majority of every state*. The words of *Origen*, as given by Professor Blunt are, “that though at the first the kings of the day and the chief officers under them, the magistrates and all who were in any post of authority, the governors of cities, the military, and the population generally resisted the dispersion of the Gospel over the world, it still prevailed, for it could not be hindered, being the Word of God, and stronger than all its antagonists; so that it took possession of the whole of Greece, and the

greater part of the world of the barbarians, and converted myriads of souls to the Christian form of worship . . . And if we consider how, in a *very few years*, whilst those who confessed Christianity were plotted against, and in many instances were slain for it; how others were spoiled of their property, and the teachers of it were few, that the Word yet found means to be proclaimed *everywhere throughout the world*, so that Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish were added to the religion of Jesus, we cannot hesitate to affirm that the thing was above what was of men." The conclusion of the learned Father has generally been accepted,—that the early and wide-spread triumphs of the Gospel over ignorance, and prejudice, and opposition, was an evidence of its truthfulness and power. It was of God, and could not be suppressed or arrested in its progress.

## II.—THE RECIPIENTS OF THE GOSPEL.

That down to the middle of the second century the Church was unable to boast of one really learned adherent may be undeniable. "But from the beginning of the third century down to the middle of the fifth, group after group of bright 'morning stars' came forth in rapid succession, heralded by Origen in the East, and by Tertullian and Cyprian in the West, until the whole breadth of the ecclesiastical horizon was crowned with these burning and shining lights,—Eusebius, Hilary, Athanasius, Basil, the three Gregories, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine,—and such is but a selection from the roll of the great names which grace the annals of this period."

It was not, therefore, by men, as has often been alleged, who had no power of forming a correct judgment, and were easily persuaded to

change their belief, that the Gospel was at first received. Among them, as the early Christian writers assure us, were not a few who had passed years in the pursuit of knowledge, and were familiar with all that the highest schools of philosophy and learning taught, and who were, therefore, competent to weigh evidence, and reach intelligent conclusions on what was submitted to their judgment. "Justin Martyr, for instance, had been under the teachers of almost every existing school of philosophy, and found, as he tells us, satisfaction in none; nor could he rest, till directed to the writings of the prophets, he discovered in them a footing-place on which he could stand. Tertullian went through a like process. He too, after examining the creeds of the various sects of the heathens, and meeting with disappointment in all, at length fell in with the Scriptures, and felt that then he had arrived at the truth he had long been in search of." But these are only

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samples of many others, equally learned and discriminating, who accepted the Scriptures as the Word of God, and became the disseminators and defenders of Christianity. Such men are strong and reliable links in the chain of the Christian evidences.

### III.—THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE.

How do I know that the books that compose the Bible were written by the men to whom they are attributed, and at the dates assigned to them? The question is a vital one, but the Christian writers of the first centuries largely supply the answer by their references to the books, and their quotations from them. In the case of the New Testament, it has come down to us in early translations that were made of it into the Syriac, Coptic, and Latin languages, and in multitudes of passages from it, found in the earliest ecclesiastical productions that have been preserved.

Though the oldest existing Greek manuscripts of the New Testament do not go higher than the fourth century, the interval between that and the times of the Apostles is not difficult to bridge over, as has been successfully shown by Isaac Taylor and Dr Scrivener. "The condition of the inspired text," says the latter of these authors, "during the first three centuries can be readily ascertained, not indeed in complete detail, as manuscripts would have enabled us to do, but to an extent amply sufficient for all practical ends, quite enough to assure us of their general integrity, and of the reverence in which they were held in the first ages of the faith:—and these are primitive versions of their text, and quotations made from them by ecclesiastical writers whose productions yet remain with us."

The references made to the Scriptures of the New Testament, all through the second



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century, by the Christian writers of that period—by Polycarp, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Rome, and others—prove to demonstration that the said Scriptures were then in existence, and in wide circulation. But not only were the Gospels largely quoted from, during the second century, but also as the productions of the men whose names they bear. The argument here need not be extended. Still, such early and multiplied testimony to the verity of Scripture is, especially in these days of questioning and wide-spread doubt, of the highest importance, and cannot be too widely known.

#### IV.—THE CHRIST OF THE FATHERS.

He was emphatically the Christ of the Apostles and Evangelists. They accordingly speak of Him as the Son of God, who, in the fulness of time, assumed the form of a man and

took the place of a servant ; stooped to the deepest humiliation for men's sake ; discharged the sinner's liability to law and justice ; died, the just for the unjust ; rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, sways the Sceptre of universal dominion, and will come again to take the place of the Judge, and give to every man according to his deeds. Proof of these doctrines, as those of the Early Church, will be found on the following pages. No, those who hold unitarian and rationalistic views of the person and work of our Lord have no support for them in the writings of the men forming the subjects of the accompanying biographical sketches. They were other than the hands of the early advocates of Christianity who sought to tear from the brow of Jesus the crown with which Apostles had adorned it. But the attempt then, as now, was in vain. God has set Him on His holy hill of Zion, and

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only a stronger than He can depose Him from His elevation. Oh no, Christ Jesus, our Lord, is not to be deprived of His honour, and stripped of His power. All, therefore, that He has been to His people in deliverance and grace in the past, He is to them in the present, and will be in the future. The Father has made Him "Heir of all things; set Him at His own right hand in the heavens, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church."

Then there is nothing, dear reader, which Christ has not for your enjoyment. Possessed of the fulness of the Godhead bodily, you have no need that he cannot supply,—no weakness that He cannot strengthen,—no defilement that He cannot cleanse,—no poverty that He cannot enrich, and no emptiness that He cannot fill.

These men, like their predecessors, went everywhere preaching the Word, and testifying to the grace of God, and many who heard them believed,—the Lord adding to the Church daily such as were saved.

But witnessing to Jesus and the Resurrection, they were emphatically evangelical and Scriptural in the course of instruction they pursued. As their writings abundantly testify, “they built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone:” their Gospel was that of our New Testament.

S Y M E O N.

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“ I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”—2 TIM. i. 12.

## SYMEON.

THERE are men who are proud of their relationships and birth. Descended from an ancestry that numbers among its members those of distinguished excellence and worth, by whom important services have been rendered to their country and race, and who have walked the highest paths of literature and philanthropy, they never tire of pointing to their pedigree, and reminding those around them of the name which they bear, or of the blood that flows in their veins. Symeon sustained higher relationships than these. He belonged to the family circle of Jesus, was the son of Cleopas the brother-in-law of Mary, and, therefore, a first cousin of our Lord. He succeeded James

the Just as bishop or chief pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, about thirty years after the crucifixion. His qualification for such a position was amply justified by his personal acquaintance with Christ, the devotion he had shown to His service, and the Christian consistency of life he had long maintained.

As the families of Joseph and Cleopas were closely connected, and held each other in affectionate respect, they were often together, and the cousins had every opportunity of thoroughly knowing one another. During such seasons of intercourse, Symeon received impressions of Jesus, which, as may well be believed, had not a little to do with his after acceptance of His Messiahship. He had, no doubt, stories to tell of Christ, and testimonies to bear to the beauty of his character, and His far-reaching knowledge and power, which few others possessed.

At what particular time, in the ministry of



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the Saviour, Symeon openly and fully acknowledged His claims we are not told. The probability however is, that it was at an early period, and that he was one of the Seventy who were sent forth to preach and heal, and to prepare the way of the Lord among men. "It may reasonably be supposed that, intending Symeon to occupy a conspicuous and difficult position in His Church, Christ would supply him with the opportunity of gaining a practical acquaintance with its duties, and thus also notify to those around him the esteem in which He held him.

"Since the kinsmen of Christ were held in honour after His ascension, Symeon was probably called upon to assist at the Council at Jerusalem, and then entrusted with the care of one of the Congregations into which the numerous Christian community there was divided."

It was not long before he was advanced to a higher and much more responsible position.

In one of the popular and furious outbreaks of the Jews against the disciples of Christ—so common in those times—James, the then Bishop of Jerusalem, was put to a violent death. Symeon was chosen as his successor. The circumstances of the times made it no easy thing to maintain the honour of such a position and successfully discharge its duties. A cruel and extended persecution of Christian believers was raging at the time in Palestine, while the armies of Rome were razing city after city of the land to their foundations, and spreading desolation far and wide. Jerusalem, in fulfilment of Christ's prediction, was now besieged, and unparalleled misery afflicted its crowded multitudes, gathered from all parts to celebrate the Passover. They were torn and wasted by mutual animosities and conflicts, and destroyed by the assaults and missiles of the encompassing foe. Their wretchedness exceeded all that words can express. "Then," said Christ, when

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pointing forward to such a moment in the history of the people, "shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time ; no, nor ever shall be."

The city was pillaged and sacked by its own sons ; that which one faction spared, fell into the hands of another, and the contending parties agreed only in crime. "Such was the terror among the people," says Josephus, "that no one dared to mourn for their dead or bury them. Tears must flow in secret, and groans be stifled, for such tokens of lamentation were visited by death. A little earth was hastily thrown over the corpses by night. . . . O wretched city, what cause of reproach hast thou against the Romans, who have but purged thee from thine abominations ! Thou wast no more the city of God, and thou could'st never again be such, since thou wast become the tomb of thy slaughtered children."

But where, meantime, were Symeon and the

Christian people who constituted the Church over which he presided ?

The course prescribed by Christ for His servants, at such a time, was in these words ; “ Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains ; and let them which are in the midst of the city depart out ; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled,” adding, “ There shall not an hair of your head perish.”

At an early period of the siege, a pause in the military operations taking place, and affording an opportunity for escape, Symeon and his fellow Christians left the city, and sought and found a home in Pella, a town in the mountainous country east of the Jordan. How long they remained there is not related. The probability is that the opportunity of returning was no sooner afforded them than they embraced it. But what a scene must have

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presented itself to them when they reached the spot on Olivet, at which men had so often paused, and wondered, and admired! Instead of the Temple standing as a mountain of snow on Moriah, the palaces which crowned the heights of Zion, the market places and squares which thousands daily thronged, busy streets and varied industries, they saw blackened ruins, universal desolation, and here and there a wailing form. What their emotions at the moment were, we are not informed, but the very dust of the city was dear to them, and they passed on, and pitched their tents amid the desolations. Their condition was sad enough, but their numbers increased, and with the Temple no longer to worship in, nor an altar upon which to lay offerings, their hold of Judaism relaxed, and they became more truly a Christian community, and better prepared for the fulfilment of the Saviour's purposes in regard to them.

A new city at length arose on the ruins of that which had been destroyed, and for a while Symeon and his people were allowed to worship in peace. But days of trouble soon overtook them, brought on by the attempt of the Jews to throw off the yoke of Rome, and resume their independence. Those who excited and led such rebellions encouraged their countrymen in them by the promise of the coming of the Son of David to lead them to victory and freedom.

As one of the means of checking or preventing such outbreaks, the Romans resolved to seek out and put to death all who claimed connexion with the family of Jesse. Symeon was accused of such relationship, and was in consequence apprehended, and dragged before the tribunal appointed for the trial of such cases. Refusing to desist from the course he pursued, and give up his faith in Christ, he was subjected, though one hundred and twenty years old, and very

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feeble, to the severest tortures. But neither his faith nor his courage failed him under the ordeal. Day by day, amid intolerable sufferings and under the eyes of many onlookers, he testified to the claims of his Divine Master and Lord, preached the Gospel he believed, and showed that faith is above circumstances, and that the supports and comforts found in the presence and approval of Christ are not to be destroyed by any indignities and cruelties to which men may expose. Unable to draw from him anything to incriminate, or to move him from the confidence he maintained, his enemies nailed him to a cross, and thus, as they imagined, destroyed the testimony he had borne. But they sadly miscalculated. The evidence he had given in torture and death of the power of the Gospel to support, in any circumstances, its disciples, continued to be remembered, and to favourably dispose men's minds towards Christianity. The very means

which his persecutors employed to destroy his influence only deepened and extended it.

And has it not always been so? "The blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the Church." As was the case with the people of Israel in Egypt, so with Christianity, the more it has been hated and opposed, the more it has grown in the earth. What is of God is not to be extinguished. What His hand sets up and maintains is not to be put down by any power of man.

But not only did Symeon bear a testimony that survives until the present hour, but a testimony, clear and full, to the Messiahship of Christ, the atoning sacrifice of His death, His resurrection from the dead and mediatorial reign; the truthfulness of the gospels, and of the facts and doctrines of the Evangelical faith.

And what man had ever better opportunity of forming a correct judgment of such facts and doctrines? He not only passed the years



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of his public life on the very ground where the great events which the pages of the New Testament narrate occurred, but was personally acquainted with the Lord Jesus, and, at least, with the chief of the apostles. He therefore spoke of that which he knew, and testified to what he had heard and seen, and too high an estimate cannot be put upon his testimony.



IGNATIUS.

“From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”—2 TIM. iii. 15.

## IGNATIUS.

TRADITION says, that Ignatius was the little child whom Jesus employed on a memorable occasion to rebuke the ambitious spirit displayed by His disciples. Placing him in their midst He said unto them, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me; but whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Whether or no, reliance is to be placed on the

“tradition,” this much, is, at least, certain, that Ignatius was a disciple of the Apostle John, passed the years of his boyhood with those who had seen and heard the Lord, and at an early period of life yielded himself to Christ. He may have been pious from even childhood. Multitudes are. The lambs of the flock of “the Good Shepherd” constitute a large proportion of His redeemed ones. And it is His joy that they do so. The love of any heart is grateful to Him, but that of little children is especially so. He carries the lambs in His bosom. They lie very near to His heart, and have much of His attention and regard. Not a little, therefore, of the time and energy of winners of souls ought to be given to the salvation of the young. You never more honour and please the Lord than by bringing to Him such. Nowhere, moreover, is Christian labour so productive as in this field of service. The harvests gathered from among the old are limited and poor. Few are con-

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verted after *twenty-five years of age*. Then with what prayerful earnestness ought decision for Christ, with those under that age, to be sought? If really bent on the fulfilment of the purpose which they profess to seek, and wise in its pursuit, ministers and teachers will specially aim at this object.

Though we have no account of the ancestry and country of Ignatius' birth, the probability is, that he was a native of the lake region of Galilee, and continued in attendance on S. John, as Timothy did on S. Paul, until such time as he was prepared to enter on a life of public usefulness.

Possessed of more than ordinary talents and qualifications for teaching and governing, he was appointed to the office of bishop or chief pastor of the Church at Antioch, in Syria. Here he laboured for half a century with zeal and success. The position was one of difficulty and responsibility, but he fulfilled the duties of it with

growing efficiency, and exerted an influence for good which extended far beyond the city where he resided.

Antioch was founded three hundred years before Christ by Seleucus, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, called by the name of his father and son, and constituted the capital of his vast dominion. Situated in the fruitful and beautiful valley of the Orontes, with the Taurian range of mountains as a back-ground on the north, and the Lebanon-ridge as its shelter on the east, "there was everything in its situation and circumstances to make it a place of concourse for all classes and kinds of people. By its harbour of Seleucia it was in communication with all the trade of the Mediterranean; and, through the open country behind the Lebanon, was conveniently approached by the caravans from Mesopotamia and Arabia. It united the inland advantages of Aleppo with the maritime opportunities of Smyrna. It was almost



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an oriental Rome, in which all the forms of the civilized life of the Empire found some representation. Through the first two centuries of the Christian era, it was what Constantinople became afterwards, 'the Gate of the East.'" It thus soon became a place of magnificence and splendour. "Its special beauty was a great wide street four miles long, and on each side adorned with colonnades of pillars, beautiful in themselves and supporting roofs that gave shelter from the noon-day sun. Under the Romans it became more magnificent than ever, and was considered as the third city of the Empire—Rome itself, and Seleucia on the Tigris, being its only superiors in wealth, splendour, and population. Beautiful gardens bordered the river, and the delicious breezes from the mountains and the sea made it a favourite resort of the Romans, who regarded the station there as the most 'delightful that could be assigned to officer or soldier.'"

Many years did not elapse from the first preaching of the Gospel to its inhabitants till a large Christian community was gathered within its walls. The hand of the Lord was with the earlier heralds of salvation there, and *a great number believed*, and turned unto the Lord. The news of this reaching Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to aid in the work so encouragingly begun, and again *much people were added to the Lord*.

A field so productive and inviting drew to itself many labourers, among whom were "prophets and teachers," "Simeon surnamed Niger," "Lucius of Cyrene," "Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch," and the apostles Paul and Peter. From the ministry of such men much was to be expected, and much accrued. The Church at Antioch became a great power for good, and the mother church of the Christian communities of many lands.

Whilst persecution under the cruel edicts of Nero, Decius and Diocletian was thinning the

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ranks of believers in many quarters, and arresting the progress of evangelistic efforts in all directions, the Christians at Antioch appear to have lived and worshipped in peace for many years. The opportunities for usefulness which such a time of quiet afforded, were, no doubt, fully availed of by Ignatius. Fired as he was with love to the Saviour, and impressed with men's need of the Gospel as God's remedy for their woes, he would spend the energy he was at liberty to employ in proclaiming salvation to men, and in seeking to lead the perishing to Jesus. And large success, as is evident from the charges ultimately brought against him by the enemies of Christianity, and the eagerness with which they sought to put an end to his existence and influence, attended his labours.

The Emperor Trajan on his way to the East to engage in war with the Parthians, halted with his legions at Antioch. During his stay

there an earthquake shook the city to its foundations. Houses, palaces, temples and theatres were thrown to the ground, and many of the inhabitants perished. The Consul died of the injuries he received, and the Emperor himself barely escaped with his life. The catastrophe was laid at the door of the Christians, and Ignatius, as the leading spirit among them and the most active propagator of the new faith, was apprehended and led before the Emperor. Trajan condemned him to death,—ordering him to be taken to Rome, and cast to the wild beasts. Ignatius' reply to the sentence was, "I thank Thee, O Lord, who hast condescended thus to honour me with Thy love, and thought me worthy as Thine Apostle Paul, to go to Rome in chains."

It was with a sorrowful heart and many expressions of grief and regret that his people witnessed his departure, at his advanced age of eighty, from Antioch. But he himself was

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calm and even joyous. He knew in whom was his confidence, and what awaited him at the end of the journey he was commencing, and he began it with a firm step, and the feeling of one who longed to see his Lord.

The vessel in which he sailed halting at Smyrna, he had the privilege of spending some days, if not weeks, in the company of Polycarp, and other Christians, who gathered around him, and in writing the letters which are now known to be genuine, and in which we have not only the expression of his feelings at the moment, but his testimony to the truth of Christianity, and the power of the Gospel he had so long proclaimed.

Speaking of what he endured in his journey from Antioch to Rome, and especially at the hands of those who were charged with his safe delivery to the Governor of the latter city, he says : " And now, in my chains, I learn that I have nothing more to desire. I have already begun to fight with wild beasts ; from Smyrna

to Rome, across sea and land, I was chained to ten leopards whom kindness rendered only more cruel. Their outrages make me only the more the disciple of Him who was crucified; but it is not this which justifies me." "Words thus written," says Dr De Pressensé, "are the sacred testimony of martyrdom. His three epistles, in their genuine form, are the farewells of a Christian hero. They have that terse conciseness which belongs to the language of action. It is clear they were written in haste, by a man who desired to put all his Christianity into the few words hurriedly penned, in moments when the vigilance of the fierce gaolers was relaxed. A strange fire flashes from those broken words as from fretted flints."

The language he employs in his three letters which were addressed to Polycarp, and to the Churches at Ephesus and Rome, is expressive not only of ardent Christian love, and earnest desire for the highest good of those to whom

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he writes, but of full and intelligent faith in the character and mission of Christ, and in the truth of the gospels which reveal Him. What he believed, and at last entered Rome to die in testimony for, was what he had so long and fully taught, that Jesus is the Messiah, and men's only hope for eternity; that He died for men's sins according to the Scriptures, and rose again for their justification; that He fills heaven and earth with His presence, and dwells as their life and strength in the hearts of all who believe. He was emphatically the disciple both of S. John and S. Paul, in the faith that he exercised and the spirit that he evinced.

Arriving in Rome, towards the end of the public games held at the close of the year, he was hurried to the Amphitheatre, where the wild beasts, let loose upon him, soon did their work,—leaving nothing of him but a few of his larger bones. These his friends

reverently gathered together and sent to Antioch where they were buried.

Such was Ignatius in character, and position in the Church ; and such the testimony he bore to the verity of the Scriptures and the doctrines he taught.



P O L Y C A R P .

“We went through fire and through water ; but Thou  
broughtest us out into a wealthy place.”—Ps. lxxvi. 12.

## POLYCARP.

SMYRNA, where Polycarp passed his days, and where, for a long period of years, he exercised his ministry as a Christian pastor, was in his times an important and flourishing city, and continues to be so still. Standing at the head of the gulf of the same name, and possessed of a fine harbour, it commanded the trade of proconsular Asia and of the Ægean Sea. Situated in the midst of a fertile region, enclosed on three sides by mountains, and with the sea in front, it was declared to be the most beautiful city of all Asia, and possessed greater attractions than most towns as a place of residence.

As it exists, at present, it is one of the largest and finest cities of the Turkish Empire, is said

to be better built than Constantinople itself, and to be ever undergoing improvements.

That the Gospel was preached at an early period to its inhabitants, and with wide-spread success, may be concluded from the Church there being one of the seven addressed by the risen Lord through the Apostle John, as recorded in the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse.

Polycarp was a native of the city, and after his conversion was, for some time, employed by the then bishop of the place as a Catechist and Evangelist. Whilst thus engaged he became acquainted with the apostle John, and had the privilege of receiving from him much instruction and encouragement in his work. Finding him an apt scholar, and likely to do good service to the Church, it was the delight of the beloved disciple to make him familiar with the doctrines of Christ, and the facts of His life. Referring to this period of Polycarp's

life, Irenæus who was his disciple writes thus to a friend,—“I could point out the spot where the blessed Polycarp sat to teach. I could describe his gait, his countenance, all his habits, even the clothes he was accustomed to wear. I could repeat the discourses which he delivered to the people, and recall all that he said of his intimacy with S. John, and the narratives he used to relate about those who had seen the Lord upon earth. His memory was constantly dwelling on that which they had told him of the words, the miracles, the doctrines of Christ.” “This valuable testimony,” adds De Pressensé, “shows how eminently qualified Polycarp was for effecting the transition from the Apostolic to the following age. He delighted to be the docile, almost passive, echo of the apostles. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should not have displayed much originality, though commanding universal respect. He was the living tradition of the Church. His letter to

the Philippians is quite in harmony with the idea Irenæus gives us of him. He appeals perpetually to the memory of the apostles, and as he is addressing a Church founded by S. Paul he invokes especially the name of the apostle of the Gentiles."

On the death of Bucolas, Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp was chosen to be his successor, and, for a long period of years, discharged with faithfulness and zeal the duties of the important pastorate. But his labours were not confined to Smyrna. "The care of all the Churches, once borne by S. Paul, and then by S. John, was, on the death of Ignatius, bestowed upon Polycarp; and he wrote letters to them, as need served, of which one only, that to the Church at Philippi, is extant."

God often raises men from the lowest social position to occupy places among the princes of His kingdom. If tradition speaks truthfully,

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Polycarp was born not only of parents of the humblest circumstances of life, but was himself in early life a *slave*. Led by the pious lady in whose service he was, to understand and believe the Gospel, he rose under its transforming and elevating power from the condition in which it found him to occupy the position he so long and honourably filled as chief pastor of the Church at Smyrna. "He puts the treasure into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power thereof may be of God and not of men."

The truths to which he bore testimony, both as catechist and bishop, were those he had learned from the lips of the apostle, on which he daily meditated and lived, and which he felt to be the very life and nourishment of the soul.

These truths may be summarized thus:—He spoke of *God*, as Almighty, Omniscient, and the Author of Salvation; as raising Christ from the dead, and, finally, all men from their graves

to receive in reward or punishment as they severally deserve,—Of *Christ*, as the Son of the Father, the Saviour of sinners, and the Judge of the quick and the dead,—Of *Salvation*, as deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, provided by God in Christ, and realized by faith,—Of the *Scriptures*, as true, and able to make men wise unto salvation.

He thus testified to all that is essential to Christianity, and thereby to the verity of the Word of God from which he frequently quotes.

I adduce him, therefore, as a witness to the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospel, and a witness, on whose testimony, from the honesty of his convictions, the school in which he had been taught, and the earliness of the age at which he lived, every reliance may be placed.

After fulfilling for many years, and to the benefit of multitudes, the ministry he had



received of the Lord Jesus, he sealed with his blood the testimony he had borne.

In the midst of a furious and popular outbreak, both of Gentiles and of Jews, against the disciples of Christ, as the cause, as it was alleged, of the calamities afflicting the state, Polycarp was apprehended, charged with being the leader of the hated community, and condemned to be burnt. But the stake had no fear for him. He believed that He whom he had served eighty and six years, and whom nothing could lead him to deny, would be with him in the fire, as He was with the three Hebrew youths, and enable him to glorify Him in death as he had done in life. Nor was he disappointed in this. Jesus was never so consciously with him as during his last earthly moments. He therefore ascended the pile, aged and infirm as he was, as a prince the steps of his throne, and found the flames a chariot to waft him to the skies. Yes, Jesus can make

not only "dying beds feel soft to His servants as downy pillows are," but even burning fagots and seven-times heated furnaces. Hence the frequency with which He has made their prison cells to be to them mansions of bliss, their scaffolds of martyrdom scenes of triumph, and their hours of torture times of coronation.

So it was with Polycarp. As soon as his executioners set light to the pile, on which he stood, he "broke forth with a loud voice of thanksgiving, with almost the same opening that is found in a Eucharistic hymn in the oldest records of the worship of the Eastern Church, and in substance, as well as words, much resembling our highest act of praise at the Holy Communion. Those Christians whom their venerable bishop had led to sing it at their holiest moments for so many years, and who would naturally have sung it with him on the next day at their Easter Communion, must

have thrilled with rapture, as well as grief, when they heard his voice thus uplifted :—

“Lord God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy blessed and beloved Son, through whom we have received the grace of knowing Thee, God of angels and powers, God of all things created, and of the just who live in Thy presence, I bless Thee for having brought me to this hour that I may be among Thy martyrs and drink of the cup of my Lord Jesus Christ, to rise to eternal life in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost. Receive me this day into Thy presence together with them, being found in Thy sight as a fair and acceptable sacrifice prepared for Thyself, that so Thou mayst accomplish what Thou, O true and faithful God, hast foreshown. Wherefore I praise Thee for all Thy mercies, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thyself, and to the Holy

Ghost, be glory both now and for ever. Amen." Thus passed Polycarp to the reward of his faithfulness, and the crown of his martyr's love.

CLEMENT OF ROME.

“For I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.”—ROM. i. 15.

## CLEMENT OF ROME.

BY whom the Church at Rome was founded is not related. It is possible, and even probable, that the first preachers of the Gospel in the city of the Cæsars were some of those “strangers from Rome” who were witnesses and partakers of the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost, and who learnt from S. Peter, and others of the apostles, the story of the life and death of the Lord Jesus.

It is at all events certain that it was not founded by an apostle; “for in that case,” as Dean Alford observes, “the fact of S. Paul addressing it by letter and expressing his intention of visiting it personally, would be inconsistent with his own declared resolution of not

working where another had previously laid the foundation.”

But whilst the introduction of the Gospel to Rome may be referred, with some degree of certainty, to some who had been hearers of S. Peter’s great Sermon, and receivers of the Baptism of Power which accompanied it, it may be concluded from the interest which S. Paul manifested in the well-being of the Roman Church that some one or more of his converts had something to do with its early growth.

Clement was its chief pastor, towards the close of the first century, and rendered it no small service by his watchfulness, instructions and influence. Little is known of his personal history beyond these facts,—that he was born and bred in pagan idolatry ; was converted in early manhood to the faith of Christianity ; was as celebrated for his learning as afterwards for his piety, and was held in the highest esteem by all who personally knew him. It was from



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his being held in such repute ; and possessed of more than ordinary endowments that he was raised to the post that he filled, with such credit to himself and benefit to others.

It is generally believed that he possessed a personal acquaintance with some of the apostles, and received from inspired lips much that he knew of the character and mission of Jesus Christ.

The times in which he lived were such as made the fulfilment of his official duties anything but easy. During part of the period in which he sustained the pastoral relation to the Church of the Capital, one of the worst of the Roman Emperors occupied the throne. Domitian was in all respects a worthy successor of Nero. There was no form of evil of which he was not guilty, nor any description of cruelty and oppression that he did not inflict. He murdered his Christian subjects by hundreds, and drove from Rome men of learning

and virtue. With such an impersonation of corruption and tyranny on the throne, and wickedness rampant in the palace, and in all high places, no surprise can be felt at the extent to which iniquity abounded everywhere else. Rome might be a city of palaces, and the centre of worldly splendour and attraction, but was, at the same time, a sink of iniquity and hot-bed of crime. But in the midst of all Clement maintained the profession of his faith, fulfilled with zeal the duties of his vocation, and testified, with unflinching Christian courage, against the evils that prevailed.

His piety was, however, anything but of that severe and sombre cast, "which under the pretext," as has been said, "of doing honour to grace, despises nature." He was as cheerful as he was sincere, and as hopeful as he was earnest. "That which strikes us in Clement," says De Pressensé, "is his *serenity*. We feel that he himself enjoys that deep and abiding peace,

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which he urges upon others. It is impressed on every page he writes, while his thoughts flow on like a broad and quiet stream, never swelling into a full, impetuous tide. The commandments of God are, to use his own impression, inscribed in the breadth and depth of his heart. Hence the fulness of expression which he gives to them. We feel that this man has a great love for Jesus Christ, and calm as is his nature, he finds words full of loftiness and of fire when this is his theme. 'Behold,' he says, 'the way of our salvation, Christ Jesus, the High Priest of our sacrifice, the Comforter, and Strength of our weakness. Through Him we rise to sit in heavenly places. He unveils to us His face, glorious in holiness ; by Him the eyes of our heart are opened, our barren and darkened understanding expands beneath His shining into marvellous light. God has been pleased to reveal to us in Him the excellent glory of His majesty, He being so much higher

than the angels, as He hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they.'”

Clement is best known by the letter ascribed to him, and addressed by the Church of Rome to that at Corinth. “Though his name is not mentioned either in the address, or the body of the epistle, there can be no reasonable doubt about the authorship. . . The direct proofs of Clement being the writer are numerous, and were early and widely admitted.”

The object of the letter was to heal divisions that had arisen in the Corinthian Church, secure the restoration of the pastors who had been unrighteously driven from their posts, and effect the reformation or the expulsion of unruly members.

The letter was widely known and highly valued from the earliest times. It is referred to by writers of the first and second centuries, and by Polycarp, only a few years after its date.

In the course of it Clement refers to the

leading doctrines of Christianity, and is to be received, from the time at which he lived, and the character he possessed, as an important witness to their truth. He speaks of God as "the Framer and Creator of the world;" "the Lord and Father of the ages;" "the true and only God;" "the Maker of man in His own image;" and "the Pervader by His energy of all the operations of nature."—He speaks of Christ as "the Manifestation, Power, and Son of God;" as "pouring out His blood for man's salvation;" as "rising from the dead, and being in His resurrection the first fruit of them that sleep;" and as "reappearing to give to every man according to His work."—He speaks of the Spirit as poured out upon man, and as influencing and guiding the minds of the writers of Holy Writ.

But thus testifying to the principal doctrines of Scripture he testifies, at the same time, to the truth of Scripture itself, and to the fact, that

the sacred writings being then in existence and circulation were not the production of a later age.

“The kind of testimony to the New Testament which is obtained (from his writings) is,” says Canon Westcott, “beyond all suspicion of design: and, admitting the authenticity of the records, above all contradiction. The Christian Church as Clement describes it, exhibits a fusion of elements which must have existed separately at no distant period. Tradition ascribes to him expressly the task of definitely combining what was left still disunited by the Apostles; and we find that the very elements which he recognized are exactly those, without any omission or increase, which are preserved to us in the New Testament, as stamped by Apostolic authority. The other Fathers of the first age, as will be seen, represent more or less clearly, perhaps, some special form of Christian teaching; but Clement places them all side by

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side. They witness to the independent weight of parts of the Canon, he ratifies generally the claims of the whole," and so forms a strong and important link in the chain of early Christian evidence.





PAPIAS.

“Ye learned (the Gospel) of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.”—COL. i. 7.

## PAPIAS.

HIERAPOLIS, where Papias exercised his ministry at the beginning of the second century, was one of the three cities which occupied the valley of the Lycus in Phrygia, and to which S. Paul refers in his Epistle to the Colossians. It stood on the north side of the valley, facing Laodicea six miles to the south, with the river flowing between them. Colossæ stood at a distance of ten or twelve miles higher up the stream. Thus situated the inhabitants would necessarily hold much intercourse with one another, and all the more so that they were occupied with the same trade in dyed woollen goods.

“Like Laodicea, Hierapolis,” says Lightfoot,

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“was in the days of the Apostles and onward an important and growing city, though not like Laodicea holding metropolitan rank. Besides the trade in dyed wools, it had another source of wealth and prosperity peculiar to itself. The streams to which the scenery around owes its remarkable features, are endowed with valuable medicinal qualities, while at the same time they are so copious that the ancient city is described as full of self-made baths . . . . To this fashionable watering place, thus favoured by nature, seekers of pleasure and seekers of health alike were drawn.”

It was at Hierapolis that Epictetus the greatest of heathen moralists was born. Though the son of parents who occupied the very humblest position in life, and many years the slave of a master who treated him with the greatest harshness and cruelty, he yet rose to occupy the foremost place of the heathen moralists and teachers of his day. Born about

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the date of the Crucifixion, he was growing up to manhood, and unfolding his great natural powers, at the time the Gospel was first introduced into his native city. Whether he ever came into contact with the first heralds of salvation there, or with the Apostle Paul when he visited the place, we have no means of knowing. It is not improbable that he did, as there is often a marked resemblance in his language to the words of Scripture.

Of the early history of Papias little can be said. The probability is that he was a Phrygian by birth and a native of Hierapolis.

By whom he was first taught the truth of the Gospel and led to make Christ his trust is nowhere related. It might be by Epaphras, the pastor of the church at Colossæ and the earnest propagator of the Faith in all the region round, or by some zealous evangelist from Ephesus, or by Philip of Bethsaida, the early friend and fellow-townsmen of S. John, and the first

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Apostle who is recorded to have held communication with the Gentiles. Here he died and was buried ; and here after his decease lived his two virgin daughters, who survived to a very advanced age, and thus handed down to the second century the traditions of the earliest days of the Church.

But not only from the two daughters of Philip did Papias learn much that he committed to paper, but also, as he tells us, from Aristion and John the presbyter, two personal disciples of Christ. "He made it his business (so far as his pastoral and evangelistic labours would allow,) to gather traditions respecting the sayings of the Saviour and His Apostles. These he published in a work of five books entitled *An Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, using the information thus collected to illustrate the discourses, and perhaps the doings, of Christ as recorded in the Gospels."

Things are related by him, as received from

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others, which many have regarded as improbable and without warrant. But granted that it is so, and that he was not always sufficiently careful to sift the evidence for the truth of what was told him, his testimony to the truth of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, and of other books of the New Testament possesses no small value. Unless he had been a man of credibility and power, and also of soundness in the faith, he would never have been received by Polycarp as a companion, nor spoken of by Irenæus as he was, and occupied the responsible position in the Church to which he had been raised. I therefore feel justified, from the early testimonies that exist with regard to him, the place that he occupied among the Christian men of his day, his nearness to the times of the Apostles, and the pains he was at to furnish additional evidence of the truth of the gospel, to make him a link in the chain of early testimony to Christianity here given.





JUSTIN MARTYR.

‘ Unblameable in word and thought  
A man arises, God Himself hath taught,  
To prove that without Christ all gain is loss,  
All hope despair that stands not on His Cross.’

## JUSTIN MARTYR.

THE sufficiency of the Gospel for men's requirements has been proved by the victories it has won. It has triumphed in palaces as well as in cottages, and been the instrument of life and light to the learned as well as to the untaught. It is the power of God for salvation to *all* who believe it. Hence the classes from which the membership of the Church is derived. The language of S. Paul to the Corinthians may be: "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" and James may ask of those he addresses: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath

promised to them that love Him?"—Yet philosophers as well as peasants are found at the feet of Jesus, and men of learning and of no education among the most ardent of His adorers, and the most zealous of the advocates of His claims. And thus it has ever been.

We accordingly find among the early witnesses to the truth of Christianity, men of high birth and men of low birth; a Justin the philosopher and a Blandina the slave.

Justin was born at Flavia Neapolis, near the spot in Samaria where stood the ancient town of Shechem. This was at the beginning of the second century of the Christian era. He was of Greek descent, and his parents, as may be inferred from the education they gave him, and the means he had for travel on reaching manhood, were persons of easy circumstances.

The scenes amid which he passed the years of his childhood and youth were the fairest in Palestine and as fruitful as they were beautiful.

They were also rich in historic associations. It was here that Abraham pitched his tent and reared his altar when he first entered the land of Promise; that Jacob sojourned for some time on his return from Padan-aram; that Joseph had his portion and, ultimately, his grave; and that Jesus held his memorable conversation with the woman of Samaria.

“It was here also, upon the sloping sides of the neighbouring confronting hills, that the blessing and the curse were so solemnly pronounced in the days of Joshua. Six of the tribes of Israel were stationed on the sides of Gerizim and six on the sides of Ebal; while in the valley between was placed the ark of God, with the priests and Levites standing round. When all was thus arranged, and every man of Israel held in his breath in anxious suspense, the Levites in a clear loud voice uttered the curses in the name of Jehovah. At every pause, the six tribes on Ebal responded ‘Amen.’

Then the blessings were uttered with the same deep solemnity, and the six tribes on Gerizim responded to every blessing 'Amen.' It is not difficult to understand how the united voices of the band of Levites in the valley would be heard by the multitudes that lined the hills on either side, when it is remembered that the sound floated upwards amid the stillness of an assembly awed into deepest silence. The lovely valley would form a noble sanctuary, with the rocky mountains for its walls, and heaven alone for its canopy. The mind can scarcely conceive of a scene of truer sublimity than would be witnessed at the moment a covenanted nation bowed their heads before the Lord, in such circumstances, and uttered their loud Amen, alike to His promises and His threatenings."

Amid such scenes then Justin passed his earliest days, often climbing the heights of such sacred memories and visiting Jacob's well,

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sitting beneath the walls of Joseph's tomb and learning from pilgrims thither the facts which the places commemorated.

The travels referred to were made by Justin in quest of truth. Many years, however, passed before the object of his pursuit was attained. He studied system after system of philosophy but failed to gain what he sought for. His thirst remained unappeased, and the restfulness he longed to experience as remote from him as ever. Meeting at length with one who possessed what he was anxious to know, he was led by him to the study of the Scriptures, and found at the feet of Jesus what all the schools of philosophy he had entered had been unable to supply. But he did not keep to himself what now satisfied and delighted him. He went everywhere preaching the Word. Though retaining his place among the scholars of the age, and continuing the use of the philosopher's cloak, he passed his time much more in teaching

Christian truth than what had been learned by him in the School of Pythagoras or Plato. He was henceforth a witness for Jesus. But is not this what every one is intended to be who bears His name? Yet there are many such who lift no testimony for Him. Men around them, and associated with them, learn nothing of Christ from them. Nor is the absence of vocal testimony compensated for by the divine likeness they manifest in their temper and walk. They differ little, if anything, in form and speech from the men of the world about them. Is it so, dear reader, with you? Are you bearing no testimony for Him whose disciple and servant you profess to be? Then for what are you living? You are Christ's only so far as you act for Him. Hence His own words; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." But all



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who are in *real* union with Him live for Him, and represent Him. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." No, you cannot be Christ's, by the faith which worketh by love, and the indwelling of His Spirit, and not show resemblance to Him, and be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.

But Justin not only *spoke* for Christ, he *wrote* of Him. Many works proceeded from his pen. Of these, two Apologies or Defences of Christianity addressed to the Roman Emperors of his time, and a Dialogue he held with Trypho, a Jew, in which he proved from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Christ, survive. The dates of these were about the middle of the second century.

The testimony of Justin to the genuineness of the Gospels and the truth of Christianity possesses peculiar value, from the time at which

he lived, the scholarship for which he was marked, and the pains he was at by travel and intercourse with men to get to know the truth in its integrity and fulness. That testimony as given *in extenso* by Canon Westcott has been thus summarized by Dr Kennedy:—"Justin tells us that Christ was descended from Abraham through Jacob, Judah, Phares, Jesse and David—that the angel Gabriel was sent to foretell His birth to the Virgin Mary—that this was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah (vii. 14)—that Joseph was forbidden in a vision to put away his espoused wife, when he was so minded—that our Saviour's birth at Bethlehem had been foretold by Micah—that his parents went thither from Nazareth, where they dwelt, in consequence of the enrolment under Cyrenius—that as they could not find a lodging in the village they lodged in a cave close by it, where Christ was born, and laid by Mary in a manger—that while there, wise men from Arabia, guided by a star

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worshipped Him, and offered Him gold and frankincense and myrrh, and by revelation were commanded not to return to Herod, to whom they had first come—that He was called Jesus as the Saviour of His people—that by the command of God His parents fled with Him to Egypt, for fear of Herod, and remained there till Archelaus succeeded him—that Herod, being deceived by the wise men, commanded the children of Bethlehem to be put to death, so that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, who spoke of Rachel weeping for her children—that Jesus grew after the common manner of men, working as a carpenter, and so waited in obscurity thirty years, more or less, till the coming of John the Baptist.

“ He tells us, moreover, that this John, the son of Elizabeth, came preaching by the Jordan the baptism of repentance, wearing a leathern girdle and a raiment of camel’s hair, and eating only locusts and wild honey—that men supposed he

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was the Christ, to whom he answered, '*I am not the Christ, but a voice of one crying: for He that is mightier than I will soon come (ἤξῆι), whose sandals I am not worthy to bear*'—that when Jesus descended into the Jordan to be baptised by him a fire was kindled in the river, and when He came up out of the water the Holy Spirit as a dove lighted upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, saying, '*Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee*'—that immediately after His baptism the devil came to Jesus and tempted Him, bidding Him at last to worship him. He further adds that Christ Himself recognised John as the Elias who should precede Him, '*to whom men had done whatsoever they listed;*' and thus he relates how Herod put John into prison, and how the daughter of Herodias danced before the King on his birthday and pleased him, so that he promised to grant her anything she wished, and that she, by her mother's desire, asked for the head of John to

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be given her on a charger, and that so John was put to death.

“Henceforth, after speaking in general terms of the miracles of Christ, how *He healed all manner of sickness and disease*, Justin says little of the details of His life till the last great events. Then he narrates Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem from Bethphage, as a fulfilment of prophecy, the (second) cleansing of the Temple, the conspiracy against Him, the institution of the Eucharist *for the remembrance of Him*, the singing of the psalm afterwards, the agony at night on the Mount of Olives, at which three of His disciples were present; the prayer, the bloody sweat, the arrest, the flight of the Apostles, the silence before Pilate, the remand to Herod, the crucifixion, the division of Christ’s raiment by lot, the signs and words of mockery of the bystanders, the cry of sorrow, the last words of resignation, the burial on the evening of the day of the Passion, the Resurrection on

Sunday, the appearance to the Apostles and disciples, how Christ opened to them the Scriptures, the calumnies of the Jews, the commission to the Apostles, the Ascension.

“(2) It is beyond controversy that Justin *seems* to quote from our Gospels—that is, that many passages in his writings are identical or nearly identical with passages in our Gospels. For example: in his first Apology we read, (a) ‘At the same time an angel was sent to the same virgin, saying, Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb by the Holy Ghost, and thou shalt bring forth a son, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest. And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins, as they have taught who have written the history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ. And we believe them.’ (Matt. i. 20, 21; comp. Luke i. 31.) (b) In his Dialogue—‘And it is written in the Gospel that He said: All things are delivered to Me of the Father. And no man

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knoweth the Father, but the Son: neither the Son save the Father and they to whom the Son will reveal Him.' (Matt. xi. 27.) (c) 'And the Virgin Mary, having been filled with faith and joy when the angel Gabriel brought her good tidings, that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and therefore that holy thing born of her should be the Son of God, answered, Be it unto me according to thy word.' (Luke i. 35, 38.) (d) Speaking of John the Baptist, 'They suspected him to be the Christ: to whom he said, I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying: there will come One mightier than me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to bear.' (John i. 20, 23, 27; comp. Matt. iii. 11, Luke iii. 16.)

“(3) It is beyond controversy that Justin does quote from some written Gospels, or appeals to them as the source of his information. Thus speaking of the Lord's Supper, he says, 'For

the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered it, that Jesus commanded them to take bread, and give thanks.' (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 26, Mark xiv. 22, Luke xxii. 19, 20.) Again 'For in the commentaries which, as I have said, were composed by the apostles and their followers (or companions), it is written, that His sweat fell like drops of blood as He prayed, saying, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' (Comp. Luke xxii. 42, and Matt. xxvi. 39.)

"Giving an account of the Christian worship to the Emperor, in the first Apology, he says, 'The memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read according as the time allows; and when the reader has ended, the President makes a discourse exhorting to the imitation of so excellent things.' Trypho, the Jew, is represented by Justin as saying, 'I am sensible that the precepts in your Gospel, as it is called, are so great and wonderful that



I think it impossible for any man to keep them. For I have been at the pains to read them.'

"Now looking at these facts," adds Dr Kennedy, "and at the fact that the gospels referred to by Justin are described by him as written by *Apostles and their followers or companions*—a description corresponding exactly with the authorship of our Four Gospels—the question that is open to debate is, whether our gospels are the very gospels that were in Justin's hands, and which were read publicly in the Christian assemblies in his times. This question has been threshed out so completely that nothing new can be said upon it. On the one side, it is maintained that the variations from the text of our gospels are such as cannot be accounted for on the supposition that Justin had these gospels before him. On the other side, it is maintained that these variations are only such as may easily be accounted for on

the supposition that Justin quoted from memory and that he often put together into one, even as writers and preachers do still, the substance of various passages ; especially when it is remembered that he was addressing Heathen Emperors, for whom chapter and verse, and a literary transcript of words, were of no consequence."

Justin was at last called upon to suffer a martyr's death for the doctrines he believed, and which, for many years he had taught and defended with more than ordinary ability and zeal. Summoned, with six companions, before Rusticus, the Prefect of the city of Rome, he made a noble confession of the Truth, triumphantly answered every objection brought against it, and refused to be drawn or driven from his loyalty to Christ. The sentence was at last pronounced in these words ; "Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods, and to yield to the command of the Emperor, be

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scourged and led away, suffering the penalty of decapitation according to the laws;" but neither Justin nor his fellow confessors were moved by its utterance. They left the bar of their judge for the place of execution neither with heavy steps nor down-cast look, but with mutual congratulations and joy, in that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus, and to perfect their testimony to His claims in a way that would give impetus to His cause, and heighten men's estimate of His grace and truth.



IRENÆUS.

“From new-born Lyons oft thy memory turn'd  
Unto the earlier East, and fondly yearn'd  
For Polycarp and Smyrna, and the youth  
Of grave Religion fair.”—Rev. J. WILLIAMS.

## IRENÆUS.

LYONS, where Irenæus passed the greater part of his life, and which became at an early period the seat of a Christian bishopric, is one of the largest and finest cities of France. Situated at the junction of the Saone and Rhone, in the midst of a rich and fruitful region, and where it commands the trade of the Mediterranean and of the interior of the land, it soon rose to importance as a centre of commerce, and the seat of a Roman colony, and drew to itself men from many lands.

From its position and influence it early attracted the attention of the Churches that were spreading the gospel in different directions. The result was the commission, by the Christian

community at Smyrna, of a number of its members with Pothinus at their head, to make a settlement there. The light thus kindled on the banks of the Rhone spread with rapidity, illuminated the darkness of many minds, and revealed to multitudes the hollowness of idolatry.

Irenæus was subsequently sent by the same church to co-operate with Pothinus, and strengthen the mission of Western Gaul.

Born about the year 130 A.D., and of Greek extraction, Irenæus had the privilege of enjoying the instructions of the holy Polycarp, and of being taught by him the knowledge of divine truth, and the character of the heresies that were troubling the churches. He was thus prepared for the position of usefulness and power he afterwards held.

How long he enjoyed the privilege of listening to Polycarp, and hearing from him what had been learnt from the Apostle John, we are



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not informed. But he ever remembered with thankfulness and delight the advantages he then enjoyed and prized. Writing in old age to Florinus, who had sat with him at the feet of the Bishop of Smyrna, but who had departed from the truth, he says: "The doctrines, Florinus, you have embraced are not those of a sound judgment, nor what you learnt from others in youth. For I saw you when I was yet a boy, in lower Asia, with Polycarp. I better remember the affairs of that time than those which have happened lately; for the things which we learn in our childhood grow up with the soul and unite themselves to it. I can tell, therefore, the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and his coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people; and how he related his conversation with John and others who had seen the Lord; and how he

related their sayings, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord ; both concerning His miracles and His doctrine, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life ; all which Polycarp related agreeable to the Scriptures. These things I then, through the mercy of God toward me, diligently heard and attended to, recording them not upon paper but upon my heart. And through the grace of God I continually renew the remembrance of them. And I can affirm, in the presence of God, that if this blessed and Apostolic Presbyter had heard any such thing as you now utter, he would have cried out and stopped his ears, and, according to his custom, would have said, ‘Good God, to what times hast Thou reserved me that I should hear such things!’ and he would have fled from the place in which he was sitting or standing, when he heard such words. And as much may be perceived from his Epistles, which he sent to

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neighbouring churches, establishing them ; or to some of the brethren, instructing and admonishing them."

Reaching Lyons, Irenæus threw himself with ardour into the work of evangelization he found carried on by the Church there. We can conceive of him therefore bearing the Gospel into parts on Alpine slopes or Mediterranean shores where the voice of no herald of salvation had yet been heard. Nor would such labour be fulfilled by him in vain. From the intelligence and earnestness with which he held and taught the truth, the faith in the living and present Christ he exercised, and the entireness of his personal consecration to his work, we may warrantably conclude that great good was done by him, and many led to turn from the worship of dumb idols to the service of the living and true God.

But in the midst of his usefulness he was arrested by the outbreak of one of the cruellest

and deadliest persecutions that ever assailed the Church. It fell with special severity on the Christians in Gaul. In the account of it given by the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to those of Asia and Phrygia, we read that the Christians were shut out from the baths and forum, where they had hitherto freely resorted, and even from the houses of friends. They were forbidden to appear anywhere, and when seen in the streets were hooted, and stoned, and, in many cases, seized and thrown into prison. Charged with being the causes of the calamities which afflicted the Empire, they were condemned to the severest punishment. "Those who were not examined by tortures were cruelly used in prison, placed in the stocks so as to stretch their limbs frightfully, ill-fed, and heaped together in noisome cells, where murderers died. The venerable Bishop, Pothinus, ninety years old, and in broken health, with a heavy oppression in breathing was

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apprehended, and dragged by soldiers to the judgment seat, followed by a mob who beat and insulted him, but all was borne by him with heroic Christian meekness.

“Beaten, with clothes torn and covered with mire, and hardly able to breathe, the saintly old man was hurried to the dungeon where his faithful fellow-sufferers received and tended him until two days after, when he expired from the treatment he had received, and the dark, stifling atmosphere he was unable to breathe, but in calmness of spirit and surrounded by loving friends.

“So died the last pupil of S. John, the gentle, worn-out, old shepherd of Lyons, and passed to his martyr-crown.”

That some should have yielded to the force of such a storm of violence and destructiveness, is not a thing to be wondered at. Yet they were few who did so, and even these for the most part, did so for a short while only. But

the majority maintained their confidence with steadfastness unto the end. No form of death held up before them drove them from their faith in Christ, nor could they be made by any of the tortures to which they were subjected to betray their brethren, or offer incense to the statues of deceased Emperors, or the idols they had abandoned. They walked as with the steps of kings, through fire and amphitheatre to the wealthy place awaiting them in the presence of their Lord. They triumphed at the stake and waited with unflinching firmness the rush of the bull, goaded to madness, that was to toss and gore them to death.

And those who manifested and maintained this attitude of Christian fortitude were not the strong, experienced, and educated only, but slave girls and lads in their teens.

“On the last day of the gladiatorial shows, now held at Lyons, Blandina, the slave girl who

had already endured unheard-of tortures, was brought into the amphitheatre, along with Ponticus, a boy of fifteen years of age. These two had been taken daily to the amphitheatre to see the sufferings which others endured, and force was used to compel them to swear by the idols of the heathen ; but on account of their remaining steadfast, and setting all their devices at naught, the multitude were furious against them, so as neither to pity the tender years of the boy, nor to respect the sex of the woman. Accordingly, they exposed them to every terror and inflicted on them every torture, repeatedly trying to compel them to swear. But they failed in effecting this, for Ponticus, encouraged by his sister, so plainly indeed, that even the heathens saw that it was she that encouraged and confirmed him, after enduring nobly every kind of torture, gave up the ghost ; while the blessed Blandina, last of all, after having like a noble mother encouraged her

children and sent them on before her, victorious to the king, trod the same path of conflict which her children had trod, hastening on to them with joy and exultation at her departure, not as one thrown to the wild beasts, but as one invited to a marriage supper, and after she had been scourged and exposed to the wild beasts and roasted in the iron chair, she was at last inclosed in a net and cast before a bull. After having been tossed by the animal, though without any feeling of what was happening to her through her hope and firm hold of what had been entrusted to her and her converse with Christ, she was also sacrificed, the heathen themselves acknowledging that never among them did woman endure so many and such fearful tortures." O, but what cannot Christ do for His servants? He can make them anywhere triumphant.

The number that fell in this persecution, which took place about 177 A.D., and under the reign of Marcus Aurelius, was very large. By



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what means Irenæus escaped it with his life, and even without harm, we are not told; but shortly after he was at Rome appealing to the sympathy of the Christians there on behalf of the much-suffering martyrs of Lyons," and combatting errors that were becoming more and more rife. Returning to Gaul he found himself elected to fill the office of the deceased Pothinus. He knew the danger as well as responsibility attaching to the post, yet hesitated not to enter upon its duties. "He counted not his life dear to him so that he might finish with joy the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus." He was as faithful and earnest in the fulfilment of the duties of a Chief Pastor as he had been in the performance of those of an Evangelist. He carried the Gospel not only to the greater part of the inhabitants of Lyons, but to many beyond. But he was as busy with his pen as with his tongue. He now wrote his great work of Five Books "Against Heresies."

He not only, in that work, details and confutes the errors which he sets himself to expose, but bears ample testimony to the genuineness of the Gospels, and the truth of Christianity. He attributes the Gospels to those whose names they bear; quotes from twelve of S. Paul's Epistles as the production of the Apostle's pen, and refers again and again, with only two or three exceptions, to the other parts of the New Testament as of canonical or divine authority. Of his four hundred quotations from the Gospels eighty are from that of S. John.

The importance of such a witness as Irenæus to the truth of Scripture is not to be over-estimated. As the pupil of Polycarp, and separated by only a single life from Apostolic times, favoured with many opportunities of knowing the general mind of the Church as to the books that were received as canonical and those that were not, and possessed of an honesty and intelligence which eminently fitted him for

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witnessing to the authenticity and genuineness of the Word of God, special value attaches to his testimony.

His experience accorded with his belief. What he received as divine he had the joy of realizing to be such in the day of trial and the hour of death. Only that which was above nature, and more than human, could have yielded him the support and comfort he experienced amid the martyr sufferings which ended his earthly life—but that was the Gospel he had preached and testified to as the truth of God.

In 202 A.D., and under the reign of the Emperor Severus, another outburst of popular fury at Lyons assailed the professors of Christianity. Among those who fell before the storm was the venerable pastor himself. But the tempest did no harm to his faith. He knew in whom he believed, and laid his head as peacefully upon the block as he had often laid it upon his pillow.



HEGESIPPUS.

“The Gospel which is come unto you, as it is in all the world ; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.”  
— COL. i. 6.

## HEGESIPPUS.

HEGESIPPUS belonged to the middle of the second century, was of Jewish extraction, and a native of Syria. Led to receive Christianity he gave himself to the task of collecting evidences of its truthfulness, for the establishment first of his own faith, and then of that of believers generally. In the accomplishment of his self-chosen work he visited many Churches and travelled to different lands, and embodied the result of his inquiries and observations in a work of five books—which, though no longer existing as a whole, yet survives in the main, in extracts, in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. The testimony borne by Hegesippus in those extracts to the genuineness of the Gospels and the character of Christ, is specially valuable

from the pains he was at in getting the information he gives and the facts he adduces.

“He went,” as has been said, “from Church to Church, and from bishop to bishop, seeing with his own eyes, and hearing with his own ears, their testimony to the Truth. What we gather, painfully and imperfectly, from lifeless letters, and are afraid to commit to memory, he enjoyed in the full life of personal conversation with holy men. Their persons, their gesture, their tone of voice deeply impressed, and fixed their communications on his mind. Instead of the massive volume, and the numbered page, he carried in his memory what he saw and heard, and then, in due time, gave it in writing to the Church for her instruction and confirmation of faith. Toil was in every respect a pleasure to him. He found, moreover, he could satisfy upon the spot many doubts by question and answer, whilst a mere nod would often clear up



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to him what we are compelled to leave in irremediable uncertainty.”

He was privileged to enjoy in the field of service he occupied for Christianity many fellow-labourers. *Polycarp* was still lifting on high the light of Life in the City of Smyrna,—*Justin Martyr* writing his defences of his suffering brethren in the faith,—*Dionysius of Corinth* sending letters of counsel to various churches,—*Melito of Sardis* penning his treatises on Truth, Prophecy, The Lord's Day, and the Revelation of St John, and *Athenagoras* giving to the world his Discourse on the Resurrection, and his Apology for the Christians.

How far Hegesippus had personal intercourse with these fellow-witnesses, we are not told. He was however in full sympathy with them in their appreciation of the claims of Scripture and Christ. The faith which they exercised was his,—embracing the verity of the gospels and the Messiahship of Jesus, the Son of Mary.

He lived in eventful times. Among the things he was permitted to witness was the final overthrow and dispersion of his countrymen, the Jews. Pagan worship having been introduced to the city which occupied the site of Jerusalem, and circumcision been forbidden by an imperial edict, the Jews, under the leadership of Barcochab, a pretended Messiah, flew to arms, and undertook afresh to throw off the hated yoke. The war, which lasted for several years, ended in the destruction of more than half a million of the posterity of Abraham, and the reduction to slavery of those who outlived the sword. Though deeply affected by the calamity, Hegesippus saw in it a fulfilment of the prediction of Christ, and a confirmation of the faith he exercised.

But though the Jews, the implacable enemies of the Christians, were thus reduced and scattered, believers continued to be accused, condemned, and put to death. Still the

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emperors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, under whose reigns Hegesippus lived, gave no countenance to these persecutions, but discouraged and forbade them. The divinity of Christianity was triumphantly proved by its growth in the face of such oppositions and hindrances, and by the way in which the disciples of Christ bore the sufferings to which they were unrighteously subjected. So Hegesippus and others felt and argued.

“ The pursuit of the object of his search would necessarily bring Hegesippus upon the track of S. Paul; and at Antioch he would find, still pure and fresh, the tradition which Ignatius had taken such pains to maintain inviolate. Amid the Asiatic Churches he would come into the full tide of the tradition flowing from the two Apostles, Paul and John, and at Smyrna might converse with Polycarp, if, indeed, he did not meet him afterwards at Rome. The Churches of Macedonia, with Philippi at their head, would

receive him next, and show themselves standing fast in the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or by epistle. He would then arrive at Corinth, the only place, specially mentioned, that he visited in his journey from Jerusalem to Rome.

“ The capital of the world at length contained the only Church awaiting the visit of the Christian traveller and inquirer. Arriving within its walls it offered singular provocations both to joy and sorrow. As he passed through the streets he would behold, towering aloft amid other proud monuments, the triumphal arch of Titus which proclaimed the hateful tale of the utter overthrow of his country, and might lead him to avert his face in sorrow and shame. But he would turn from the representation of the furniture of the Temple, carved upon that structure, to the living furniture of a living Temple, which was in Rome in all the beauty of holiness. There he found priests clad in

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righteousness, and was embraced in the arms of brethren. Anicetus was then bishop, and he, who found himself so blessed by the visit of Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, would not be slow in showing Hegesippus all the hospitality for which the chief pastors of Rome possessed so high a character. Here, under favourable circumstances, he pursued his object; and, after due investigation, composed a work on the succession of the bishops of Rome down to the time then passing. Thus he fulfilled his object, and was able to assure the Christian world, in the face of all heretics, that, throughout his whole journey, he had found in every Church, and in every succession of pastors, all things in accordance with the preaching of the law, the Prophets, and the Lord."

"We cannot quit Hegesippus," says the writer from whom we have quoted, "without casting one more look upon his journey from Church to Church. In the pursuit of

truth, this holy man underwent a long fatigue of body and mind. But it was lightened and turned into refreshment by that inward satisfaction which rewards such an undertaking. *He found the truth triumphant everywhere ;* everywhere the law, everywhere the prophets, everywhere the Lord. His forefather Abraham was not so blest in his long pilgrimage ; for, though fortified occasionally with fresh renewals of the promise, he wandered among strangers both to himself and to God. The truth was restricted to himself alone, whithersoever he came. But this his child, who had obtained the fulfilment of the promises, found comfort at each halting place in its travels. He met a Melchisedec in every city, who refreshed not only his body, but also his soul, with the true bread and wine ; and he and they were one in the Lord, through one loaf and one cup, through one faith and one spirit. When he came to a strange city he was no stranger the moment

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he presented himself to its Church. A holy family was ready to take him in. The Bishop and his Presbyters received him among them, and opened to him all the history of their Church, and his visit ended with the delight of finding the same undefiled faith, and of course the same Christian charity; the kiss of peace and the prayers of the brethren dismissing him full of heavenly joy on his road to another Church, there again to be received in the open arms of the love which is the fruit of true faith. Thus he went from blessing to blessing, and from the blessed to the blessed. How different (as he might have thankfully reflected) was the reception which the Apostle of the Gentiles had experienced on tracing the very path he now trod. He had to acquire friends and helpers in every city. Wherever he arrived he found the law professed, the prophets believed in, though not understood, but nowhere the Lord. Hegesippus was now

reaping in joy what that sower of the Word had sown in sorrow and tears, in weakness and destitution. Such thoughts would add to his blessedness."

Hegesippus, as a theologian, might not be all that one could have wished, but as a witness to the truth of the teaching of the New Testament he occupied no unimportant place among the men whose testimonies to Christian doctrine are here given. From the nearness of his times to apostolic days, the men whom he consulted on the object of his inquiry, and the care he took in the arrangement of his arguments and facts, he is to be regarded as supplying no little certainty to the foundation of our hope.



HIPPOLYTUS.

“ I could have deem'd one spake from heaven,  
Of hope and joy, of life and death,  
And immortality through faith.”---ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

## HIPPOLYTUS.

HIPPOLYTUS was born in the latter half of the second century, and, as is most probable, of pagan parents, and in Italy. Fond of knowledge and possessed of the means of obtaining it, he travelled, as soon as of age to do so, from one place to another in the pursuit of it. Many lands were thus visited by him. Now he was to be seen in one school of learning and then in another ; here at the feet of some Greek philosopher, and there at those of the aged Irenæus at Lyons ; at one time in the distant east, and at another in the far west.

Finding everywhere the same faith and worship, and men of all conditions and languages confessing and trusting in Christ as their

Saviour, he was led to consider the claims of Christianity, and then to accept the Gospel as the message of God's love and mercy to men. Settling at Rome, and giving evidence of the reality of his conversion, and of his fitness for usefulness in the Church, he was ordained to the office of elder, and shortly afterwards took the oversight of the Church in Portus at the mouth of the Tiber. Here he soon became known. His fame as a preacher drew around him men from all quarters, who were moved by his eloquence and instructed by his discourses.

Here he wrote his commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New Testaments, and also his treatises on Antichrist and the gifts of the Holy Spirit ; on God and the resurrection of the body ; on good, and the origin of evil, &c. He thus became the teacher of many who had no opportunity of listening to his oral instructions, and the means of serving the cause of truth far beyond the sphere of his ministry at

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the port of Rome. Strongly opposed to the growing usurpations of the hierarchy and the spreading errors of the times, he did much by his preaching and writings to check the advance of both, and aid the triumphs of the Gospel among men. He was one of the ablest champions of the truth of his times, and bore convincing testimony to the genuineness of the Gospels and the verity of Revelation. It is thus, for example, he discourses on the central doctrine of the Incarnation :—“ In the person of Jesus, God was manifest in the body, going forth perfect man ; for not in mere appearance, nor by change, but truly, did he become man.

“ And so, though he were God, yet did He not refuse any conditions of the humanity He bore. He hungers, and toils, and wearies, and thirsts in His weariness ; He flees through fear, and prays out of tribulation, and He who as God has a sleepless nature, slumbers on a pillow ; He shudders at the cup of His passion, though for

this end He was present in the world, and in His agony he sweats blood, and is strengthened by an angel, Himself strengthening all that believe in Him, and teaching them by His example, to overcome the fear of death. He who knew Judas, and what was in him, is betrayed by Judas. By Caiaphas He is dishonoured, though as God He had been honoured by Caiaphas with sacrifice and offering. By Herod He is set at nought, by Pilate cruelly scourged, and by the soldiers mocked, though at His word thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand of angels and archangels stand obedient. He who stretched out the heaven as a curtain is stretched by the Jews on the accursed tree. The Inseparable from the Father cries to the Father, and commends to Him His spirit, and bowing His head, gives up the ghost. And because He was unsubdued by death, He said, being Himself the Life, 'I lay it down of myself.' The

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bountiful Giver of all life has His side pierced with a spear, and the Raiser of the dead is wrapped in linen cloth and laid in a sepulchre, but the third day is raised by the Father to be 'the Resurrection and the Life.' All these things *He* accomplished for *us*, who, for our sakes, became as we are. For Himself hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and for us was afflicted, as saith the prophet Esaias. This is He who was lauded in the hymn of the angels, seen of the shepherds, waited for by Simeon, and witnessed to by Anna. This is He who was sought after by the Magi, and discovered by the star. This is He who lingered in His Father's house, and was pointed out by John, and was witnessed to by the Father from above in these words, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him.' This is He who is crowned as the conqueror of the devil, who was invited to the marriage in Cana, and changed the water into wine; rebuked the sea

when it raged under the violence of the winds, and walked upon the waters as on dry land ; gave sight to him that was born blind, and raised Lazarus from the dead ; performed manifold mighty works, and gave power to His disciples. Blood and water flowed from His holy side when pierced with the spear. For His sake the sun is darkened, and the day has no light, the rocks are cleft, and the veil is rent. The foundations of the earth are shaken, the graves are opened, and the dead arise. The rulers are ashamed when they at length see upon the cross the controller of all nature drooping His head and yielding up the ghost. Creation sees and is troubled, and, unable to approach and view His exceeding glory, shrinks into darkness. This is He who breathed the Spirit upon the disciples, and enters among them, the door being shut ; who is taken up into the heavens, a cloud receiving Him out of men's sight ; who is set down at the



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right hand of the Father, and comes as judge of quick and dead. This is God, who for our sakes became man, and to whom the Father hath made all things subject. To Him be glory and might, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the holy Church, both now and always, even for evermore."

Such were the truths that Hippolytus rung out from the pulpit at Ostia, and in the hearing of men from many lands ; by which he moved the hearts of Gauls and Egyptians, traders from the west and travellers from the east, Greeks and Romans, and led many to leave their idolatries and become the worshippers of the living and true God.

And thus he taught and testified at the very time that imperial edicts against the disciples of the Lord were rapidly succeeding one another, and martyrdoms, by the cruellest forms of death, were in every direction taking place. But by nothing was the faithful Bishop of

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Portus to be awed and silenced. He felt it was his duty to obey God rather than man, and that a "woe" would rest upon him if, from any dread of the anger and arm of the enemies of the truth, he ceased to preach the gospel. He kept therefore to his post till dragged from it by force, and put to a violent death.

I would still let him speak for himself. The only one of his Homilies which survives is that which he wrote in confutation of the error of Noetus, who taught that there was no distinction between the Father and the Son; that it was the Father Himself who was born, and suffered, and died, and not as is generally believed, One distinct from Him. Part of Hippolytus' answer to such teaching is, according to one of his translators, in these words:—

"And this is what Christ Himself said when in the Gospel He confessed both His Father and His God, saying, 'I go away to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'

If, therefore, Noetus dares to say that Christ Himself is the Father, let him tell us to what Father Christ was going away, according to this saying in the Gospel. But if he thinks that we should abandon the Gospel and listen to his folly, he labours in vain, 'for we ought to obey God rather than men.'

"And if he should say, 'Christ Himself said, I and the Father are One,' let him attend to the expression, and consider that He did not say, 'I and the Father *am* one,' but '*are*' one. For 'are' is not used of one, but He uses it to point out two persons and one power. He explained this Himself when He said to the Father concerning His disciples, 'The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.' What have the Noetians to say to these things? Are all one body according to sub-

stance? Or do we become one by the power and disposition of like-mindedness? In the very same manner the Son who was sent, proclaimed to them that were in the world, that He was in the Father by power and disposition, but not the Father Himself. The Son is the mind of the Father. Those who have the mind of the Father accordingly receive Christ; but they who have not the mind of the Father reject Him. And if they cite the case of Philip, who said, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,' and to whom our Lord answered saying, 'Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and yet hast thou not known Me? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?'—if they cite this as proof that Christ calls Himself the Father, let them know that they herein adduce the most direct contradiction to their own dogma, and convict themselves of error by the very scripture they

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bring forward ; for when Christ, by very deed and word, had declared Himself the Son, they yet did not know Him, and were unable to comprehend or perceive His power, and Philip, not understanding how far it was possible to see, asked that he might look upon the Father, and so our Lord answered him, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ;' that is, if thou hast seen Me, through Me you may know the Father ; for the Father is brought within easy reach of our knowledge through the image which bears His likeness ; but if thou hast not known the image, that is, the Son, how think you to see the Father ? And that these things are as we have stated them, the context evinces, shewing that the Son, being set forth, was sent from the Father and went to the Father. . . .  
. . . . One God there is, my brethren, and the knowledge of Him we receive from the holy Scriptures, and from no other source. For just as any person wished to be skilled in the

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wisdom of this world will find no other means of attaining his desire than by studying the writings of philosophers, so as many of us as resolve to practise godliness, must draw our information from no other source than from the oracles of God. Whatever, therefore, the holy Scriptures declare, let us observe; and whatever they teach, let us understand; and as the Father wills that we believe in Him, let us believe; and as He wills that the Son be honoured, let us honour Him; and as He wills that the Holy Ghost be given, let us receive Him,—not after our own understanding, nor after our private prejudices and preconceptions, nor using violence towards the things given us of God, but as He Himself intended to teach by the holy Scriptures, so let us mark and understand.”

For the cause which Hippolytus so earnestly and publicly defended, he at last, like so many others of his time, laid down his life. “His bones were carried to Rome, and placed, in the

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time of Constantine, beside the revered remains of S. Laurentius. Prudentius tells us that the chapel reared to his honour always attracted a large concourse of people. It was probably at this period that the statue was erected to him, which is now in the Vatican, and which brings before our eyes the noble and austere form of a martyr bishop. The head is large and life-like, the brow broad, the expression full of firmness and fervour, and the whole form, of the description so striking in the rude sketches of the catacombs. We love to picture to ourselves, under such a form, the heroic champion of the Church's freedom, who combined, with a blameless deportment and fervent faith, depth of learning and breadth of thought."

The testimony to the truth of Christianity of such a man, possessed of such stores of learning, so fervent in piety, and so deeply conscientious, ought to be highly prized. He possessed all the characteristics of a trust-worthy

witness. He was familiar with all knowledge, wrote a history of Roman Christianity, and confuted in successive publications no fewer than thirty-two heresies.

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CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

“Searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”—ACTS xvii. 11.

## CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

THE second and third centuries were noted for men of learning and celebrity, and for leaders in the Church who were in every way qualified to defend the Christian faith and maintain the claims of Scripture.

Among these was Clement of Alexandria, who filled for years the office of Principal of the celebrated catechetical or theological school of that city.

“Though born in the midst of paganism, he spent his youth like many others of his times, in ardent and active searches after truth. He travelled far and wide in the pursuit of what he sought, and never paused in his enquiries till, in his own words, he found rest in the

bosom of the Word of Life. . . He visited the most renowned cities of the ancient world, and travelled both in Asia and Africa, but has left no account of the countries he traversed, nor of any of his adventures. He has recorded but one journey,—that of his passing from one system of religion and philosophy to another. This alone had an interest for him.

“His writings show what a wealth of information he acquired during this period of his life. Poets and philosophers became familiar to him, and he lifted the veil of all the mysteries of religion.”

Of what ancestry he came, and where he was born, we are not told. From his wide and varied learning it may be inferred that he received in youth a liberal education, which so far implies that his parents occupied a good social position.

At the close of his travels he settled in Alexandria, was ordained a presbyter, and

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became first the coadjutor of Pantænus in the conduct of the school already mentioned, and then his successor.

Alexandria was still in its greatness, and celebrated far and wide for its scholars and educational advantages. Founded by Alexander the Great, in the year 332 B.C., and with the intention of its inheriting the commercial greatness once possessed by Tyre, he spared no pains to make it a place of attraction, and laid deep and broad the foundations of its future greatness. "The Ptolemies, who soon came into its possession, spared no cost in adorning their chosen residence. Men of all nations were invited to a share in the privileges of citizenship, and the town was filled ere long with a dense population of Egyptians, Greeks, and Jews. Every country was laid under contribution to decorate the rising favourite. All books of value that found their way into the city were seized by the Govern-

ment, carefully copied, and the transcripts sent to the owners with a liberal acknowledgment for the exchange. An extensive library was erected near the palace, in connexion with the museum, whose groves and porches became the resort of the most distinguished professors in literature and science."

Here, then, where literature, art, and commerce flourished, and where, by these, as well as by religious attractions, and the beauty and healthiness of the place, a large and active population had been drawn together, Clement took up his abode, and found the amplest scope for his energies and Christian devotedness. And he fully availed himself of the opportunities of usefulness which he enjoyed. Many listened to his instructions, and were led by him out of the darkness and bondage of paganism into the light and liberty of the Gospel of Christ.

His distinguished and useful career at Alexandria was brought to a close at the beginning

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of the third century by the persecution which broke out under the reign of the Emperor Severus, and which raged with peculiar violence in Africa. Multitudes fell before it. "Many martyrs," says Clement, "are daily burned, crucified, and beheaded before our eyes."

Feeling that his work was done in Alexandria, but that the cause that lay so near to his heart might be helped elsewhere, he withdrew to Asia Minor, and then to Jerusalem, where he found an open door for work for his Lord. He died about the year 220, and, as is generally believed, in peace.

Three great works proceeded from his pen,—  
"The *Exhortation*," in which he seeks to win the heathen to Christ. It is an elaborate and masterly production, in which he sets forth the truth, as taught in Scripture, respecting God, and Jesus as the living Word and the Saviour of men.

"The *Pædagogus*," or "Instructor," addressed

to those who have accepted the Gospel, with the view of guiding them in the formation and development of Christian character.

“The *Stromata*,” or “Book of various discourses,” in which he treats of a great variety of subjects bearing on Christian life and doctrine. He not only refers, in these works, to almost every book of Scripture, and quotes largely from both the Old Testament and the New, but occupies much of his space with expositions intended to make the Word of God more intelligible and interesting to ordinary readers. It may be true that many of his interpretations are not to be depended upon; that like other writers of his times he was too fond of allegorizing in his expositions of divine things, but of his testimony to the existence and authorship of the Gospels, and the genuineness of Scripture, as a whole, too much cannot be said. From the position he occupied, the acquirements he possessed, and the pains he was at to know



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all that was to be learned about Christianity, as well as the men with whom he met, and the personal love he cherished towards Christ, he was eminently qualified to bear such witness to the truth of the Gospel as that which he rendered. If such testimony is not to be accepted I do not know what is. I am unable to see how any one can read, without prejudice, his biography, as far as recorded, and thoughtfully peruse his writings, and not feel, from his personal character, breadth of intelligence, and manifest honesty in dealing with Scripture subjects, that his testimony, as a witness to the truth, is to be welcomed and fully relied on. He speaks what he knows, and testifies to what he has heard and felt. Christ was a living Personality to him, and the Gospel narratives records which he regarded as beyond question. He believed and therefore witnessed to what he knew.



TERTULLIAN.

“We have not followed cunningly<sup>r</sup> devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”--2 PETER i. 16.

## TERTULLIAN.

CARTHAGE, the birth-place and subsequent home of Tertullian, was for ages the rival of Rome, and one of the leading cities of the world. Founded by a colony of Phœnician traders, and occupying, on the northern coast of Africa, an advantageous site for commerce, it soon rose by the enterprise of its inhabitants to power and wealth. Taking possession of several of the islands of the Mediterranean, and giving itself to military as well as mercantile expeditions, it came into collision with Rome, and contended, for ages, for the prize of supremacy, with the great Latin power. For a long time victory swayed from side to side, but at last declared for Rome, and Carthage

was razed to the ground. A new city was by and bye constructed on the site of the old, which also reached eminence, and became as important in ecclesiastical as in political history. In this latter city Tertullian was born about the middle of the second century, and rose to the fame he acquired as a religious controversialist and witness to Christian truth. As the son of a pagan Roman officer he was educated in all the superstitions of idolatry, and reared amid influences every way hostile to Christianity. Yet he rose to a first place among Christian apologists and preachers. "No influence of early times equalled his, while his writings breathe a spirit of such undying power that they can never grow old, and even now render living, controversies which have been silent for fifteen centuries. We must seek the man in his own pages, still aglow with his enthusiasm and quivering with his passion, for the details of his personal history

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are very few. The man is, as it were, absorbed in the writer, and we can well understand it, for his writings embody his whole soul. Never did a man more fully infuse his moral life into his books, and act through his words."

Indicating at an early age a fondness for books, and showing more than average mental powers, he had given to him the best education the times afforded, and was trained for the legal profession.

By what means he was brought under the influence of Christian truth and led to make Christ his trust, we have no means of knowing. "He might, like Justin, have beheld the constancy of a dying martyr, of one, perhaps, whom his own voice, joining the cry of the amphitheatre, had brought to the stake, and his generous impetuous temper may have caught divine fire from the spectacle. Or in the course of his curious and multifarious reading, he might have fallen in with one of

the Christian apologies, which were so diligently circulated through the empire. The antiquarian lore by which they were distinguished might first have arrested his attention, and induced him to examine their tenets with patience. The truth might then have flashed upon him, and he might have yielded his heart and understanding to the fulness of its light.”

God has many ways of bringing men to Himself. The means He employs to do so are sometimes as strange as they are efficacious. They were such in the case of a physician, well-known to the writer, who, driven by a storm into the lobby of a church during divine service, overheard a few Gospel words, and by them was saved. Mr H—— was led by a stray leaf of the New Testament to the New Testament itself,—a book he had never before seen—and then to the Saviour, and at length to work for Him in the ministry of the Gospel. “God chooses the weak things of the world to



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confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, to bring to nought things that are.”

And then none are too far off for God to bring, by such means, to Himself. He can raise men, as He has often done, from the lowest degradation to sit among the princes of His kingdom, humble the proudest, and reveal to the self-satisfied their utter spiritual bankruptcy. Of no one's salvation need we ever therefore despair. He who of old made of the persecutor an apostle, and of the high-minded philosopher a child-like Christian, can, by a thousand ways, bring your prodigal son to repentance, and the man for whose salvation you have long laboured and prayed to be a fellow partaker with you of the grace of eternal life.

No one before Tertullian had entered the Church with a richer store of acquirements. Nor was he likely to allow his qualifications to slumber in unprofitableness. “With his

active mind and ardent temperament he was not likely to remain long in the class of common Christians. His deep and varied information well qualified him for the office of a teacher, and the suffrages of the Church would readily second his inclination to enter into the company of the preachers of the faith. Reaching that position he gave himself with redoubled zeal to the propagation of the Gospel and the defence of his maligned and suffering fellow Christians. It grieved him to see to what misrepresentations and afflictions believers in Jesus were subjected, and heedless of the danger to which it exposed him, he appeared as their defender and addressed an apology to the magistrates of the province on their behalf. Its main arguments are much the same with those employed by his predecessors. He exposes and remonstrates against the cruel wrongs suffered by the Christians, vindicates their desertion of the religion of their fathers

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by a detail of the absurdities and impieties of heathenism, and proves their innocence by a general review of their tenets and discipline. But its power is far superior to that of any former defence. Tertullian not only surpassed his predecessors in information and talent, but was peculiarly fitted by temper to treat such a subject. No one could express in such forcible language the indignant sense of injustice, or represent its detail in a more lively manner. None could press his arguments so closely, and few had so learned an acquaintance with heathenism, and could expose its follies with bitterer sarcasm, or with greater truthfulness." And this he did not fail to do. He left the persecutor without excuse for the course he pursued. He laid bare the enormity of his offence, and showed the utter groundlessness of the charges for which he inflicted punishment, imprisonment, and death.

Nor were such efforts on the part of Tertul-

lian in vain. They had the effect of mitigating, if not of stopping the persecutions from which many were suffering.

Severe in disposition, and intolerant of the weaknesses and shortcomings of only too many bearing the name of Christ, Tertullian adopted the ascetic habits of Montanus, accepted his claims to supernatural endowments, and became the advocate of his doctrines. But whilst he thus separated from the Church, or the great body of believers, in practices that he adopted and associations he cultivated, he yet maintained the Evangelical doctrines he had long held,—salvation by grace, justification by faith, acceptance on the ground of the blood of Christ, the Tri-unity of the Godhead, the incarnation, resurrection, ascension, and second advent of the Lord of Glory.

“He also maintained the genuineness and authority of the Four Gospels, on the ground of the very sure and credible testimony of the

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Churches from the time of their being written to his own age. 'If it be certain, he says, that that is most genuine which is most ancient, and that most ancient which is even from the beginning; in like manner it will also be certain that that has been delivered by the Apostles which has been held inviolate in the Churches of the Apostles. It may be depended upon that the Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear. The Apostles have truly preached and written the doctrines they received from Christ. Moreover, the immediate successors of the Apostles have also faithfully published in writing what they received. All the Gospels are therefore supported by the authority of Apostles, yea, of Jesus Christ Himself.'"

Dr Lardner closes his review of the life and writings of Tertullian with these words: "We have now seen a very valuable testimony to the Scriptures of the New Testament in the works

of Tertullian, written in the latter part of the second, and the beginning of the third, century. It is considerable for the number of the books cited by him, almost all those which are now received by Christians as canonical. The quotations are large and numerous. The testimony is important, too, from the evident tokens of respect paid to the Scriptures. Indeed, they would not have been so much quoted if they had not been greatly esteemed. Nor have the differing sentiments of those called heretics done us any lasting prejudice. The contest which they occasioned has increased our proofs of the genuineness, authority, and integrity of the evangelical and apostolical Scriptures. It is easy for every one to observe the value of this testimony upon some other accounts, which I need not therefore mention. The whole which we have transcribed from Tertullian may afford satisfaction to a serious Christian, as confirming his faith in the Holy Scriptures; and enabling

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him, if there be occasion, to convince, or at least to confute and silence adversaries with abundance of evidence." He searched and found, and held with a death-grasp what he felt to be his very life.





ORIGEN.

“O how love I Thy law ! it is my meditation all the day.”—  
Ps. cxix. 97.

## ORIGEN.

DR LARDNER closes his review of the life and character of Origen with this testimony :—“ He had a capacious mind, and a large compass of knowledge ; and throughout his whole life was a man of unwearied application in studying and composing works of various sorts, some of them extremely tedious and laborious ; and in teaching by word of mouth, in the way of catechetical instruction, and public discourse to the people and conference. He had the happiness of uniting different accomplishments, being at once the greatest preacher, and the most learned and voluminous writer of the age ; nor is it easy to say which is the most admirable, his learning or his virtue. In a word, it must be owned that Origen, though not perfect nor

infallible, was a bright light in the Church of Christ, and one of those rare personages that have done honour to human nature.”

Born at Alexandria in 185, A.D., and of parents who were pre-eminently Christian, he was reared in circumstances that were every way favourable to the development of his intellectual powers and moral life. Leonides, his father, took great pains with his religious instruction. He read with him the Scriptures and made him commit a portion of them every day to memory. In talking with him over what had been read and repeated, Leonides was often struck with the intelligence the child showed, the questions he put, and the interest he manifested in the things of God. He believed he was destined for the fulfilment of some important service in the Church, was thankful to be the father of such a boy, and oftentimes when the child was asleep would kiss his breast as the Spirit's chosen abode.

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The painstaking of Leonides with his child's religious instruction had no doubt much to do with the Christian character and usefulness for which Origen was afterwards marked. The man comes of the child. The bent given to the character by the parental hand is generally retained all through life. What you make your boy while under your influence and roof he will, as a rule, continue to be—practising the habits you then lead him to form, cultivating the tastes you encourage him to cherish, and following the course you induce him to adopt. Were there more Leonideses in the world there would be more sons of eminence. Were Christian and intelligent fathers equally painstaking in drawing forth the capabilities of their boys, religiously instructing them, and interesting them in the things of God, the Church would have all the workers she requires for the fields of Christian service she cultivates, and also for those she

wants to occupy. Such fathers are, however, few and far between, and hence the dearth of Christian labourers everywhere existing. It would be different were the Church's tone of piety what it ought to be. Religion at home is the guarantee of religion abroad. Men are out of doors what they are indoors.

Origen's faith was nurtured in the Church as well as in the home. Christian worship at Alexandria was, at the time, a thing of much beauty. "Nowhere else were the public prayers so poetically rich and full. The forms of adoration were grand and solemn, and yet striking in their simplicity. It is pleasant to follow the young Origen in thought, into those daily assemblies, where the Church of Alexandria, like the woman in the Gospel, broke over the feet of Christ a vase of very precious ointment, in the offering of adoring praise, which their full hearts poured forth in an over-flowing, ever-fragrant stream. There

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is every reason to believe that Origen had been received to the Lord's Supper before the death of his father. That service was a deeply impressive one, and might well leave a track of fire in so susceptible a soul."

His intellectual advantages were equal to his religious privileges. As a pupil of the renowned catechetical or theological school he sat at the feet of Pantaenus and Clement, two of the most learned Christian teachers of the day. Their instructions enlarged his intellectual resources and confirmed him in the faith of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.

In his seventeenth year a cruel persecution, under the Emperor Septimus Severus, broke out against the Christians. It effected fearful ravages in Alexandria and Egypt. Leonides was one of those who fell under it. Fired with a love that led him to long to be with Christ, Origen would have gladly taken his place by his father's side and laid his head upon the same

block. It was with difficulty that he could be restrained from doing this, and only was so by his mother concealing from him his clothes.

It was no doubt a trial to Leonides to leave a wife and seven children, and, as his property like that of all martyrs would be confiscated, without a farthing they could call their own. But he felt that He, on whose behalf he was sacrificing his life, and who had at command all resources for His people's support, would not forget them or fail to interfere for them, and he went therefore to the block with a mind fully assured as to mother and children being provided for.

For a few months, after his father's martyrdom, Origen was supported by a benevolent lady of wealth, but not liking to be dependent on others for maintenance, he betook himself to teaching, and soon gathered around him, both from Christian and heathen families, a large number of pupils.



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Anxious to open and organize afresh the famous Catechetical School which the persecution had broken up, the bishop of Alexandria appointed Origen to be the President of it. Although only eighteen years of age his fame as a teacher drew around him in a short time many scholars. In such a position, as the principal of a great public Seminary, and in which he taught the doctrines of Christianity with earnest and uncompromising fidelity, Origen exposed himself to great danger. But this, in no way, discomfited him. Death had no fear for him. He even seemed to court it. Accordingly when first one and then another of those who had been led by him to Christ were conducted to the stake he accompanied them, and sought by his presence and words to comfort and strengthen them in the presence of death. The wonder was that he was not on these occasions torn to pieces by the infuriated mob. His faith for personal

safety was in Him whose favour was more to him than life, and being yet but at the beginning of the great work he was intended to perform, he was preserved from harm. Instead of being unmanned and paralysed by the violent deaths of pupils and fellow-labourers, and the danger to which he was hourly exposed, he was stimulated to higher exertion and nobler work. He denied himself in all sorts of ways that he might put himself in possession of all knowledge, excel in the exposition and defence of Holy Scripture, and place at the command of others the best and largest help to an understanding of the Word of God. The difficulty was to get fingers to write, and hands to distribute the interpretations and commentaries of the books of the Bible he prepared for circulation. It is when His servants most feel their need that God interposes on their behalf. It is when they see no way of accomplishing what is in their hearts with

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regard to His glory, and men's highest good, that He opens one to them.

Among those who were led by Origen out of darkness into light, and saved from dangerous error, was a wealthy Alexandrian merchant, by the name of Ambrose, who henceforth was Origen's staunch and attached friend, and supplied him with abundant means for the diffusion of his writings, and the spread of the faith of Christ. He placed seven secretaries at his command, who took it in turn to write without pause or interruption from Origen's dictation, and besides these, also a number of copyists.

“In a letter which has come down to these times, Origen has paid,” says De Pressensé, “a noble tribute to his friend and benefactor: ‘The pious Ambrose, who has devoted himself to God, thinking that I loved work, and that I was truly athirst for the Divine Word, has convinced me by his laborious zeal and his

love for the sacred Scriptures . . . . We never cease comparing texts ; we discuss them during meals, and after meals allow ourselves no time for walking or rest ; we return at once to our studies and diligently correct the manuscripts. So far from giving the whole night to slumber, we carry on our labours till very late, not to speak of the morning's work, which is pursued without relaxation till the ninth and sometimes the tenth hour. Such a measure of time should be devoted to teaching and the deep study of the Divine Oracles, by all who wish to make them the serious business of life.' ”

Works now proceeded with rapid succession from Origen's pen,—Commentaries, Homilies, Apologies, and Essays ; some say to the extent of *thousands*, but certainly to that of *hundreds*.

But the labours of Origen were not confined to the study, nor to Alexandria : he went in many directions teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Now he is found in

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Rome and then in Jerusalem; at one time in Palestine and at another in Asia Minor; on one occasion travelling into Arabia to fulfil his mission as a Christian teacher to a chief who invites his aid, and on another journeying to Antioch to give instruction to the aunt of the reigning Emperor.

His absence from Alexandria is sometimes the result of his own free act, and sometimes the consequence of persecution. *Driven* at last, finally, from it, he takes up his abode at Cæsarea. But even here he is not permitted to live and die in peace. Before the desolating approaches of the Decian persecution he withdraws to Tyre. But he is soon in the hands of those who pursue him and long to lead him to the stake. "He was not only loaded with chains, but exposed to divers tortures. He was cast into the deepest dungeon, an iron collar was hung around his neck, and his feet were crushed for four days in the stocks. He

was constantly reminded of the fiery death awaiting him, but he stood firm under all agonies and threats. His persecutors, however, by a last refinement of cruelty, did not send him to the stake, imagining that they could thus deprive him of the crown of martyrdom." Spent by his long life of labour and self-sacrifice, and by the sufferings he was enduring, he expired at the end of two years' confinement in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and was buried by Christian sympathisers and friends in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the town of Tyre.

It may be true that Origen's interpretations of Scripture are often fanciful and without warrant, that he adopted a system of allegorical exposition of the Word of God that was followed by baneful results, and practised and recommended habits of asceticism which neither religion nor expediency requires, yet from the learning he possessed, his perfect knowledge of Holy Writ, and the pains he was at to obtain

the fullest evidence of the truth of Christianity, he must ever be placed in the foremost van of the early witnesses to the verity of Revelation.

Canon Westcott thus speaks of him and his testimony:—"Among all the fathers of the first three centuries, Origen—the Adamantine—stands out with the noblest individuality. Unsurpassed in Christian zeal, unrivalled in universal learning, he devoted a long life to the study of the Scriptures. He believed that the Bible contained all the treasures of wisdom, and so he often appears to see mysteries in it which the critic refuses to recognise. He believed that Christianity contained the answer to every human instinct, and so often presses with unchastened boldness to offer an explanation in its name for that which must as yet be hidden from men. His faults, as of every great man, were themselves great, but his genius is yet powerful to warm and to enlighten. No canonization has hallowed his name, but none

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the less his influence on after ages has been equal to that of the greatest saints—Augustine, Athanasius, and Jerome.”

Thus he writes respecting the four Gospels:—“As I have understood by tradition, respecting the Four Gospels, which are *the only undisputed ones in the whole Church of God throughout the world*. The first is written according to Matthew, the same that was once a publican, but afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, who having published it for the Jewish converts, wrote it in the Hebrew. The second is according to Mark, who composed it as Peter explained to him, whom he also acknowledges as his son in his general Epistle, saying, ‘The elect Church in Babylon salutes you, as also Mark my son.’ And the third according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, which was written for the converts from the Gentiles. And last of all the gospel by John.” On all the gospels Origen wrote commentaries. The



gospel by John—"the John," as he says, "who reclined on the breast of Jesus,"—was his especial delight. "He rejoiced to trace S. John in his calm and royal flight into the sublimities of Christian metaphysics ; he would fain follow him, who has been so well called the Eagle of the Gospel, in his soarings towards the Sun of the moral world."

In further confirmation of the argument I add the following quotations from Dr Kennedy. He says :—"The value of the testimony of Origen does not depend on the greatness and goodness of the man himself, nor is it lessened in anywise by aught that may be urged against his system of allegorical interpretation. What we have said of Eusebius is true of him, that he is not to be regarded as a single witness. He gives us the testimony of thousands of witnesses, and not of individual witnesses merely, but of Churches throughout the world, which in the middle of the third century accepted the

four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as the writings of these men, and therefore as authentic records of the life of Jesus Christ.

“Origen had a right which perhaps few, if any other men ever possessed, to speak in the name of the whole Church of God throughout the world. He visited personally almost all parts of Christendom, became acquainted with their bishops and presbyters, taught in many of their churches, took part in their controversies, wrote in defence of their common faith, and at last died in prison, the martyr of Jesus. . . His language might have been in the maintenance of his testimony, ‘I speak that which I do know, and testify that I have seen.’ This almost ‘universal traveller’ within the limits of Christendom, this life-long student and interpreter of the Gospels, this great disputer with heretics and unbelievers, this martyr for Christ’s sake, writes calmly and in the tone

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of a man to whom it does not occur that his words would be questioned, and tells us that these four gospels were universally accepted as the writings respectively of two Apostles, and two friends of Apostles. His testimony is that of the universal Church before the middle of the third century.

“Origen was connected with the past not only through the Christian father who instructed him in the knowledge of the gospels, but through Clement at whose feet he sat, and who died in A.D. 220. Clement had travelled both in Asia and Africa, and had the opportunity of hearing many eminent representatives of Christianity in Italy, Greece and Asia. Clement does not give us anywhere a catalogue of the Scriptures which he regarded as Apostolic, but there were few portions of the New Testament to which he had not occasion to refer. And so far as concerns the gospels, we find all of them owned and received by

Clement, with a tradition concerning the order in which they were written, which he had received from presbyters of more ancient times. This tradition as Lardner says, ‘affords a proof of the curiosity and inquisitiveness of the ancient Christians concerning the sacred books of the New Testament, which they had received.’

“In A.D. 180, there came to Alexandria a Christian philosopher, Pantænus, the founder of the school of Catechists or Teachers, of whom Clement and Origen were the most eminent. It was this Pantænus that exercised the most decisive influence over Clement. Of him we know that he carried the Gospel into the far East, whether before or after his first visit to Alexandria is uncertain, and that he proclaimed the name of Christ to barbarous tribes to whom it was but little known. We thus connect the testimony of Origen with predecessors who had the very best means of

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information, and in whose time, reaching back to the middle of the second century, the Four Gospels already occupied the place which we find them occupying a century later.”



CYPRIAN.

“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature : old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”—  
2 COR. v. 17.



## CYPRIAN.

CHRISTIANITY has demonstrated its divinity by the triumphs it has won, and the changes it has wrought. There is no kind of intellect it has not subordinated to its sway, nor any description of people it has not elevated by its influence, and made a power for good in the world. Hence, the men who are found among its disciples, and the nations it has raised from barbarism and moral degradation to civilization and intelligence. But such achievements would not have been effected by it had it been less than it claims to be, in the vitality it possesses, and the power it wields. The oppositions it has vanquished would not have been overcome nor the wildernesses it has reclaimed been con-

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verted into fruitful fields ; adversaries made the advocates of its doctrines, and the accumulated darkness of ages made to recede before its approach, had it been other than supernatural.

One of its grandest early trophies was the subject of the present sketch. Born at Carthage about the beginning of the third century, Cyprian was reared amid all the refinement and luxury of domestic wealth. "His father was a man of fortune and influence ; a senator in the capital of proconsular Africa, and the holder of important offices. The young patrician saw a fine career open before him, and his brilliant talents well fitted him to adorn it. He possessed keen literary tastes, and while studying jurisprudence with the view of filling subsequently some office of state, he devoted himself assiduously, at the same time, to the cultivation of letters, and while still very young became a professor of rhetoric."

The circumstances that he occupied and

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the associates which his talents and pursuits gathered around him, exposed Cyprian to many temptations. These, from the want of strong moral principle, he was unable to resist, and was led, like many of his companions, to lead a life of profligacy and self-indulgence. But here he was anything but satisfied. And what man ever was? Who ever found a life of evil to be other than one of wretchedness? "The way of transgressors is hard." Only in the fulfilment of the ends of being is contentment realized. The heart has rest only as the purposes of life are accomplished. Cyprian might have as companions the fashionable and gay, and see his lectures appreciated and applauded by large and enthusiastic audiences; but he was far from being happy. He found neither in his religion, nor his indulgences, what he felt he required and longed to possess. He would have gladly, therefore, exchanged his experience for that of many whom he despised. He found in self-gratifica-

tion only disappointment and an increase of the appetite which he was unable to appease.

There were others who regretted the course he pursued as well as himself. Among these was one Cæcilius, who, though once a pagan and an idolater, was now a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In what relation he stood to Cyprian we are not informed, but he made him the object of his deepest Christian solicitude, and used every means he could command to bring him to Christ. And he had the joy of seeing his efforts crowned with success, and the high talents of his friend all consecrated to the service of Jesus and the furtherance of His Gospel in the earth. Would that there were more of this! that believers made *individual* souls the object of their care, and bent all their energies to the task of bringing them to the Saviour. Such labour would not be in vain. Men whose salvation is so sought for is generally secured. It may not be so at once. Years of

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prayer, anxiety, and effort may be necessary to secure its accomplishment. But what then? Is not the salvation of a soul worth all that? Cæcilius did not think a lifetime of prayer and pious exertion too much to win Cyprian to Jesus Christ. You know what the salvation of men, aye, of each individual man cost the Lord Himself; then let no effort be deemed too great by us to bring a brother, a child, or a friend within the circle of the Divine family.

The conversion of Cyprian was in the year 246 A. D., and was followed by acts which left no doubt of its reality. He employed his wealth for the relief of needy and persecuted Christians, dissociated himself from those who had been his companions and who still adhered to their idolatries, and issued a treatise in which he maintained the unity of God, showed the absurdity of paganism, and set forth the purposes of the mission of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures now became his earnest, and

constant, and prayerful study; and he soon became efficient in the knowledge of their contents, and one of the most successful defenders of their claims.

His success as an expounder of the Word of God, and the power with which he pressed upon Christians their duties, and defended their rights, soon led to his investment with the ministerial office. So efficiently did he meet the requirements of that office that by the end of two years from his conversion he was called by the unanimous voice of the North African Church to the position of bishop or chief pastor. He would have gladly escaped the duties and responsibilities of such a post, and did all that he could to get them devolved upon another. But the multitude of the believers refused to accede to his wish. He was therefore obliged to accept the position to which the people called him; and soon gave evidence of his fitness for its duties. "Such grace and

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holiness beamed from his face," writes Pontius, his biographer and fellow-labourer, "that he inspired with respect all who beheld him. His countenance was at once frank and thoughtful: he was grave without dulness, gentle without weakness, and combined all these various qualities in such a manner, that it was difficult to say whether he was the more to be loved or revered; indeed, none could doubt that he was worthy of both love and reverence."

"It would have been impossible," says De Pressense, "to withhold affectionate respect from so disinterested and generous a bishop as Cyprian. He showed unwearied devotedness to all the sufferers of his flock: he hesitated at no sacrifice which could bring solace to the poor or to the prisoners. He had sold all his possessions soon after his conversion, that he might distribute to such as had need. A country house with which he had parted came back into his possession by some circumstance

with which we are not acquainted ; he would have sold it again, but that he feared to attract the attention of the persecutors : it was soon known, however, what became of the income he derived from it. Almost the whole sum was divided amongst indigent members of the Church. ‘I implore you,’ he wrote to his clergy, ‘take peculiar care of the widows, the sick, and the poor. If you find some in needy circumstances among the strangers, take all the sums necessary from the money which I left with Rogatian, our fellow-labourer in the priesthood. Lest that fund should be exhausted, I have sent you a fresh supply by the acolyte Maricus, that you may be able promptly and generously to succour our brethren in distress.’”

It was, however, but for a short time that he was allowed to pursue in peace his career of Christian benevolence and service. He was led by the severity of the Decian persecution to withdraw from the scene of his labours, and



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seek for safety in a retreat of secrecy. But here he remembered his brethren in the faith, and sought by letters that he addressed to them to instruct and comfort them, and maintain them in the loyalty of their attachment to the person and cause of Christ. Permitted by an abatement of the persecution to leave his concealment, he reappeared among his people, and gave himself with renewed activity and earnestness to the duties of his office, the maintenance of sound doctrine, the purity of the Church, the encouragement of the faithful, and the excision from the community of the saved of those who, in the hour of danger, had offered incense to heathen gods.

The day for the full testing of Cyprian's own faith at last arrived. But it stood the trial. Nothing could move him from the hope of his calling. He maintained with openness and steadfastness his profession. Banishment was the result. This was soon superseded

by martyrdom. On a new imperial decree appearing, ordering apostates from the religion of their fathers to be punished with death, Cyprian was summoned before the proconsul of the district, and as he persisted in confessing Christ, and declaring Him alone entitled to worship, was condemned to death. Led to a field belonging to himself, he was there, in the midst of crowds of weeping friends, and of thousands of onlooking pagans, beheaded and passed to his martyr-crown.

Like many of his times Cyprian held views of Christian doctrine and practice which probably few in these days would fully accept, but of his loyalty to Christ, and faith in Scripture as the Word of God, there can be no doubt. Then he was as eminent as a scholar as he was devout as a Christian, and in every way qualified to witness to the truth of the Gospels, and bear testimony to the verity of Revelation.

ATHANASIUS.

“This is the true God, and eternal life.”—I JOHN v. 20.

## ATHANASIUS.

GOD has, in every age, shown His care for His Church by the men whom He has raised up for her instruction in pure doctrine, to check the advances of error, defend her from the encroachments of kings and prelates, and lead her on to fresh enterprises and triumphs.

Among such men Athanasius occupied a conspicuous place. He was born at Alexandria in 296 A.D., of parents in moderate circumstances of life. From his comparatively humble condition he rose by superior ability, perseverance, and piety, to occupy a commanding position of influence, do more for the orthodox faith than any other man of his time, and leave behind him a rich legacy of instruction to the Church of the future.

“His first appearance is in a well-known story, which, though doubted in later times from its supposed incongruity with the dignity of a great saint, has,” says Dean Stanley, “every indication of truth. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, was entertaining his clergy in a tower or lofty house overlooking the expanse of sea beside the Alexandrian harbour. He observed a group of children playing on the edge of the shore, and was struck by the grave appearance of their game. His attendant clergy went at his orders to catch the boys and bring them before the bishop, who taxed them with having played at religious ceremonies. At first, like boys caught at a mischievous game, they denied ; but, at last confessed that they had been imitating the sacrament of baptism ; that one of them had been selected to perform the part of bishop, and that he had duly dipped them in the sea, with all the proper questions and addresses. When

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Alexander found that these forms had been observed, he determined that the baptism was valid ; he himself added the consecrating oil of confirmation, and was so much struck with the knowledge and gravity of the boy-bishop that he took him under his charge. That little boy was Athanasius," who, under the bishop's roof and supervision enjoyed advantages which he greatly valued. These, from his love of knowledge and religious zeal, he made the most of, and soon attained to distinction in learning and piety. So satisfied was his generous patron with his fitness for office in the Church, that he made him, even before reaching full manhood, his archdeacon. From his appearance, as well as youth, Athanasius was thought by many to be without the qualifications necessary for the office to which he had been raised. He was in stature a mere dwarf, although in face and expression, according to one of his earliest biographers, was beautiful as

an angel. But the result proved the soundness of the judgment which his bishop had formed of him, and the wisdom of the choice he had made for the vacant office. He found in Athanasius, even a more efficient helper in the fulfilment of his episcopal duties than he had counted on. Fertile in resource, quick in apprehension and accurate in calculation, the archdeacon was everything to him in emergencies that he needed, and he more and more appreciated and loved him.

The Church was now being rent by the Arian controversy. Anxious to put an end to a state of things that was imperilling the peace of the Empire, as well as doing irreparable harm to religion, Constantine summoned a Council of all the Churches of the Roman Empire at Nicæa in Bithynia to settle the questions in dispute. This was in the year 325 A.D. Some three hundred bishops, besides deacons and presbyters, responded to the invitation,



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and discussed the doctrine of the Godhead of the Son of Man. Athanasius who was present with his bishop, specially distinguished himself in the part which he took in the debates, and largely contributed to the result in the adoption of the Nicene Creed. From that time he was the object of Arian hatred and persecution, and subjected to untold annoyances and troubles.

The year after the Nicene Council the Bishop of Alexandria died, and Athanasius was, sorely against his will, raised to the vacant See. This he held for the long period of forty-six years. Scarcely, however, had he entered upon his more responsible duties, when the first of the persecutions assailed him, which drove him again and again into exile, and compelled him to pass *twenty years* away from his diocese.

Under the influence of his sister, who had come under Arian influence, Constantine commanded Athanasius to restore Arius to his place in the Alexandrian Church, of which he

was a presbyter. This the Bishop refused to do, and was banished in consequence to Northern Gaul. The following year, in 337, Constantine died, and Athanasius was restored by the new Emperor, Constantius, to his beloved Alexandria. "The population of the over-joyed city poured forth," as has been related, "to meet him, not as was their habit on such occasions, in the indiscriminate confusion of a modern populace, but in a certain stateliness of arrangement. Each trade and profession kept its own place. The men and women, as in Oriental countries, were apart. The children formed a mass by themselves. As the mighty stream rolled out of the gates, it was as if the Nile at the height of its flood, scattering fertility as it went, had turned in its course and flowed backwards from Alexandria towards the first outpost of the City. As now, so then, the usual mode of moving to and fro along the roads of Egypt was on asses. . . . Branches of trees were

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waved aloft around Athanasius ; carpets of the gayest colours and richest textures were spread under his feet. There was a long unbroken shout of applause ; thousands of hands clapped with delight ; the air was scented with the fragrant ointments poured out ; the city at night flashed with illuminations ; public and private entertainments were given in every house." Such a reception greatly galled his Arian adversaries, and excited them to renewed efforts to gain their purpose with regard to him, to secure his deposition, and final banishment to some remote place of exilement. Charges were soon framed and brought against him, and on the ground of these, false and flimsy as they were, he was condemned and driven into exile. On four or five different occasions this was the case, but the ends sought for by his enemies were far from being secured thereby. They saw that the Word of God was not to be bound, and that the more the leaders of the orthodox faith

were persecuted the more the truth, for which they suffered, was valued and diffused. Besides, Athanasius did more for the spread of Trinitarianism during his years of forced quietude than during those of his active public life. It was in exile that he wrote his best defences of the Divinity of Christ, and the most of his commentaries and other works. The wrath of man was thus made to advance the Divine praise, and what was done to discredit the doctrine of the Saviour's Godhead was over-ruled by the Most High for its fuller elucidation and establishment.

Then that which Athanasius defended and maintained at such cost was his support and comfort in every exilement and trouble. He had evidences of the Oneness of the Son with the Father beyond what he met with on the inspired page. He had *experience* of it in his loneliness and suffering. Christ's words were verified to him ; " he that loveth me shall be

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loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself unto him."

Yes, there are other testimonies to the divinity of Jesus than those that are supplied by the pages of Scripture,—and testimonies that are not to be confuted by any arguments that opponents of the doctrine may adduce. No, you cannot reason me out of my experience. You may silence me as to many of the arguments I bring forward in support of the truth of Revelation, but I know that Christ is what He claims to be, from the repeated consciousness I have had of His presence, the consolation and strength I have realized in communion with Him, and the answers I have had to the prayers I have offered.

But Athanasius was more than a teacher of the Divinity of Christ, he bore, by his writings and oral discourses, full and definite testimony to the Scriptures, in their entireness, as the Word of God. "That testimony," as Dr

Lardner observes, "is very valuable. As we learn from his works, he received the books of the Old and New Testaments as alone of authority, and in which the doctrine of religion is taught with absolute certainty. And, considering the time in which he lived, the acquaintance he had with the several parts of the Christian Church, and the bishops of it, in Egypt, Europe and Asia, and the knowledge he had of ancient Christian literature, his testimony must be reckoned of great use to satisfy us."

Such, then, was the position which Athanasius occupied in the church, and the service, he rendered to the cause of truth. Few men ever lived a more chequered life, enjoyed a wider celebrity, and were more intensely hated by enemies and loved by friends. Whilst his zeal for orthodoxy, and natural impetuosity of temperament frequently led him beyond the limits of Christian moderation both in language and acts towards opponents, yet he was

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sincerely honest in his convictions, and possessed a power in argument and debate rarely exceeded. But withal, he was amiable, generous, and self-sacrificing. There was no service he was not ready to perform, nor self-denial to practise for the help of those whose good he sought, and the maintenance and spread of the doctrines he believed. He was pre-eminently a man for the times, and fitted for the work for which Providence had evidently raised him up. Hence the admiration in which he was held by those who personally knew him, and the estimate put upon his character by men of after times. Gibbon and Stanley, early religious writers and subsequent historians, use very much the same language of eulogy in reference to his attainments and services.

After persistently and intelligently bearing for half a century testimony to the central truth of Christianity, and the verity of the Scriptures, he was permitted to pass the last five years of

his life in the city of his birth, and among the beloved people of his flock. His life had been a martyrdom, and he did not therefore need to die at the stake or under the executioner's axe to be entitled to the martyr's reward. With words of thankfulness upon his lips, and in peace, he passed, in 373, into the joy of his Lord.

But Christianity went on conquering and to conquer. Being of God it was not to be arrested in its progress. It was in vain therefore, that men attempted to frustrate His purpose with regard to it. Dr Farrar has eloquently put the matter in the following passage, with which I shall close the present chapter :—  
“Christianity spent her first three centuries in one long, legalized, almost unbroken persecution. Some of her holiest bishops—an Ignatius, a Polycarp, an Hippolytus; some of her greatest writers—a Justin, an Athanasius, an Origen; even her poor female slaves—a Blandina, a



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Filicita, a Potamiæa, endured the rack or the prison, perished by the sword or flame. 'Yet they stood safe,' said Cyprian, 'stronger than their conquerors; the beaten and lacerated members conquered the beating and lacerating hooks.' 'The nearer I am to the sword,' said Ignatius, 'the nearer to God.' 'We were condemned to the wild beasts,' wrote the youthful S. Perpetua, 'and with hearts full of joy returned to our prison.' 'Call us,' said the fervent Tertullian, 'call us Sarmenticii and Semaxii, names derived from the wood wherewith we are burned, and the stakes to which we are bound; this is the garment of our victory, our embroidered robe, our triumphal chariot.' Such was their 'tremendous spirit;' and when the very executioners were weary, when vast holocausts had been offered to the expiring divinities, then finding, as has been finely said, that she had to deal with a 'host of Scævolas,' the proudest of earthly powers, arrayed in the

plenitude of material resources, humbled herself before a power founded on a mere sense of the unseen.'

"Yes, it was of God, and they could not overthrow it; the catacomb triumphed over the Grecian temple; the cross of shame over the wine-cup and the Salean banquet, the song of the siren and the wreath of rose. These obscure sectaries,—barbarians, orientals, Jews as they were,—fought against the indignant world and won. 'Not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;' by heroic endurance, by stainless innocence, by burning zeal, by inviolable truthfulness, by boundless love. The world's seductive ideals and intoxicating joys, the world's enchanting mythologies and dissolute religions, all fled before a cross of wood!"

BASIL THE GREAT.

“ He liveth long who liveth well !  
All else is being flung away ;  
He liveth longest who can tell  
Of true things truly done each day.”—BONAR.

## BASIL THE GREAT.

“As Athanasius was the great champion of the Catholic faith, while the Arians were in the ascendent, so,” says Dr Newman, “Basil and Gregory Nazianzen in the East, and Ambrose in the West, were the chief instruments of Providence in repairing and strengthening its bulwarks, by word, writing, and deed, when the fury of these assaults was spent. I am not concerned just now with the great Western luminary, Ambrose, but with Basil and Gregory. Of these two, one had to contend with an Arian sovereign, the other with an Arian populace; and they gained the victory each on his own field of battle, the one with the loss of his See, the other at the sacrifice of his life. Premature death, and a solitary old age

were the contrary destinies of the two great saints and dear friends ; the labours of Basil were cut short and the sufferings of Gregory were lengthened out. The scene of Gregory's struggle was the imperial city of Constantinople ; of Basil's, the length and breadth of Asia Minor, and the adjoining provinces."

Basil was the son of Christian parents, who were members of noble and wealthy families, and was born A.D. 329, at Cæsareia, the capital of Cappadocia. As a man of learning, and occupied with teaching, Basil, the father, meant that his son, who began to show at an early period the possession of superior mental powers, should have the best education the times afforded. He accordingly sent him from one school to another, and was not disappointed with the results. Basil made the best use of the advantages his father secured for him, and soon became celebrated for his attainments. He settled in his native city as

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a teacher of rhetoric, and drew around him by his eloquence and learning large numbers of the better class of young men as pupils. In his eager pursuit of knowledge and fame he forgot, however, the religious instructions of his early home life, and puffed up with the pride of philosophy and science stood aloof from the Christian community, and refused to occupy himself with the study of the Scriptures. He was unable, however, to resist his mother's prayers and appeals. Won by her at last, to the faith of Christ, he threw himself with all the force of his earnest nature into the cause he had been led to espouse. Christianity was now everything to him, and there was nothing he was not prepared to undertake and sacrifice to farther its extension. Ordained to the office of the ministry, he preached the Gospel with faithfulness and fervour, and set his face like a flint against the errors in doctrine and practice that were only too prevalent.

Led by the jealousy of his bishop, and the falling away from the truth of some whom he was unable to recall to the faith of Christ, he withdrew to a remote and secluded district in Pontus, where he passed some years in retirement, the practice of the severest asceticism, and the establishment of monasteries, hospitals for the poor, orphanages, and other homes of beneficence.

Returning to his native city, in Cappadocia, to help to stem the tide of heresy, and protect the Church of his fathers from the evils with which it was threatened, he was soon, in consequence of the death of Eusebius, raised to the bishopric of the diocese. His opportunities of usefulness were now greatly extended, and he availed himself of them to the utmost of his strength. His life was one of incessant activity, yet in the midst of manifold engagements he made time for the closest and most critical study of the Word of God. An almost un-



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broken stream of works proceeded from his pen, and, for the most part, on subjects of profound importance and practical worth. He is said to have written, in addition to the publications referred to, commentaries on almost all the books of Scripture.

His testimony to the authority and genuineness of these books might be argued from the value he set upon them, the time he gave to their study, and the pains he was at to make them intelligible and attractive to others; but, in addition to this, we have his own unmistakable words as to their importance and sufficiency as a rule of faith and practice to men. His language, in a homily upon the first Psalm, according to Laraneris is: "All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable, and for that end was written by the Spirit, that, as in a common treasury of medicines for souls, all men might find what is proper for the healing of their several maladies. The prophets teach some

things, the historical books other things, the law others : and the Proverbs have instructions for regulating our manners. The book of Psalms contains whatever is useful in all the rest."

Again : "The best way to know our duty is to meditate on the divinely inspired Scriptures : here are instructions concerning our conduct ; and the examples of good men recorded therein, are as it were living patterns, set before us for our imitation. And whatever malady any man labours under, if he acquaints himself with the Scriptures, he will there find a medicine suited to his case."

Such testimony from a man of Basil's attainments, piety, and position, is of great moment and value, and forms an important link in the chain of the Christian evidences here supplied. I therefore give it a place in the present series, and feel that in doing so I am serving the cause I am seeking to promote.

Basil was far from being allowed to pursue

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uninterruptedly his life of activity and usefulness. Charges were often trumped up against him by the Arian bishops around, and difficulties put in his way. Those who ought to have been the first to stand by and assist him in his efforts to heal the divisions by which the Church was rent, and put down the heresies that prevailed, often stood aloof, and left him to bear alone the brunt of the assaults of many foes. Yet he felt that he was not alone. The arm on which he leaned was his support. The Saviour he trusted did not leave him without the evidence of His presence, approval, and help, and he was kept from the fear of man, and any halting in his career.

What Ambrose, in the West, was, in Christian intrepidity and adherence to duty, that Basil was in the East. Accordingly, when the Arian Emperor Valens made a tour through Asia Minor, with the fixed resolve of exterminating the orthodox faith and establishing

in its place the creed he professed, Basil awaited his arrival at Cæsareia with as fixed a resolve to oppose his purpose, and resist his imperial authority. Of this Valens was informed at Cæsareia, and from other things he had heard respecting Basil's popularity and power, was led to moderate the demands he had intended making. "To bring matters, however, to an issue, the Emperor on reaching the city, presented himself among the worshippers in the Church in which the bishop was, at the moment, conducting a service. He found the place crowded with people, and their chanted psalms pealing forth like thunder. Basil was, at the instant, celebrating the eucharistic sacrifice, standing, according to the primitive custom, behind the altar with his face to the congregation, supported on either hand by the semicircle of his attendant clergy. 'The unearthly majesty of the scene,' the rapt devotion of the Archbishop, erect like a

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column before the holy table, the reverent order of the immense throng, 'more like that of angels than of men,' overpowered the weak and excitable Valens, and he almost fainted away. When the time came for making his offering, and the ministers were hesitating whether they should receive an oblation from the hand of a heretic, his limbs failed him, and but for the aid of one of the clergy he would have fallen. Basil pitying his enemy's weakness, came forward himself and accepted the gift from his trembling hand. The next day, Valens again visited the Church, and listened with reverence to Basil's preaching, and made his offerings which were not now rejected. . . . An interview followed, and the Emperor retired so well pleased with what he saw and heard that he made Basil a grant of lands for the poorhouse he was erecting."

Worn out by his manifold labours, various trials, and severe austerities, Basil, though only

fifty years of age, succumbed to the disease which had long afflicted him. "His deathbed was surrounded by crowds of the citizens, ready," writes his friend Gregory, "to give part of their own life to lengthen that of their bishop. He breathed his last with the words, 'into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' His funeral was attended by enormous crowds, who thronged to touch the bier, or the hem of his funeral garments, or even to catch a distant glimpse of his face. The press was so great that several persons were crushed to death; almost the object of envy because they died with Basil." "They carried him to his grave and made great lamentation over him."

So lived and died one who neither courted the smile, nor dreaded the frown of man; whom nothing could drive nor draw from the path of duty, and who as "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministered the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might

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be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." By his life he illustrated the transforming power of the Gospel he believed and preached, and by his death its sustaining consolations. But what Christianity was to him it may be to writer and reader alike,—the Power of God to Salvation.





AMBROSE.

“ The proud he tamed, the penitent he cheered,  
Nor to rebuke the rich offender feared ;  
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,  
A living sermon of the truths he taught.”—DRYDEN.

## AMBROSE.

GOD never calls his servants to posts of difficulty and high responsibility in His Church without preparing them for them. They may not themselves be conscious of the process of which they are the subjects, nor have any idea that they are being trained for another than the way of life they have chosen,—but the purpose of God with regard to them is meanwhile being fulfilled. He fits them, as has sometimes been the case, by the exercise of civil authority for being spiritual rulers in His kingdom, and by the work of instructing men in matters belonging to the present life for being the teachers of righteousness and truth. So Ambrose, who was born in 340, and of parents of high rank, was prepared for the

position he afterwards occupied. His father who was Prefect or Governor of Gaul,—including France and Spain, and Great Britain,—dying in early manhood, the widow settled in Rome, for the purpose of obtaining the best possible education for her two boys and only daughter. Possessed of means she spared neither money nor pains in carrying out her wish with respect to them, and she had the satisfaction of seeing her desire gratified.

Ambrose chose the profession of the law, which was then, as Gibbon says, the usual path to the highest civil offices. When he had completed the round of the studies deemed necessary as a preparation for the office of an advocate, he commenced the practice of a pleader in the Court of the Praetorian Prefect of Italy. Here he soon reached the highest position the Court had at its disposal. But at this point he did not stop. So impressed was the Prefect with his abilities and integrity that

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he made him Governor of the provinces of Liguria and Æmelia, with his head-quarters at Milan.

How long this civil post was held by him we are not informed, but the testimony of those who had every opportunity of forming a correct judgment was, that “he made an admirable magistrate, and became known to the people of the regions he ruled, as a high-minded conscientious and religious man.”

The story of his translation from a civil to an ecclesiastical office has often been told—and is this: Auxentius, the Arian bishop of Milan dying in 374, a warm contest arose between the Arian and orthodox parties, as to his successor. The strife becoming more and more violent, and fearing its issue, Ambrose appeared in his character of Governor, where the parties were assembled, and addressed them so calmly and Christianly, with the view of allaying irritation and leading to a peaceful result, that

he no sooner resumed his seat, than a cry arose, "Ambrose for bishop!" The cry was taken up by both parties, and by an unanimous vote his election to the vacant See was proclaimed. No one was so much surprised at the issue of his appearance on the scene to keep order as himself. He persistently and absolutely refused to accept the proffered honour. It was true he was a Christian, but he had not even been baptised, was the merest novice in religious knowledge and experience, and wholly therefore unfitted for the position to which he was called. But the people would not be refused. The Emperor confirmed the election, and insisted on Ambrose acceding to the wish so earnestly and unanimously expressed. Yielding, at last, to the arguments and solicitations addressed to him, he gave himself to the task of preparing for the duties of the Episcopal office. That he might not be impeded in the performance of these duties by any

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external encumbrance he distributed a large amount of his wealth among the poor of his diocese, provided for the support of his sister, and handed over what remained to the management of his much loved brother, Satyrus.

As has been said “the *vox populi* was never more thoroughly justified than in the election of Ambrose to the vacant diocese of Milan. He was exactly fitted to become a great bishop. . . . The foundation of his excellence was laid in a singular and unsullied purity of character; he had a natural love of teaching and governing, warm sympathies, eminent practical abilities, an undaunted courage, stimulated by the ambition of martyrdom, and a religious spirit so devout and eager that the only faults with which he can be charged may be attributed to an excess of Episcopal zeal.” He found in his See precisely his place, and laboured for the period of twenty-three years in the fulfilment of its duties.

He was at the same time an ardent student as well as a hard worker ; searched the Scriptures with daily and prayerful painstaking, and never was content to ascend the pulpit without having, for his hearers, what was fitted to deepen their interest in the Word of God and quicken them in the ways of righteousness.

“He studied,” as has been said, “in order to teach, and he taught with a constant eye to edification. One would say that he was always thinking how he could give the best instruction to the flock committed to his charge, from the Emperor to the lowest of the people, so as to train them in soundness of faith and purity of life. His intellect was quick in perception and fertile in illustration. In doctrine he followed reverently what was of best repute in the Church in his time, carefully guarding his own and his people’s orthodoxy from all heresy, and urging, but with wholesome, if not always consistent qualifications, the ascetic religious



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perfection which the best Christians were then pursuing."

But the time that he could spare from the public and official duties of his position was not all occupied with reading and increasing his resources in knowledge, much of it was given to writing. A large number of works therefore, in the form of commentaries, treatises, and sermons passed from under his hand.

Yet he was subject to many interruptions. The times in which he lived, and the extent of the diocese he ruled, made great demands upon him. Arianism was moreover ever placing obstructions in his way, and requiring to be dealt with. Such occasions were never, however, evaded, nor did he ever cease to oppose by spoken and written discourse the Christ-dishonouring system, till he had cleared his diocese of it. It mattered not what was the form under which it appeared, or the persons by whom it was upheld, he had nothing for it but strongest

argument and sternest denouncement. His reply to the Empress Justina, the mother of the reigning Sovereign, accordingly was, when asking for a Church in Milan to be given to the Arians for worship, "Palaces are for Kings, Churches are for Christ, and, as His servant, I refuse to accede to any such wish." The refusal filled Justina with wrath, and the determination to have her revenge, but Ambrose was in no way disquieted by her threats. The honour of Christ was more to him than the favour of princes, and nothing could induce or drive him to do anything derogatory to the claims of his Lord.

But his courage for truth went beyond opposition to the will of the Empress. When Theodosius, who wielded undivided sway over the Roman world, was guilty of the crime of ordering the indiscriminate slaughter of thousands of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, in consequence of the murder of several of his

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officers in a popular outbreak, Ambrose not only reprov'd him in a letter he address'd to him, and condemn'd in severest terms the act of which he had been guilty, and by which so many unoffending and innocent persons had lost their lives, but, for eight months, closed the Church against him, and deprived him of all its privileges.

“On the feast of the *Nativity*, Theodosius entreated to be admitted (and restored to Christian privileges). Ambrose replied ‘The Emperor might kill him, but only over his body could he pass into the Church.’ The Emperor answered, ‘Remember David, who was the man after God’s own heart, and yet committed murder.’ Ambrose replied, ‘Thou hast imitated David in his sins; imitate him also in his penitence.’ At length,” adds the Rev. A. Reed, “Theodosius was restored, on condition of his public penance, and of his issuing an edict prohibiting all capital punish-

ment for thirty days (after the sentence of death had been pronounced).

“The great ruler and conqueror, after the long delay, obtained the desired absolution, and entered the place of penitents, disrobed, prostrating himself, beating his breast, tearing his hair, and watering the ground with his tears. The whole world admired this rigorous justice of the Church, by which an Emperor was made to humble himself like the meanest transgressor.”

Ambrose had the honour of being, under God, the means of the conversion and admission into the Church of the greatest of the Christian Fathers—Augustine. The probability is that he foresaw, from his intercourse with the learned and eloquent teacher of rhetoric, something of the service that he would render to the Church were he to become fully decided for Christ, but doubtless had no idea of the extent of the service which Augustine

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actually rendered to the truth. No, we never know where the word we speak for our Lord may travel. The influence we put in motion for Him may never pause till it reaches the ends of the earth. The soul you bring to Jesus may be the blessed means of leading many others to Him. The young man you induce to join a Bible Class, or to become a listener to the Gospel of God's grace, may, before many years have passed, be like a Whitfield or a Williams, the bearer of the glad tidings of salvation from island to island, and continent to continent. At all events to "convert a sinner from the error of his way is to save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

Although Ambrose's interpretations of Scripture are not always to be depended upon, owing to his fondness for allegorical expositions, yet few men, of early times, did more to maintain the orthodox faith,—the Tri-unity of the Godhead, the Divinity of the

Lord Jesus, the necessity of the Spirit in regeneration, the authority and sufficiency of the Word of God, the salvation of men by grace, and the practical character of faith, or bore a fuller and better testimony to the claims of Christianity. He laid the Church, not only of his own times, but of future generations under great obligation, by the stand which he made in writing and oral discourse for her prerogatives and the doctrines of the cross, and against Arianism and other prevailing forms of error. He lived to honour God and God honoured him, by the success with which He crowned his labours, the extent of service for the Church He enabled him to render, the joy with which He filled the cup of his daily experience, and the serene and trustful death He gave him to realize.

CHRYSOSTOM.

“An eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures.”—ACTS  
xviii. 24.



## CHRYSOSTOM.

No figure stands out with greater distinctness and attraction on the canvas of the Church's early history than John of Antioch, or Chrysostom of the "golden mouth."

The question, how he came to reach the extraordinary position he occupied and the lofty reputation he acquired, has been differently answered. He was not always wise in the plans of action he adopted, and considerate in the spirit he displayed. He was an ascetic in his habits, and in the opinions he, from time to time, broached was contracted and erroneous. "Yet the fact is beyond dispute that he earned imperishable glory, wrote books that can never die, filled the world with his fame, and, at this hour is more widely known than ever."

The explanation of this is probably to be found in the position he occupied, which admitted of his singular qualities having the fullest scope; and in the fact, that he was possessed of "a fine genius, high mental culture, ardent piety and surpassing eloquence; above all, that the Spirit of God dwelt in him in an extraordinary measure, and worked in him with marvellous power. Hence his rare insight into the meaning of the Word of God, and his realizing sense of its power and glory. His soul enjoyed a perpetual illumination, and the holy fire which burned in his heart was fed continually by an unseen hand. Hence it was with him as with Paul, when he said, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.' Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. The one was ever full, and therefore the other was ever open. He was constantly receiving, and therefore was constantly giving out. 'And, moreover,

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because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge ; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words ; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the master of assemblies which are given from one shepherd.' ”

Chrysostom was born at Antioch in the year 347 A. D. His parents were of noble rank and connected with the best families in the city. His father, Secundus, filled a high military post, but died soon after his son's birth. Bereaved of her husband at so early a date after marriage Anthusa, who was at the time only twenty years of age, devoted herself to the well-being of her fatherless boy, and especially, as an earnest Christian woman, to his religious training. To that training Chrysostom owed in no small measure,

under God, the usefulness and celebrity of after years.

Christianity has in every age been indebted to mothers of piety for men of usefulness and power. The case of Monica, the mother of Augustine, is too well known to be dwelt on. But what Anthusa was to Chrysostom, and Monica to Augustine, Nonna was to Gregory of Nazianzen, and Emmelia, his grandmother, to Basil the Great; Doddridge's mother was also to him, and John Wesley's to her two eminent sons.

But what these and many other mothers were to their sons, those whose eyes fall upon this page may be to theirs. Yes, Christian mothers, you may be the means, by the prayers you offer for them, and the religious instruction you give to them, of preparing your children for lives of highest usefulness and influence in the Church of God.

Possessed of wealth Anthusa gave to Chrysostom the best education she could command

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for him. She placed him under the most distinguished teachers of his native city. Proficiency in every attainment he pursued was soon acquired, and the highest expectations were formed of him by those who marked his career, and felt interested in his future. Destined for the profession of the law, he commenced practice as an advocate as soon as his course of study for such a position closed. "His gift of eloquence speedily displayed itself. His speeches were listened to with delight and applauded by all. A brilliant career was opening before him, leading to what multitudes most court, wealth, fame, and high place. But a change gradual, but mighty, came over his spirit, and like another student of former days, 'the things that were gain to him he counted loss for Christ.'" Quitting the law, he resolved to give himself to religious pursuits, and that he might do so with advantage determined to leave the city with its distractions and temptations, and retire to one of the remotest hermit-

ages of Syria. To such a step his mother refused to give any countenance, and pleaded so earnestly and beseechingly with him to renounce his intention, that he meanwhile abandoned it, and became under the direction of the Bishop of Antioch a public reader of the Scriptures. His earnest craving for retirement was at length however gratified. He joined a band of monks who had taken up their abode in a group of solitary hills a few miles from the city. Here he remained nearly six years, passing his time in the study of the Scriptures, the fulfilment of services for others, and meditation and prayer. Returning at the end of that time to Antioch, broken in health and weakened in constitution by the privations to which he had voluntarily subjected himself, he was after a while ordained to the office of deacon, and then to that of presbyter. In the latter character he was associated with the bishop or chief pastor of the Church in ministerial work.

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He was now in his true place, and had the opportunity of pouring forth the truths "that had for years been pressing for utterance, but for which no sufficient outlet had yet been obtained. The sluices were now opened, and the pent up waters broke loose with all the force and fulness of a tidal current."

Already known for his talents and eloquence, a thronging crowd greeted his first appearance in the pulpit. Dr Macgilvray, in his excellent life of the Christian father, thus describes the scene: "The devotional exercises being concluded, Chrysostom opened the manuscript Bible that lay on the desk before him, from which he read out his text, and began his exposition in a calm, measured, deliberate style of speech, for which he was afterwards famed. The tones of his voice, rich and sonorous, were laden with meaning, and betrayed in their tremulous falls 'the motion of a hidden fire.' This, along with that metallic distinctness of

utterance which always marks out the natural orator, and which conveys the force, not only of every sentence, but almost of every syllable, arrested at once the attention of the audience. As he advanced from exposition to illustration, from Scriptural principle to practical appeals, his delivery became gradually more rapid, his countenance more animated, his voice more vivid and intense. The people began to hold in their breath. The joints of their loins were loosening. A creeping sensation, like that produced by a series of electric waves, passed over them. They felt as if drawn forwards toward the pulpit by a sort of magnetic influence. Some of those who were sitting rose from their seats; others were overcome with a kind of faintness, as if the preacher's mental force were sucking the life out of their bodies; and by the time the discourse came to an end, the great mass of that spell-bound audience could only hold their heads, and give vent to their emotion in tears.



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For a while at first, they looked at each other with glances of wondering delight, and clapped their hands in ecstasy; but the speaker, as if rather interrupted than gratified by these tokens of their admiration, rushed on and bore down their attempts at applause; and long before he was done, admiration gave way to such intense emotion that they were no longer able to express their feelings in the customary form. In fact, the speaker was lost in the splendour and power of his speech. His hearers were past thinking of him, by the very force with which he turned their thoughts in upon themselves, and on the vital and almost visible truths with which he seized, filled, and mastered their minds. His person vanished, as it were, into a voice; and from the utter stillness that prevailed, it was like 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness,' and answered only by the sighing winds of the waste."

As Chrysostom began his public ministry,

so he continued it, and for the next ten years in Antioch attracted crowded audiences as often as he ascended the pulpit, and electrified them by his eloquence. But what he addressed to the thousands that almost daily listened to him were not merely oratorical harangues, but the most solid and practical instruction. He publicly expounded, it is said, during that time the entire Word of God; while seventy-five homilies or sermons on the book of Genesis; one hundred and forty on the Psalms; seventy-seven on the Prophets; fifty-four on the Acts, and two hundred and forty-four on the Epistles, still exist to show how persevering was his industry, and what pains he took to ground his audiences in a knowledge of Scripture doctrine and Christian duty.

He manifested his appreciation of the Scriptures, and bore testimony to their truth, by the diligence and delight with which he studied them, and the faithfulness and fulness

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with which he expounded them both by pen and in oral discourse for the instruction of men.

But the course he pursued, as was certain to be the case, gave offence to many. The way in which he grappled with men's consciences, laid bare the secrets of their hearts, and rebuked and denounced their superstitions and sins, excited against him on the part of numbers, the deepest hostility and dislike. While they could not but admire him for his eloquence, and respect him for his generousness and honesty, they hated him for the severity of his reproofs and the strictness of the morals he enforced.

And the men who thus felt towards Chrysostom were not of the hundred thousand in the city who still professed and practised idolatry, but more largely of the other hundred thousand who avowed Christianity. But God often withdraws the gifts from men which they fail to value; extinguishes the light in which

they refuse to walk, and removes the power which is allowed by them to lie in abeyance. "From him that hath not He taketh away even that which he hath." So he acted by the men of Antioch. He transferred to another people the ministry they failed to appreciate and profit by. And so he may act by the reader. Yes, you may, dear friend, lose what you have ; see the privileges you enjoy passed on to others through not being valued and used by you, and the door that now invites your admission finally closed against you. "Walk then in the light while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." "Seek the Lord while He may be found ; call upon Him while He is near." "Let no man take thy crown."

CHRYSOSTOM—*continued.*

“Continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine.”—ACTS ii. 42.

## CHRYSOSTOM—*continued.*

THE fame of Chrysostom as a preacher travelled far and wide. Men were drawn from all parts by what they heard of his public discourses to be listeners to his eloquence. His majestic utterances, burning words, and sweeping oratory seem to have impressed very much alike the different classes of his audience.

Among those who heard him and were deeply impressed with his superior abilities and masterly command of language, was Eutropius, principal chamberlain and prime minister at the imperial court of Constantinople. From the hour he was so favoured he made up his mind to have the great preacher transferred to the Capital of the Empire. The opportunity

for Eutropius carrying out his intention soon presented itself by the death of the then Archbishop of the Metropolis. To none was his appointment to the vacant See more a surprise than to Chrysostom himself. He declined the honour and responsibility, preferring a thousand times over to remain where he was, notwithstanding the difficulty which the frivolity and luxury of the population around him offered to his successful fulfilment of his ministry, and the hatred and opposition which his faithfulness had drawn forth against him. But Eutropius, and those who were of the same mind with him, were not to be baffled in their intention. They resolved that Chrysostom should be *brought* if he would not *come*. Enticed out of Antioch, under a false pretence, he was forced into a carriage waiting for him, and driven off. In due time he reached the scene of his future labours, which he found to be anything but a field of easy cultivation and



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remunerative labour. It was the seat of government for the Eastern Empire, and the abode of royalty, a proud aristocracy, and a large and mixed population. Whatever were the hindrances he found to the spiritual success of his ministry in Antioch he found them intensified and extended in the Capital of the Empire.

From the beauty and advantages of its situation, the pains which Constantine, its founder, took with its construction and adornment, and the presence of royalty, the Court, and all the high officers of state, Constantinople soon drew to itself a large population, and rose to great power and wealth.

It not only stood on the confines of Europe and Asia, by the straits of the Bosphorus, and within sight of some of the most interesting spots and objects on the face of the earth, but, like the Rome it was intended to surpass in magnificence and splendour, “ was built on a group of seven

hills, rising above each other in regular succession, five of which were inclosed by the walls. Its length was about three, and its circumference about fourteen Roman miles. The streets and buildings were designed on the most sumptuous scale ; and if the reign of Constantine produced no such artificers as the men who in the days of the early Cæsars executed those works of art which all succeeding ages have admired and sought in vain to rival, the Emperor stripped the cities of Greece and Asia of their noblest monuments, so as by means of them to enhance the splendour of his new metropolis. Besides a variety of pillars, obelisks and other remains of ancient art thus appropriated, we are told that among the Grecian statues with which the forum was adorned was a famous one of Apollo—the work of the celebrated Phidias. It was of bronze, and stood on a pillar a hundred and twenty feet high, composed partly of white marble and

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partly of porphyry. The palace was a magnificent edifice, which scarcely yielded to the residence of Rome itself, and which, together with the dependent courts, gardens and porticoes, covered a large space of ground." Many of the public buildings and residences of the nobility around were of a style to match. Constantinople was thus, only a few years from the time it was founded, the pride of its inhabitants and the admiration of all who saw it.

Such was the city, with its gaiety and grandeur, abundant wealth and manifold pleasures, mixed populations, and men of all creeds and characters in which the lot of Chrysostom was now cast.

But the circumstances in no way affected him, either as to his habits, style of living, or manner of preaching. He was therefore in the pulpit at Constantinople what he had been in the pulpit at Antioch. Faith, humility,

and purity, were insisted on with the same earnestness; and the sins of worldliness and self-indulgence denounced and condemned with the same unsparing severity. He fortified all, however, he said by the authority of Scripture. His ministry was emphatically one of the Word of God. He preached what he believed; condemned what Holy Scripture forbade, and encouraged what it commanded. His ministry was thus a daily testimony to the truth and authority of the Bible, and a reflexion of the mind of Christ. Multitudes felt it to be so, and, as such, a means of life and blessing to them, and they supported it, and cherished great personal attachment to him who exercised it. But what was a savour of life to many was a savour of death to not a few. There were those who disliked and decried the ministry of Chrysostom as well as those who everywhere, and in the highest terms they could employ, commended it. In the case of the

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former, it rebuked their sins, and excited their wrath ; in the case of the latter opened to them the Scriptures, and filled them with gratitude and joy.

Many who had envied the great preacher his elevation, and felt condemned by the life he lived and the ministry he fulfilled, were determined to find an occasion for depriving him of the support of the court, and securing his deposition and banishment from the capital. The occasion was soon found. It was reported to the vain and impetuous Empress Eudoxia that words of a depreciatory character which he had uttered were meant for her, and that she was being publicly held up by him to the contempt and indignation of the populace. Charges of heresy were also alleged against him. A council was summoned, and he was condemned and deprived of his Sec.

The news of Chrysostom's deposition threw the city into a state of the utmost excitement,

and great fear was felt as to the result. "The government had hardly realized the immense influence which Chrysostom had gained at Constantinople. For three days the people crowded to the church to hear his farewell addresses. At length he feared a tumult would be excited, and yielded himself to those who were sent to arrest him. The escort took him to a boat, and he was quickly ferried across the Hellespont; but next morning the whole city was in an uproar. An earthquake, which occurred the same night, was sent, they were persuaded, as a judgment for the removal of their teacher. So threatening was the appearance of affairs, that the Emperor at once ordered his immediate recal from banishment. His return was a perfect triumph. A thousand boats thronged the Straits with music and banners and torches; and, on his arrival, the multitude bore him to his throne, and would not disperse until

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he had preached them a sermon on the spot."

Chrysostom resumed his duties, and for a while pursued them in peace. Nor did he fail to make the best use of such a season for the accomplishment of the true ends of his ministry. He had the joy of seeing the object at which he aimed largely secured. Success of the most vital and spiritual kind attended his discourses. "It was a time," as has been said, "of real refreshing both to himself and to multitudes of his attached flock. The bruised reed was recovering its elasticity, and waving its head above the wind; the smoking flax was again breaking out into a bright, glowing, and far-shining flame. The people at Constantinople as they listened to the 'old man eloquent' day after day, and felt that he was speaking 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power,' became more and more exasperated against the treacherous men who had combined

together for the purpose of destroying his character, and driving him from the Episcopal chair of the metropolis."

It was, however, impossible for Chrysostom to escape the plots of his enemies for his destruction. Their defeat in their recent attempt made them only the more determined to carry their design, with regard to him, into effect. Hating his doctrine, and feeling themselves reproved by every sermon he delivered, they were resolved that he should not escape. And they were only too soon successful. Believing the charges that were trumped up against him, the weak-minded and unworthy Emperor, Arcadius, ordered him to quit his Episcopal residence and leave the city. He was commanded to be conducted by the soldiers, to whom he was entrusted, in the first place to Nicaea in Asia Minor. Here he remained a month, awaiting the farther orders of the Emperor. These arrived at the end



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of that time, banishing him to Cucusus, a wretched place, on the distant confines of Armenia. Here the hardships and sufferings he endured told greatly and painfully upon a constitution already weakened by fatigue, and the labours and privations he had undergone. Yet friends gathered around him, and did all that lay in their power to ameliorate his condition. He drew his highest comfort from that Word which it had been his delight to expound and defend as God's all-sufficient revelation of mercy and truth to man, and from communion with Him whom he had long known as his Saviour and Friend, and whom he had made the sum and substance of a thousand addresses to the multitudes that had gathered around him both in Antioch and in Constantinople.

The very mitigation of his sufferings by his friends but inflamed yet more the fury of his enemies, who succeeded in getting him driven to a still more distant place of exile, at Pytyus

on the Euxine or Black Sea. He died on the way, breathing out his spirit with the language of joyful exultation upon his lips. His last words were those that often fell from him; "Glory be to God for everything." This was on the 14th of September 407, and in the sixty-first year of his age.

Such were the circumstances under which the greatest teacher of the age, and one of the ablest witnesses of early times to the genuineness of Scripture and the truth of Christianity, ended a glorious career, and passed into the joy of his Lord. As has already been said, he might not be always wise, and the first in every department of Christian work and doctrine, but few men ever made so deep an impression for good upon their age, more grandly advocated the claims of the Gospel, and more manifestly and beautifully illustrated by their life the transforming power of Divine truth: well, therefore, does he deserve the position that has

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always been assigned to him among the early witnesses to the genuineness of the Gospel and the supernatural character of the Holy Scriptures. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."



AUGUSTINE.

“Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”—ROM. iii. 24.

## AUGUSTINE.

THE grace of God never was more magnified in men's salvation than by the conversion and Christian life of Aurelius Augustine. It raised him from the lowest depths of depravity to occupy a place among the princely and pure in the kingdom of God, rendered him the first of the uninspired writers of early times, and made him a pre-eminent witness to the freeness and power of Divine love. By no one was a more effective breakwater presented to the inflowing errors of his day, nor the Church of subsequent times laid under greater obligation.

He was born at Thegaste, not far from Carthage, in the kingdom of Numidia on the 13th of November, 354 A.D. Monica, his

mother, was a woman of eminent piety and prayer, who sought by every means in her power, to lead him in early life to know and love the Saviour. But it was not till he was *thirty* years of age that she saw the desire of her heart with regard to him fulfilled. She never, however, ceased to wrestle with God on his behalf, and to believe that the day for which she so longed, in which he would make a full decision for Christ and wholly devote himself to His service, would arrive. And she was not disappointed. A holy mother's tears and prayers on behalf of a son are what God never disregards. The answer, as in the case of Monica, may long be delayed, but is never entirely withheld. Hence the numbers of believers, in every age, who have attributed their salvation to the means employed by pious mothers for that end ; and hence, too, the men of eminence in the Church whose decision for Christ has been the fruit and reward of earnest



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and continued maternal intercession. No, ye mothers in Israel, you have no cause for despondency and discouragement. Others, situated as you are, have prevailed and had the joy of seeing the sons for whose salvation they have travailed as in birth, wholly devoted to Christ. And so it will be with you if equally persevering and expectant in your supplications.

Monica's prayers, as we may believe, were often hindered by the spirit and conduct of her husband. Patricius was a man of violent temper, and a devoted idolater. As such he was, no doubt, often an obstruction to the mother in her approaches to God on behalf of her child. But hers was no isolated experience here. The prayers of wives have often been hindered by their husbands. Forbidden marriages are far from being uncommon. But O how fruitful of evils they are ! The piety of those who contract them invariably suffers, influences for good that are sought to be exerted are neutralized,

and prayer is restrained, if not hindered ; children are misled by the divided opinions of their parents, and the order and peace that otherwise would mark the home are far absent.

As Augustine indicated, at an early age, the possession of superior mental powers, Patricius resolved that he should have the best education his means would allow. The boy was sent to a school in his native place ; and when possessed of all that was to be acquired there, was sent to a superior educational establishment at Madaura, a neighbouring town. From thence he passed before long to Carthage where he enjoyed still higher advantages. Here the evil tendencies which, to the great sorrow of Monica, he had shown even in childhood, found scope for their development, in attendance on the stage, and at the circus, and in association with the bad companions to whom he allied himself. He plunged into every excess of evil. There was no Broadway of sin he did not follow, nor

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any unhallowed or corrupt passion of his nature which he did not gratify. He found, however, no satisfaction in the course of unrestrained lawlessness and self-indulgence he pursued. And who ever did? What man ever found the way of transgressors to be other than the Scriptures describe? You but *in-flame* the passions you gratify, and *quicken* unsanctified appetite by what you minister to it. So it was with Augustine. He found no satisfaction in the pleasures to which he gave himself up: "he was stricken down by an illness which could find its cure only at the foot of the cross. He endeavoured to find peace in literary pursuits, and threw himself into that direction with intense energy. The longings of his soul were, however, not appeased; nor was he a man who would seek in rhetoric a compensation for the loss of faith. . . . He endeavoured to find in the theatre and amidst the games of the circus a kind of intoxicating

forgetfulness, but the only result was that his evil passions received thereby a fresh impulse. Even friendship proved to him an insufficient remedy; it became the source of his bitterest sorrows, and the loss of a friend rendered life insupportable."

In addition to the grief caused her by the life of wickedness led by her son, Monica had the further sorrow of losing at this time her husband. She had the comfort, however, of knowing that he died a Christian. His salvation had been as much a burden to her as that of Augustine; but a year before his death he gave evidence of being the possessor of the mercy she had so long and earnestly sought for him. That evidence became fuller and clearer during every succeeding week of his life, and filled the heart of his pious and devoted wife with thankfulness and joy.

Apprised of his father's illness, Augustine

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hastened to Thegaste, but arrived too late to find him alive. The impression for good which the bereavement made upon him, now in his seventeenth year, was of the most temporary description. He accordingly continued his life of dissipation and debauchery, going from bad to worse, and sinking lower and lower in the mire of corruption. His own account, in his "*Confessions*," of the life he led at this time is of the most astounding and saddening character. He speaks of himself as "walking the streets of Babylon, with companions as bad as himself, and wallowing in the mire thereof, as if in a bed of spices and precious ointments ;" as "having the briers of unclean desires growing rank over his head ;" "plunging into every excess of sensuality and crime," and as "treating his mother's words of anxious solicitude and wholesome counsel as womanish devices."

In the midst of the course of folly and sin he was thus pursuing, Augustine was somewhat

arrested by the perusal of Cicero's *Hortensius*, which spoke to him in beautiful language of God and immortality, and led him to make higher themes the subjects of his study than had previously occupied his thoughts. He turned to the Word of God, but doing so more in the spirit of a philosopher than of a little child, did not find in it what he needed and desired. Brought at this time, when he was beginning to thirst for the truth which alone could appease his cravings, and give him rest of soul, into connection with the sect of the Manichaeans, which professed to have the last revelation of God to men, to know that matter is the source of evil, and to be able to put all inquiring and troubled souls into the possession of what purifies and satisfies, he joined himself to them, and continued one of their number for the next ten years.

“He was flattered by the eagerness with which they welcomed him as a disciple. He

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rejoiced to escape the humiliation and the shame of coming as a sinner to beg for salvation, which he was unworthy to receive, and which God bestows solely from his undeserved grace and love. No man afterwards grasped the truth, 'By grace ye are saved,' more fully than did Augustine. He had, however, yet to learn by painful experience how worthless are all grounds of hope or expectation that exist not in Christ alone.

"For a time he boldly avowed his new opinions. It was a fresh source of grief to Monica. Would her gifted but unhappy son never arrive at the truth? In a dream she saw herself standing on a certain wooden plank, and a person approaching with a cheerful and smiling countenance, whilst she herself was overwhelmed with sorrow. 'Why do you weep?' he asked. 'I bewail,' she answered, 'my son's perdition.' He bade her take courage, telling her to look and see that where she was, there

he was also. When Monica, in her joy, related her dream to Augustine, the latter interpreted it to mean that she would one day adopt his opinions. 'No,' she answered promptly, 'it said, not that I was standing where you do, but that you were standing where I am.' Her faith moved him more than the dream itself.

"Augustine tells us that at this period his mother called upon a pious bishop and begged him to speak to her son. 'Do see him, refute his errors, unteach him the evil, and teach him the good.' 'Let him alone,' the old man answered, 'he is as yet unteachable and puffed up with the novelty of this heresy; only pray for him, and he will find his way out of that error as I have done.' She urged her petition with many entreaties and tears. 'Go, and take heart,' he answered; 'it is impossible that the son of these tears should perish.'"

Augustine at last discovered that the Manichaeans were anything but what they professed,



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and far from being superior to those around them. Leaving Carthage he went to Rome in the pursuit of his profession as a teacher of rhetoric, and thence to Milan, where a better appointment was offered him. Hither he was followed by his mother, who was over-joyed to learn from his own lips that he had left the Manichaeans, although he added that he was not yet a believer, and almost despaired of ever finding the truth. Monica felt that God having delivered him from the error in which he had so long lived would not fail to lead him to the foot of the cross and into the true doctrine of His Son Jesus Christ. She saw, moreover, in the state of mind in which Augustine now was, a first answer to the prayers she had offered, and was encouraged to continue her intercessions, and to believe that the day of her son's salvation, which she had never ceased to look forward to, was at hand.

Augustine was not long in Milan until intro-

duced to Ambrose, the bishop, who received him, as Aurelius himself tells, with paternal kindness, and manifested the greatest interest in him. Won by his graciousness in manner and spirit, Augustine became an attendant on Ambrose's ministry, and was led to a reconsideration of the doctrines he had maintained and the life he had led. The result, in the first instance, was the abandonment, as already mentioned, of the errors of Manichaeism. But he was not content to be without a belief. "Touched by Ambrose's eloquence, his heart," as he himself records, "opened itself to the truth of what he said." "The *life* of the Bishop spoke, however, more clearly than the sermons he preached. Augustine resumed with profit the study of the Holy Scriptures: he had a kind of foretaste of the beauty and majesty of his mother's religion; he was drawn towards it, and almost won over to it. If conversion had not yet come, it was because

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he had not yet learned to be subdued. The difficulties which stopped him seemed solely of an intellectual kind; but they were really moral ones; he did not believe because he would not believe; and if he would not, it was because he felt at what cost he must follow Christ. He still kept dragging along the chain of his guilt, and, in order to deceive himself, he opposed to the Gospel objections of a metaphysical kind. Meanwhile the call from above resounded with increasing strength. Augustine was at the same time roused and irritated, attracted and repelled. At last a violent crisis came, a struggle even unto blood, which he has himself described to us with sincere and impassioned eloquence." Nor was the struggle of short duration. He had too many questions to answer, too many prejudices to lay aside, and too much pride in firm enthronement in the heart, to make it an easy thing to take the place of a little child at the feet of Jesus, and

be taught as one knowing nothing. But truth is stronger than error, and at last gained the victory, and he passed from darkness to light, and from agitation to tranquillity.

AUGUSTINE—*continued.*

“By the grace of God I am what I am.”—I COR. xv. 10.

## AUGUSTINE—*continued.*

IT is often by very simple means that God quickens into life those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and gives rest to troubled souls. The word of a little child, the repetition of a single verse of Scripture, and the perusal of a religious tract have, in the hands of the Divine Spirit been sufficient for the accomplishment of such ends.

During the struggle just referred to, a point was reached, in which Augustine felt that he could bear himself no longer. Quitting the presence of his friend Alypius, he withdrew to a secluded part of the garden, where they were at the moment, that he might all the more freely cry to God for the mercy he needed, and for relief from his agony of soul. Throwing

himself under a fig-tree, he gave vent to his feelings in a torrent of tears. He cried in his distress for pardon and help. "How long Lord wilt Thou be angry with me? Be not mindful of my old sins. How long? How long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why may there not be in this hour an end of my uncleanness?" He was thus speaking and weeping in the intense bitterness of his repentance, when suddenly he heard a child's voice from the next garden, singing over and over again, "Take and read, take and read!" "The words, so peculiarly suited to his state, arrested his attention, and he began to consider whether children were used to sing such words in any of their games. He could not recollect that they were, and so, returning to Alypius, he took up the manuscript of S. Paul which lay by his side. In silence he read these words, on which his eye first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not



in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying ; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' As he read these words, light seemed to break in upon his heart, and the peace which passeth all understanding stole gently over his soul. When he told Alypius his joy, 'Let me see,' he answered, 'what you have been reading ;' and when the place was pointed out to him, he went on with the next sentence, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye ;' and, applying them to Augustine's case, confirmed him in his persuasion that his peace was from the Lord.

"The two hastened to the house and told Monica the joyful tidings. Who can describe her happiness at thus learning the answer to her prayers ? As Augustine afterwards recorded this history of his conversion, his heart burst forth in grateful praise : 'O Lord, I am Thy servant ; I am Thy servant and the son of Thine

handmaid ; Thou hast loosed my bonds ; I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.' All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee ? Oh, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation !”

Augustine was no sooner possessed of the peace which is the accompaniment of faith, and assured of his personal salvation, than he withdrew into solitude to prepare for a public avowal of Christ as his Saviour and Lord. He was now thirty-three years of age, and was joined in the reception of baptism by his friend Alypius, and “his son Adeodatus, the monument of his sins and of the grace of God.”

Resigning the position he held as professor of rhetoric, and settling his affairs at Milan, he started at the end of a few weeks for Africa, accompanied by his mother and son, and three intimate friends. They had reached as far as Ostia, the port of Rome, when the greatest earthly affliction befell Augustine. The mother to whom he owed so much, and whom he loved

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as his own soul, sickened and died. His account of the event is one of the most touching and tender narratives on record. He speaks of the heavenly frame of mind she was in, the blessed hours they passed together in communion on their common heritage of blessing and glorious hope, during the two or three days that preceded the fatal seizure, and the earnestness of her longing to be with her Lord. "Son," she said solemnly, as they were about to part for the night, after one of these seasons of heavenly converse, "for mine own part, I have no further delight in anything in this life. What I want here farther, and why I am here, I know not, now that my hopes in this world are satisfied. There was indeed one thing for which I wished to tarry a little in this life, and that was that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. My God has exceeded this abundantly, so that I see thee despising all earthly felicity and made His servant,—what do I here?"

Burying Monica, according to her own expressed wish, where she died, Augustine resumed his journey with his friends, and in due time reached Thegaste, his native place. Here he passed three years in retirement. "With his intimate friends Augustine led a very simple and frugal life. Much of his time was devoted to the study of the Word of God, and the evidences for the truth of Christianity. His soul grew in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and became daily more rooted and grounded in love. His works on *Genesis*, on *True Religion*, and on *Music* belong to this period."

Paying a visit at the end of these three years to his friend the imperial Commissioner at Hippo, Valerius, the bishop of the place, prevailed upon him to stay, ordained him a priest, and in the course of two years associated him with himself in the Episcopate. Augustine now occupied a position where his talents had every scope, and whence his influence extended

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far and wide. He gave himself to the duties of the office in which he soon succeeded Valerius and which he held for thirty-five years, with prayerful earnestness and undivided zeal. Specially called to the defence of the Gospel, and eminently qualified for such a task, not a little of his time was spent in confuting the errors of Arius, Manichee, and Pelagius. The pulpit, however, never ceased to have his regard. There, he felt, that much of his strength lay, and that he had the largest opportunities for usefulness, and the fulfilment of what he regarded as specially his mission. Men of all classes, and from all parts, attended his ministrations, led to do so by the lucidity and earnestness with which he unfolded the meaning, and enforced the claims of the Word of God. Several hundreds of the discourses thus listened to and appreciated have come down to these times, but his greatest work, though less popular than "The Confes-

sions," was his "City of God," which occupied thirteen years of his life, and in which he defends Christianity against the charge of being the occasion of the Goths storming and sacking Rome. "It is the last and greatest," as has been said, "of the Christian Apologies. You do not find in it the indignant eloquence, or the mere verbal pictorialism, of Tertullian, the massive and immense learning of the Alexandrian Clement, or the careful and cultivated composition of Lactantius. But in thorough grasp of the difference and the contrast between nature and grace—of man without Christ, and man in Christ—of the historical, social, philosophic aspects of human nature unredeemed and unrenewed, and of the immeasurable superiority which the new birth has occasioned in every view of man for this life and the life to come, the 'City of God' stands unrivalled by any production of Christian antiquity. Nor, indeed has any modern work of a similar kind

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approached its blended intellectual and moral grandeur. It still remains the first historical comment on much of Holy Writ. 'Glorious things' have been 'spoken of thee, O city of God.' It should be read by every classical scholar, as the best commentary on the First of Romans; and as the yet fullest and noblest estimate of the utter moral inadequacy of Pagan philosophy and polity, superstition and art, to raise the individual or family, the neighbourhood or the nation."

I have said that Augustine was called to the defence of the Gospel. It was for this, I take it, that he was so divinely enlightened and sanctified, and inflamed with such burning love to Christ and ardent zeal for the salvation of men. Hence the spirit in which he spoke, the pains that he took with his pulpit preparations, and the Apologies for Christianity that proceeded from his pen. He was far from being perfect. There was sometimes a want

of fairness in his dealing with those who differed from him, and an undervaluing of the claims of conscience. Naturally ardent and impetuous, he could do nothing by halves, and so went often from one extreme to another. He thus passed from dissoluteness to asceticism, and from unrestrained licence to the most stringent system of authority. Yet he was, withal, the most illustrious of the Fathers, as generous in act as he was holy in life, and a grand incontrovertible witness to the verity of Scripture and the doctrines of grace. He maintained the plenary inspiration of the Bible, and received as canonical, or of divine authority, the books of the Old and New Testaments.

I regard the testimony as of the highest importance from Augustine's thorough conscientiousness, commanding abilities and information, painstaking study of the Word of God, and special qualifications for testifying to its truthfulness and claims. Few men ever had



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more favourable opportunities for arriving at a correct judgment on such a matter, and none ever made a better use of them. His may fitly, therefore, be the closing link in the chain of testimony to the certainty of Christianity now adduced. Augustine's testimony seems a summing up of all that preceding writers furnished, and with it the witness-bearing of these pages may properly end.

Smitten at last by fever Augustine, at the age of seventy-five, and with a constitution shattered by early dissipation and long and laborious Christian labours, was without the power of throwing it off, and sank under it. "But if ever sick-chamber was lighted with a heavenly glory, it was the humble apartment where the illustrious Church-father lay. . . . As the celestial city with its bright glories rose before his eye he was quite unable to restrain the ardent longings of his soul to meet his Lord. 'My God,' he would say, 'how I

long to hear that transporting music, and those divine songs, which publish the mysteries and glories of the blessed Trinity! My God, how honoured to be so soon admitted, not only to hear, but myself to join in the concert with the sons of God who sing to their Christ and King the pleasant songs of Sion?’

“With an eye undimmed, and with a certain divine halo on his calm brow, the aged saint lay, day after day, surrounded by weeping friends, and his heart already half in heaven. ‘O the ravishing entertainment,’ he would whisper, ‘of those harmonious hymns, the melody of angels, and the sweet notes of songs, in concert, sung by each member of the heavenly choir! No mixture of bitter pollutes those holy joys, no railing or revelling, no fear or disquiet, no doubt or uneasiness or mutual distrust; but perfect peace and love, eternal praise and thanksgiving, unbroken rest, and joy everlasting in the Holy Ghost.’”

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Yet tears of sorrow, as well as of joy, were shed by Augustine on his deathbed. He never forgot the years he spent in folly and wickedness, and the remembrance of them always filled him with grief and regret. A keen recollection of them possessed him during his last illness, and that he might ever have suitable words in which to express the feeling then experienced, he had the seven penitential psalms inscribed on the walls of his chamber opposite to where he lay, that, as often as his sins came to mind he might read them, which was frequently the case.

Another cause of disturbance to him was the siege of the city at the moment by the Vandals, and the miseries that were being inflicted on many of the inhabitants. Yet the abundance of his joy far exceeded his sorrow: his peace in God was too deep to be destroyed by any remembrance of the past, or any of his surroundings. His prospects, therefore, re-

mained unclouded, and his peace unbroken. As the last night of his earthly life drew on, he spoke once more to the friends who had gathered around him to unite with him in prayer, and minister to him any alleviations they were able to supply, of 'an inextinguishable burning of vehement longing' after the immediate vision of his Lord. "And thus consumed," as his friend and biographer, Possidius, who was then with him, says, "in the flames of love, he was wafted upward in the fire-chariot, to see Him as He is."

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The object I had in view, in penning the preceding pages, renders it unnecessary to extend farther the testimonies that have been given to the verity of the Scriptures, or draw them from times later than those of Augustine. It would be easy to do so, but sufficient have

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been adduced to meet the necessity I have aimed at supplying.

However scanty may be the Christian literature of the first centuries, the chain of evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels is to be traced back, without break, from the days of the Bishop of Hippo to the times of the Apostles. The links may not all be of equal strength, but all are there.

But here the evidence for the truth of our Holy Religion does not stop. There is that which is higher and even more conclusive than the *historical*. The Bible speaks for itself. Its language is manifestly that of truth and of God. The influence it exerts is obviously supernatural. Only what is from God can make Godlike. That which renders men who are worldly, spiritual,—who are unholy, pure,—who are churlish, sweet-minded,—and who are selfish, generous, can only be from Him who is the Father of lights and the God of love.

“Then there is a productive energy in the Bible that rewards a hundredfold all who labour for its circulation, and that also demonstrates its divinity. The triumphs of the Gospel are a testimony to its power.” “No sooner, therefore, was the Word of God liberated,” as was observed by a speaker at the recent Anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, “from the trammels which confined it among the Jews than it manifested its power. Not only did it win converts and secure martyrs, but it ‘shook from their thrones the very gods of Olympus,’ and broke for ever their captive spell. These gods and goddesses fell before it, like Dagon before the ark, and passed away from their temples and the hearts of men as if they had been the phantoms of a dream. And at the Reformation, the grand instrument in opening the eyes of benighted Christendom, and terminating the reign of Papal darkness, was not so much the zeal and

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toil of men who agonised for the Church's deliverance, as that Word which, freed once more from perversion and restraint, arose like the sun upon the earth, with healing and victory in its beams. And where is hope for the world but here? What is to quell its feuds, secure its peace, and promote its universal brotherhood? To what are we to look for the overthrow of its strongholds of superstition and vice, and the turning of its moral wastes into fields of fruitfulness and beauty—to what but to the Book of God, which has done so much for us in the past, and which in our own day, notwithstanding the malignity with which it is assailed, is multiplying itself into every language and gathering its trophies from every land? It shall continue to advance. Never shall man be able to arrest its progress or silence its testimony. Never! till in the light of millennial glory its universal triumph shall demonstrate that where the Word of God is

there is the manifestation of God's power. Be stirred, then, to do more than ever for the Society. Your past successes and achievements only lay greater responsibility on you for the future. Never was the call to circulate the Scriptures louder or more urgent than now. And while we hear much at the present time of what is called 'the attitude of England'—some affirming that it is an attitude ever changing and not easily understood,—let us make it clear that in one respect, at least, the attitude of England never changes and cannot be misunderstood,—not in standing with sword half drawn ready for direful conflict, but in maintaining the principles of truth and righteousness and in holding out in the extended hands of Christian charity the Word of God to the world,"—that Word that teaches man to love his neighbour as himself, to respect the rights of others, and to be considerate and forgiving,—that makes wise unto salvation all who read



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and believe it, and is to those who follow its teaching a safe guide to eternity. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

"YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDÆA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH."



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