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**FRAUDS AND FOLLIES OF THE  
FATHERS**

**A Review Of The Worth Of Their Testimony To The Four  
Gospels**

**By Joseph Mazzini Wheeler**

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## I.

To expose the delirium and delinquencies of a respected or even respectable body of men is always an ungracious, though it may not be an unnecessary, task. But when we are informed that rejection of certain supernatural stories means our condemnation here and damnation hereafter, we feel tempted to examine the kind of men who first accepted and promulgated those stories. The man who tells me I shall be damned if I do not believe in his theories or thaumaturgy may have many estimable qualities, but he must not be surprised if, disregarding these, I call attention to instances of his credulity. When, moreover, priests assume authority over conduct on the ground that their Church or their doctrines were God-given, it becomes necessary to investigate how that Church and those doctrines were built up; and if we find superstitious fooleries and pious frauds mixed therein, it may do something to abate our confidence in priestly pretensions.

In regard to the Fathers, as to much else, the Catholic is the most consistent of all Christian Churches. The men who established the Church, and fixed what was and what was not Canonical Gospel, are surely entitled to some authority on the part of believers. When Protestants wish to prove the authenticity of their infallible book, they have to fall back upon the witness of the fallible Fathers whose authority they are at other times always ready to repudiate.

The intellectual and moral character of the men who were the original depositaries of Christian faith and literature is then evidently of the utmost importance. All historical evidence as to the authenticity of the New Testament, or the faithfulness of ecclesiastical history, comes through them. If they were credulous and untrustworthy, the edifice built upon their testimony or their faith will be found to be tottering.

Now, concerning the Fathers of the Christian Church, we have, at the outset, to allege that, as a class, not only were they superstitious and credulous, and therefore unreliable, but that many of them were absolutely fraudulent, not hesitating to use any and every means to further the interests of their religion.

Bishop C. J. Ellicott, in his article on the Apocryphal Gospels, which appeared in the "Cambridge Essays" for 1856, pp. 175, 176, says: "But credulity is not the only charge which these early ages have to sustain. They certainly cannot be pronounced free from the influence of pious frauds.... It was an age of literary frauds. Deceit, if it had a good intention, frequently passed unchallenged.... However unwilling we may be to admit it, history forces upon us the recognition of pious fraud as a principle which was by no means inoperative in the earliest ages of Christianity."

Jeremiah Jones says: "To make testimonies out of forgeries and spurious books to prove the very foundation of the Christian revelation, was a method much practised by some of the Fathers, especially Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Lactantius."—"A New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament," part ii., chap. xxxiv., p. 318, vol. i. 1827.

B. H. Cowper, a well-known champion of Christianity, and once editor of the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, confesses in the Introduction to his "Apocryphal Gospels" (p. xxv., 1867): "Ancient invention and industry went even further, and produced sundry scraps about Herod, Veronica, Lentuius, and Abgar, wrote epistles for Christ and his mother, and I know not how much besides. No difficulty stood in the way; ancient documents could easily be appealed to without necessarily existing; spirits could be summoned from the other world by a stroke of the pen, and be made to say anything; sacred names could be written and made a passport to fictions, and so on *ad libitum*."

M. Daillé says: "For these forgeries are not new and of yesterday; but the abuse hath been on foot above fourteen hundred years."—"The Right Use of the Fathers," p. 12, 1675. Mosheim mentions a variety of commentaries filled with impostures or fables on our Savior's life and sentiments, "composed soon after his ascent into heaven, by men who, without being bad, perhaps, were superstitious, simple, and piously deceitful. To these were afterwards added other writings falsely accredited to the most holy apostles by fraudulent individuals."—"Institutes of Ecclesiastical History," part iii, chap. ii, sec. 17, p. 65, vol. i. Stubbs's edition, 1863.

The same justly-renowned historian declares that "a pernicious maxim which was current in the schools, not only of the Egyptians, the Platonists, and the Pythagoreans, but also of the Jews, was very early recognised by the Christians, and soon found among them numerous patrons—namely, that those who made it their business to deceive with a view of promoting the cause of truth were deserving rather of commendation than censure."—"Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantino the Great." Second century. sec. 7, pp. 44, 45. R. S. Vidat's translation. 1813.

Dr. Gieseler, Professor of Theology in Gottingen, says: "In reference to the advancement of various Christian interests, and in like manner also to the confirmation of those developments of doctrine already mentioned, *the spurious literature* which had arisen and continually increased among the Jews and Christians, was of great importance. The Christians made use of such expressions and writings as had already been falsely attributed by Jews, from partiality to their religion, to honored persons of antiquity, and altered them in parts to suit their own wants, such as the book of Enoch and the fourth book of Ezra. But writings of

this kind were also fabricated anew by Christians, who quieted their conscience respecting the forgery with the idea of their good intention, for the purpose of giving greater impressiveness to their doctrines and admonitions by the reputation of respectable names, of animating their suffering brethren to steadfastness, and of gaming over their opponents to Christianity."—"Compendium of Ecclesiastical History," sec. 52, vol. i., pp. 157, 158. Translated by Dr. S. Davidson. T. & T. Clark's Foreign Theological Library.

But as our purpose is to examine these writings somewhat in detail, we will commence with

## THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

This name is given to those Christian writers who are alleged to have had intercourse with the Apostles. These writings are said to date from about 97 to 150 a.c. Dr. J. Donaldson says: "Of these writers investigation assures us only of the names of three, Clement, Polycarp and Papias. There is no satisfactory ground for attributing the 'Epistle of Barnabas' to Barnabas, the friend of Paul, nor the 'Pastor' of Hermas to the Hermas mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans."\* Yet it is to be noticed that both these works were read in the primitive churches as Scripture, and are included in the Sinaitic Codex, which is asserted to be the most ancient manuscript of the New Testament extant.

\* *"The Apostolical Fathers," chap. i., p. 101, 1874.*

We take first

### ST. CLEMENT.

There is a "fellow-laborer" with Paul of the name of Clement, mentioned in his Epistle to the Philippians (iv., 3), but whether this is the same individual whom the Catholics make a Pope of Rome, and some of the Fathers say was a kinsman of the Roman Emperor, is a matter of dispute, and much doubted by the best authorities. Bishop Lightfoot ("St. Paul's Epistles: Philippians," p. 166) says: "The notices of time and place are opposed to the identification of the two." A sufficient evidence of the estimation in which St. Clement was held, however, is to be found in the number of forgeries which Christian piety have palmed upon the world in his name. In the Alexandrian Codex, one of the oldest and most important manuscripts of the New Testament, two epistles addressed to the Corinthians stand inscribed with his name, and are enumerated in the list of books of the New Testament. Of these, the second is on all hands allowed to be a forgery, and the first is generally considered to be interpolated. That forgeries or interpolations have taken place in regard to those books of the same Codex which, upon the authority of certain Fathers, have been formed into the received canon of sacred Scripture, must not, of course, be suspected on pain of everlasting burning. The fact of the Epistle to the Hebrews being ascribed to St. Paul, the second Epistle ascribed to St. Peter, and such texts as those of the heavenly witnesses (1 John v., 7, 8), show any scholar that nothing of the kind could have taken place by any possibility whatever. Is it likely that God would allow his Holy Word to be tampered with?

The history of Clement of Rome, says Canon Westcott ("On the Canon," p. 22, 1881), "is invested with mythic dignity which is without example in the Ante-Nicene Church." It was too utterly impossible for other Fathers and founders of the Church to be invested with mythic dignity. Jesus must have come of the seed of King David, even though Joseph had nothing to do with his genealogy. "The events of his life," Westcott goes on to say, "have become so strangely involved in consequence of the religious romances which bear his name, that they remain in inextricable confusion." And so indeed they are; almost as badly as those of the founder of Christianity.

Clement is called at one time a disciple of St. Paul, and at another of St. Peter, who Paul withstood to his face because he was to be blamed (Gal. ii., 11). The Abbé Migne, in his *Patrologie*, makes him Pope in 91 A.C. The Clementine Homilies, purporting to be written by Clement himself, says he was ordained by Peter. Some put the first Popes as Linus, Cletus, Anacletus, and then Clement; others give their order as Linus, Cletus, Clement, Anacletus; others Clement, Linus, &c.; in short, they are given every way. Baron Bunsen called Anacletus a purely apocryphal and mythical personage, and some wicked sceptics have thought the same of the whole batch. In addition to the two epistles which stand on the same parchment with Holy Scripture, St. Clement is credited with two epistles to Virgins—which, though superstitious, are possibly none the less authentic; two epistles to James the brother of the Incarnate God, the Apostolic Canons (which include his own writings as sacred scripture), the Apostolic Constitutions, the Recognitions, a Liturgy, and twenty Clementine Homilies. All of these, says Mosheim, were fraudulently ascribed to this eminent father by some deceivers, for the purpose of procuring them greater authority. Clement has also been supposed the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Acts of the Apostles.

Restricting ourselves for the present to the first epistle, generally put forward as genuine, until a comparatively late date quoted as authoritative scripture by the Fathers, put in the apostolic canons among sacred and inspired writings, and which Eusebius tells us ("Hist. Eccl." iii., 16) was publicly read in very many churches in old times and even in his own day; we at once discover evidence that the writer could not have been akin to the Caesars or of a noble Roman family. He bespeaks his Jewish birth by his continual citation of the Jew books, by his references to the services at Jerusalem (chaps. xl. and xli.), and by speaking of "our father Jacob." But, like other Christian writers, he is very loose in his quotations. For instance, he jumbles up the first Isaiah and an apocryphal Ezekiel in the following quotation, "Say to the children of my people,

Though your sins reach from earth to heaven, and though they be redder than scarlet and blacker than sackcloth, yet if ye turn to me with your whole heart, and say, 'Father,' I will listen to you as to a holy people."\* He mentions (chap. lv.) "the blessed Judith," which book, by the way, Volkmar and others think must be dated a.c. 117-118. He also (chap. xvii.) quotes Moses as saying, "I am but as the smoke of a pot," and other passages (chap. xxiii.-xxvi), probably from the apocryphal "Assumption of Moses." But this is no worse than Matthew (ii., 23) quoting as from the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene;" Paul's wrongly quoting the Psalms (Eph. iv., 8); or Jude (ver. 14) citing the apocryphal book of Enoch as by "the seventh from Adam." But it somewhat vitiates his supposed testimony to the canonical books. It is evident, however, that he was acquainted with Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, and his own reads at times like a bad imitation of Paul.

*\* Pp. 12 and 13, vol i., "Ante-Nicene Christian Library."  
All our citations, unless otherwise mentioned, will be taken  
from this valuable series of volumes.*

The apostle to the Gentiles, and thereby the real founder of modern Christianity, disregarding a certain threat of its supposed founder (Matt. v., 22), ventured, in arguing for the resurrection, the somewhat questionable statement, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die" (1 Cor. xv., 36). Clement altogether outdoes this. He says (chap. xxv.):

"Let us consider that wonderful sign [of the resurrection] which takes place in eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a phoenix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parents, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And, in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and, having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the five hundredth year was completed." This is the way the Christian evidences were presented by the authoritative head of the Church in the first century. Tertullian ("De Resurr. Cam.," sec. 10), takes Psalm xcii., 12, as referring to this prodigy. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, St. Epiphanius, and other of the Fathers, follow Clement in his fable. It is said that Clement in this only followed Herodotus, Pliny, Ovid, and Tacitus, who mention the phoenix. This is false. Herodotus (ii., 13) simply relates the report of others, and does not intimate that he believed any part of it, but positively declares that some of the statements were not credible. Pliny ("Nat. Hist," x., 2) states expressly that the accounts may be fabulous. Ovid ("Metam.," xv., 392) uses the legend for poetical purposes. Tacitus ("Ann.," vi., 28) declares that the statements are uncertain. These, be it remembered, were unenlightened heathen, but the apostolic saint founds the distinguishing article of the Christian creed upon this mistake of an Egyptian myth. May it not have been a phoenix, instead of a dove, which descended on Jesus at Jordan? The cherubim described by Ezekiel were curious fowl. There are some queer animals mentioned in the Apocalypse; Isaiah and Job mention unicorns, and the former dragons. The Jews were indeed great in the natural-history department. Rabbinical references to the phoenix are numerous. The Talmud speaks of the zig, a bird of such magnitude that when it spread out its wings the disc of the sun was obscured; and the barjuchne, one of whose eggs once fell down and broke three hundred cedars and submerged sixty villages.\*

*\* See B. H. Cowper's article on the Talmud, in "The Journal of Sacred Literature," Jan., 1868.*

The second epistle, or rather homily, of Clement, though equally bound up with the sacred records, and placed in the Apostolical Canon, is admitted to be spurious, and is every way less notable. The concluding leaves of the Alexandrian manuscript have been lost. It ends abruptly with this interesting chapter:—

"Let us expect, therefore, hour by hour, the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of the appearing of God. For the Lord himself, being asked by one when his kingdom would come, replied, 'When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female, neither male nor female.' Now, two are one when we speak the truth one to another, and there is unfeignedly one soul in two bodies. And 'that which is without as that which is within' meaneth this: He calls the soul 'that which is within,' and the body 'that which is without.' As, then, thy body is visible to sight, so also let thy soul be manifest by good works. And 'the male with the female, neither male nor female, this "....

Here is an interesting quotation by the earliest Christian Father of words uttered by God Incarnate upon an important matter. Had they found their way into the Canonical Gospels, what books would have been written upon their beauty and sublimity! As it is, we gather from Clement of Alexandria\* that these words and other important sayings of Jesus were found in the Gospel of the Egyptians. This gospel was certainly an ancient one, and is supposed by Grabe, Erasmus, Du Pin, Father Simon, Grotius, Mills, and others, to have been among those referred to by Luke in his preambles: "Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." This Gospel of the Egyptians was received by the Ophites, the Encratites, the Valentinians, and the Sabellians. It was evidently at one with the doctrines of the Essenes in regard to women. For instance, Clement of Alexandria quotes from it the following: "The Lord says to Salome: 'Death shall prevail as long as women bring forth children.'" "I am come to destroy the works of the woman, that is, the works of female concupiscence, generation, and corruption. When you despise a covering for your nakedness, and when two shall be one, and the male with the female neither male nor female." Intimations that similar views regarding marriage were found in the early Christian Church may be gathered from Matt. xix., 12; Rev. xiv., 4; 1 Cor. vii., 8, etc. But the subject is too delicate to be handled by other than a divinity student.

*\* "Stromata," book ill-, 9, 13. The English editors have  
deemed it best to give the whole of this book in Latin.*

Passing, then, Clement's two epistles to virgins with the remark that although generally rejected as

spurious by Protestants, they are considered genuine by their editors, Wetstein, Bellet, and Cardinal Villecourt, we come to "The Recognitions of Clement." Of these remarkable documents Hilgenfeld says, "There is scarcely a single writing which is of so great importance for the history of Christianity in its first stage." The editors of the Anti-Nicene Christian Library call it "a theological romance;" but it is a question whether that epithet would not equally fit every other so-called historical composition of the first three centuries of the Christian era. Cardinal Baronius ("Annal." tom. i., an. 51) call sit "a gulf of filth and uncleanness, full of prodigious lies and frantic fooleries." But Cardinal Beliarmino says it was written either by Clement or by some other author as ancient and learned as he.

It begins, "I, Clement, who was born in the city of Rome," and proceeds to narrate his thoughts on philosophy, his doubts and hopes of a future life. To resolve these the worthy Father determined to go to Egypt, and bribe a magician to bring him a soul from the infernal regions to consult whether the soul be immortal. But he heard of the Son of God in Judea and was ready to accredit the wonders ascribed to him. Having heard Barnabas, Clement proceeds to Cæsarea and sees Peter, who instructs him concerning the True Prophet. And now comes the curious part of the story. Peter is engaged in continuous controversy on the true Mosaic and Christian religion with a miracle worker, called Simon the magician, who it is said confessed he wrought his wonders by the help of the soul of a healthy young boy, who had been violently put to death for that purpose, and then called up from the dead and compelled to be his assistant. Peter follows this Simon about from place to place, exposing him. He especially follows him to Rome. The astounding revelation in connexion with this story we give in the words of the author of "Supernatural Religion" (vol. ii., p. 34): "There cannot be a doubt that the Apostle Paul is attacked in it, as the great enemy of the true faith, under the hated name of Simon the magician, who Peter followed everywhere for the purpose of unmasking and confuting him. He is robbed of the title of 'Apostles of the Gentiles,' which, together with the honor of founding the Churches of Antioch, of Laodicea, and of Rome, is ascribed to Peter. All that opposition to Paul which is implied in the Epistle to the Galatians and elsewhere (1 Cor. i., 11, 12; 2 Cor. xi., 13—20; Philip i., 15, 16) is here realised and exaggerated, and the personal difference with Peter to which Paul refers is widened into the most bitter animosity."

The most able authorities, such as Davidson, B. Lightfoot, Mansel, Hilgenfeld, Reuss, Baur, Scholten, and Schwegler agree in this view, which is strongly confirmed by the epistle of Peter to James, which stands as a preface to the Clementine Homilies, dealing with the same matter of Simon Magus. Peter says: "For some among the Gentiles have rejected my lawful preaching, and accepted certain lawless and foolish teaching of the hostile man." Canon Westcott, in his edition of 1866, said on this passage: "There can be no doubt that St. Paul is referred to as 'the enemy'" (on the Canon, p. 252). Since the quotation of this damaging admission by the author of "Supernatural Religion," it has been removed. But whether the fact that the Simon Magus who is reviled in the Clementine Recognitions is intended to represent Paul has the authority of Canon Westcott or not, there can be no doubt that this view better agrees with Paul's epistles, and all we know of the early Christians, than the reconciling but unhistoric "Acts of the Apostles," which took the place of the Clementine "theological romance," because, in the struggle for existence, the Christian Church which was built on Paul rather than that which was built on Peter (Matt. xvi., 18), proved to be the fittest to survive.

## II.

### ST. BARNABAS

St. Barnabas is the next of the Apostolic Fathers demanding our attention. Here, again, it is very doubtful if we have any of the authentic words of the companion of Paul, so highly extolled by Renan, and declared by the author of the Acts of the Apostles to have been "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (xi., 24).

The epistle ascribed to St. Barnabas, although generally received as his for many ages, and repeatedly cited as Apostolic by Clement of Alexandria, and also cited by Origen, and found, together with the "Shepherd" of Hermas, in the Sinaitic Codex, is repudiated by most modern scholars, and declared by the author of "Supernatural Religion" to be an instance of "the singular facility with which, in the total absence of critical discrimination, spurious writings were ascribed by the Fathers to Apostles and their followers" (vol. i., p. 233, 1879). Although the weight of authority is against its authenticity, it is still supported as genuine by such scholars as Schmidt, Grieseler, and Samuel Sharpe; and it must be admitted that most of the arguments used against it have been based upon its contents not coming up to what critics have supposed ought to be the Apostolic standard. At any rate, it is an interesting relic of the early Church which is considered genuine by the most important section of Christendom, the Roman Catholics. In Jerome's time it was still read among the Apocryphal Scriptures, and in the Stichometria of Nicephorus (ninth century) it is put among the disputed books of the New Testament.

Barnabas is still more questionably fathered with a gospel of his own, which is no longer extant. But as it appears to have contained a very peculiar statement to the effect that Jesus did not actually die upon the cross, and that it was Judas who was crucified in his stead, which statement has been taken up, from whatever quarter, by the Mohammedans, this gospel is, of course, set down as a Mohammedan forgery.

The Catholics have a tradition that Barnabas was converted after witnessing the miracle at that wondrous

pool of Bethesda, where the angel came down troubling the waters. He was a Levite of Cyprus, and his name was formerly Joses. It is noteworthy that upon entering the Church, Christian converts took new names, a custom common to the Buddhists. Clement of Alexandria says he was one of the seventy Apostles. He is stated to have converted Clement of Rome, and to have been stoned by the Jews about the year 64. All these statements rest on the mere authority of the Church, not the slightest proof being forthcoming either for or against them. Nothing was known of his tomb until the year 478, when the Cypriotes, being required to submit to the episcopal sway of Peter the Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch, his coffin, with the Gospel of Saint Matthew inside, turned up in the nick of time to avert the calamity and assert the independence of a place having such indubitable relics. The Church of Toulouse yet claims to have his body, and eight or nine churches pretend to having possession of his head. Of the value of this wondrous head we shall presently have sufficient proof.

"The Acts of Barnabas," a so-called apocryphal book, gives an account, by Mark, of the journeyings and martyrdom of this Apostle (Vol. XVI., "Ante-Nicene Christian Library"). The Evangelist tells how Paul was quite enraged against him so that, although he gave repentance on his knees upon the earth to Paul, he would not endure it. "And when I remained for three Sabbaths in entreaty and prayer on my knees, I was unable to prevail upon him about myself; for his great grievance against me was on account of my keeping several parchments in Pamphylia" (p. 294). Paul, according to this story, refused to accompany Barnabas if he took Mark with him, and Barnabas elected to stand by Mark. They removed a fever from one Timon by laying their hands upon him. "And Barnabas had received documents from Matthew, a book of the Word of God, and a narrative of miracles and doctrines. This Barnabas laid upon the sick in each place we came to, and it immediately made a cure of their sufferings" (p. 297). Once in their journeyings they found a certain race being performed, and upon Barnabas rebuking the city, the western part fell, so that many were killed and wounded, and the rest fled for safety to the Temple of Apollo. But our purpose is with the Apostolic epistle which goes under his name.

Joses may have been a ready speaker, as is judged by his Christian name of Barnabas, or *Son of Exhortation*; but he certainly cannot be classed as a brilliant letter writer. His epistle, like many other Apostolic documents, would be considered dreadfully prosy but for its age and reputation. Though no great hand at *composing*, Barney had a remarkable faculty for dealing with *types*. Types are an attractive study to theologians; biblical stories—like that of Jonah and the whale, for instance—which, taken in a plain and natural way, are evident absurdities, serve capitably as divine types and symbols. At this sort of interpretation Barnabas was, as we shall see, a perfect master. He outdoes the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, by the way, Tertullian ("De Pudicitia, 20") ascribes to Barnabas.

He prides himself upon his exegesis of Scripture, which he does not hesitate to ascribe to divine inspiration. "Blessed be our Lord," he exclaims, "who has placed in us wisdom and understanding of secret things" (c. vi., p. 110, vol. i., "Ante-Nicene Christian Library"); and, further on, he boldly avows inspiration on behalf of what Osburn calls "a tissue of obscurity and absurdity which would disgrace the Hindoo Mythology" ("Doctrinal Errors of the Apostolic and Early Fathers," p. 25, 1835).

According to Barnabas, the Mosaic legislation had Christ in view rather than the sanitary condition of the Jews. He even manufactures a law of Moses in order to make out a type of Christ having vinegar to drink. He says (c. vii., pp. 112, 113) "Moreover, when fixed to the cross, he had given him to drink vinegar and gall. Hearken how the priests of the people gave previous indication of this. His commandment having been written, the Lord enjoined, that whosoever did not keep the fast should be put to death, because He also Himself was to offer in sacrifice for our sins the vessel of the Spirit, in order that the type established in Isaac, when he was offered upon the altar, might be fully accomplished. What, then, says He in the prophet? 'And let them eat of the goat, which is offered with fasting, for all their sins.' Attend carefully: 'And let all the priests alone eat the inwards, unwashed with vinegar.' Wherefore? Because to me, who am to offer my flesh for the sins of my new people, ye are to give gall with vinegar to drink: eat ye alone, while the people fast and mourn in sackcloth and ashes."

Some have supposed these spurious regulations were taken from traditions, but the Rev. J. Jones says: "I rather look upon it as a *pious forgery and fraud*, there being nothing of the sort known to have been among the Jewish customs, and this book having several such frauds in it" ("A New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament," vol. ii., p. 377, 1827). If it is not either of these it is very clear that we have lost some important portions of God's inspired word in the Pentateuch. Barnabas also has a chapter on the red-heifer, which was sacred to Typhon among the Egyptians, as a type of Christ, and says (chap. viii., p. 115) "The calf is Jesus."

It appears, too, that Abraham was a Greek scholar some time before the Greek language was known, and that he circumcised his servants as a type of Christianity. Barnabas knew, probably by inspiration, the exact number who were circumcised, and tells us (chap. ix., p. 116): "Learn, then, my children, concerning all things richly, that Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, looking forward in spirit to Jesus, practised that rite, having received the mysteries of the three letters. For [the Scriptures] saith, 'And Abraham circumcised ten, and eight, and three hundred men of his household.'" "What, then, was the knowledge given to him in this? Learn the eighteen first, and then the three hundred. The ten and eight are thus denoted—Ten by I, and Eight by H, you have [the initials of the name of] Jesus. And because the cross was to express the grace [of our redemption] by the letter T, he says also 'Three Hundred.' He signifies, therefore, Jesus by two letters, and the cross by one. He knows this, who has put within us the engrafted gift of His doctrine. No one has been admitted by me to a more excellent piece of knowledge than this, but I know that ye are worthy."

Verily Barnabas must have been full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. No wonder he was "expressly set apart and sent forth to the work of an apostle by the order of the Holy Ghost" (Acts xiii., 2—4). The importance which he places upon numbers may be compared with that assigned by the author of the book of Revelation. Barney tells us that the world will last 6,000 years because it was made in six days, and the inference is doubtless as true as the fact (?) on which it is based. His system of finding types in the Old Testament has lasted in the Christian Church to our own time, and derives countenance from several passages of Paul. This most excellent piece of knowledge concerning Abraham is hardly more far-fetched than saying that Levi paid

tithes to Mel-chisedek because he was potentially in the loins of his forefather Abraham when he met him (Heb. vii., 9,10), or that Agar was a type of Jerusalem (Gal. iv., 25).

Barney applies to Jesus the passage, Isaiah xlv., 1, "Thus saith the Lord to his annointed, to *Cyrus*." This the Rev. J. Jones (p. 384) calls "a wilful and designed mistake." But his reference to prophecies are scarcely more disingenuously ingenious than Matthew's making Jesus go to Egypt, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son;" he dwelt at Nazareth, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (ii., 23); or, saying that Jesus spoke in parables, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (xiii., 35). His loose system of quotation may also be paralleled from the sacred volume. In Matt, xxvii., 9, the passage from Zechariah xi., 12, 13, is attributed to Jeremiah; in Mark i., 2, a quotation from Malachi iii., 1, is ascribed to Isaiah; in 1 Corinth, ii., 9, a passage is quoted as Holy Scriptures which is not found in the Old Testament, but is taken, as Origen and Jerome state, from an apocryphal work, "The Revelation of Elias."

One more specimen of this Apostolical Father will suffice. It occurs chap, xi., p. 118, and is as remarkable for the Levite's understanding of the laws of Moses as for his information upon natural history: "'And thou shalt not eat,' he says, 'the lamprey or the polypus, or the cuttle fish.' He means, 'Thou shalt not join thyself to be like to such men as are ungodly to the end and are condemned to death.' In like manner as those fishes above accursed, float in the deep, not swimming like the rest, but make their abode in the mud at the bottom. Moreover, 'Thou shalt not,' he says, 'eat the hare.' Wherefore? 'Thou shalt not be a corrupter of boys, nor like unto such.' Because the hare multiplies, year by year, the places of its conception; for as many years as it lives so many [—Gr.—] it has. Moreover, 'Thou shalt not eat the hyena.' He means, 'Thou shalt not be an adulterer, nor corrupter, nor like them that are such.' Wherefore? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male and at another female. Moreover, he has rightly detested the weasel. For he means, 'Thou shalt not be like to those whom we hear of as committing wickedness with the mouth, on account of their uncleanness; nor shalt thou be joined to those impure women who commit iniquity with the mouth. For this animal conceives by the mouth.'" We will leave this shocking old Father with a very serious question, as to the value of his testimony to the truth of Christianity.

## ST. IGNATIUS.

This Apostolic saint need not detain us long. He is alleged to have been the identical babe taken up in the arms of Jesus as an example of innocence and humility to his none too innocent or humble disciples. But in truth his history is as untrustworthy and fabulous as that of the other heroes of the early Christian Church. St. Chrysostom tells us that Ignatius never saw the Lord Jesus Christ, and he might have added neither did any of the other early Christian writers, with the possible exception of the author of the Revelation; unless, like Paul, they saw him in a trance. He is said to have been a Syrian Bishop of Antioch, but, like the Galilean fishermen, to have written in Greek. Fifteen epistles are ascribed to him, but of these eight are universally admitted to be spurious, and the other seven are exceeding doubtful, three only being found in the Syrian manuscript. Calvin said: "Nothing can be more disgusting than those silly trifles which are edited in the name of Ignatius." The reason for the Presbyterian's condemnation lay in the stress which these epistles place upon Episcopacy. The writer declares himself to have been inspired by the Spirit saying on this wise: "Do nothing without the bishops (Phil. vii., p. 233). He says bishops are to be looked on even as the Lord himself (ad. Ephes. vi., p. 152). Again, let all reverence deacons as Jesus Christ, of whose place they are the keepers" (ad. "Trail.," chap, iii., p. 191), and "He who honors the bishop has been honored by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop does [in reality] serve the devil" (ad. "Smyrn," chap, ix., p. 249).

Dr. Donaldson ("Apostolic Fathers," p. 102) says: "The writings now ascribed to him present a problem which has not yet been solved"—"in whatever form they be examined, they will be found to contain opinions and exhibit modes of thought entirely unknown to any of the Ep-Apostolic writings."

Ignatius, who was surnamed Theophorus, is said to have been martyred, but the year in which his death occurred is among the obscurities of early Christian chronology. It is alleged that he voluntarily courted death by giving himself up as a Christian to Trajan when that emperor was at Antioch, and that he was sent by a circuitous route all the way to-Rome in order to be devoured by wild beasts there, or, apparently, rather in order to write his epistles while a prisoner on his journey. But no reference to this legend is to be traced during the first six centuries of the Christian era. This absurd story is now generally discredited. The life and writings of Ignatius must be classed in the vast catalogue of Christian myths and fabrications.

## ST. POLYCARP.

Most of the little that is reported of this saint is also probably mythical. His importance chiefly depends upon his being made the link between the Apostle John and Irenæus, the first writer who towards the close of the second century names the four Gospels.

Archbishop Usher ("Proleg. ad Ignat. Ep.," chap, iii.) thought Polycarp was the angel of the Church at Smyrna, referred to in Revelations ii., 8. A trivial objection to this is, that it would make Polycarp live until 100 years afterwards, as the old father is alleged to have lived on through all the early persecutions, only to suffer death in 167, under the reign of the mild and gentle Antoninus. Later critics, however, have decided

that Statius Quadratus, under whom he is said to have died, was pro-consul in a.d. 154-5 or 155-6—all of which shows the very reliable nature of early Christian records. He is said to have declared that he served Christ for eighty-six years, but learned authorities are again divided as to whether he meant that as his age, or as dating from the time of his conversion. Irenæus, from whom we get our information concerning Polycarp, gives us the following choice anecdote, which illustrates how these Christians loved one another: "There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.' And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion and said, 'Dost thou know me?' 'I do know thee, the firstborn of Satan'" ("Irenæus against Heresies," book iii., chap. iii., sec. 4., p. 263, Vol. V. "Ante-Nicene Christian Library"). In the so-called Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, which consists of a string of quotations from the Old Testament and Paul, occurs this passage: "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the Devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan" (chap. xii., p. 73). Schwegler and Hilgenfeld consider the insertion of this phrase, "firstborn of Satan," as proof of the inauthenticity of the Epistle. They argue that the well-known saying was employed to give an appearance of reality to the forgery. Nor are there wanting other indications of its spuriousness. It refers to the mythical martyr journey of Ignatius, and while treating him as dead in chapter ix., has him alive and kicking again in chapter xiii.

The Church of Smyrna is said to have issued an encyclical letter detailing Polycarp's martyrdom, which is reported by that eminent Church historian, or rather mythographer, Eusebius ("Ec. Hist.," iv., 15). It relates how "as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, 'Be strong, and show thyself a man O, Polycarp.' No one saw who it was that spoke to him, but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice" (chap. ix., p. 88). Upon which Dr. Donaldson quietly says ("Apostolical Fathers," chap. iii., p. 202; 1874): "It is not very probable that there was any voice from heaven; and it is improbable that there were Christians in the place to hear the voice."

The old father proved to be of the asbestos-like nature of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. "When he had pronounced this *amen*, and so finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. And as the flame blazed forth in great fury, we, to whom it was given to witness it, beheld a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what then took place. For the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with wind, encompassed as by a circle the body of the martyr. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace. Moreover, we perceived such a sweet odor, as if frankincense or some precious spice had been smoking there" (chap. xv., p. 92). But this divine interposition was only to make a display—Polycarp was not to escape; he was only saved from the flames to perish by the dagger. "At length, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on doing this, there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished; and all the people wondered that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was one, having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been, or shall yet be, accomplished" (chap. xvi., p. 92). The account relates that Polycarp had a vision of his pillow on fire, and prophesied therefrom that he should be burnt alive.

The dove which flew out of Polycarp's side proved him to have been possessed of the Holy Ghost. Herodian relates that at the Apotheosis of the Roman emperors it formed part of the solemnity to let an eagle fly from out of the burning pile of wood on which the corpse of the new deity was cremated, to intimate that this bird of Jove carried the soul of the deceased to heaven. Lucian, in his account of the death of Peregrinus, relates how he told the simpletons that at the death of this Christian martyr, a vulture flew up out of the flames, taking his course direct to the skies, and screaming out in an articulate voice, "Soaring above the earth, I ascend to Olympus." The miracles at the death of Polycarp may be just as true as that of the earthquake and the saints having come out of their graves at the death of Jesus; but sceptics will doubtless be found who consider, with Dr. Donaldson (p. 219), that "not one of the facts has proper historical testimony for it."

### III.

## HERMAS.

The "Pastor" of Hermas, the editors of the *Ante Nicene Christian Library* inform us in their Introductory notice (vol. I., p. 319), was one of the most popular books, if not the most popular book, in the Christian Church during the second, third, and fourth centuries. W. Osburn, in his "Doctrinal Errors of the Early Fathers," p. 35, 1835, declares—with much show of reason—it is "the silliest book that ever exercised an influence over the human understanding." This gives a sufficient gauge of the value of the judgment of those centuries. As with all other early Christian writings, with the exception of some of the epistles of Paul, much doubt exists as to its author. The earliest opinion was that it was the production of the Hermas who is saluted by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans xiv., 14. Origen, in his commentary on the Romans (bk. x., 31), states this



opinion distinctly, and it is repeated by the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius (hi., 3.), and by Jerome in his work against heresies (iv., 20, 2). There is an early Æthiopic version of Hermas which contains the curiously bold figment that it was written by the Apostle Paul himself, under the title of "Hermes," which name, as stated in the twelfth verse of the fourteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, was bestowed upon him by the inhabitants of Lystra.

The Muratorian fragment on the Canon, however (the authorship of which is unknown, but which may plausibly be dated about the year 200,) asserts that "The 'Pastor' was written very lately in our times, in the city of Rome, by Hermas, while Bishop Pius, his brother, sat in the chair of the church of the city of Rome" (i.e., 142—157 A.C.), and the best modern authorities since the time of Mosheim incline to this opinion. Yet it is quite possible that the name of the author is as fictitious as the contents of the work.

It is a threefold collection of visions, commandments, and similitudes. The author claims to receive a divine message and to record the words of angels, and there is evidence that in the early days of the Church this claim was unquestioned. C. H. Hoole, in the introduction to his translation of the work (p. xi.) says: "At the very earliest period it was undoubtedly regarded as on a level with the canonical books of the New Testament being distinctly quoted by Irenæus as Scripture." Irenæus, as everyone knows, is the first who mentions the four Gospels by name. Clement of Alexandria speaks of it as divine revelation (Strom. I., xxix). Origen claims it as inspired by God (loc. cit.) All the early Fathers accepted its authority except Tertullian, and he only disputed it after he became an heretical Montanist. In his orthodox works he too cites it as part of Holy Scripture. Eusebius tells us that it was read publicly in the churches, and it is found in the Sinaitic Codex of the New Testament, together with the epistle of Barnabas, along with the canonical books. Dupin ("Ecclesiastica Writers," p. 28, 1692,) says: "The 'Pastor' hath been admitted by many churches as canonical."

Hermes makes no mention of a Trinity nor of the Incarnation, and, though he speaks of the Son of God, this Son of God seems to be the same as the Holy Spirit. Of the man Jesus he makes no mention. When the Arians appealed to this book its reputation sank with the orthodox party. About the year 494 it was condemned in the decree of Pope Gelasius, and from that time it has declined in public favor. Jerome, who in his Chronicon had lauded it, in his commentary on Habakkuk taxes it with *stultia* foolishness. And not unjustly. Its visions are almost as fantastic as those recorded in the Apocalypse. Its divine revelations are about on a level with the maudlin platitudes uttered through the lips of spiritist trance mediums. Although so highly appreciated by the primitive Christians, there are few among the moderns who would not find his vagaries puerile and unreadable. He has a complete system of angelology. "There are two angels with a man—one of righteousness, and the other of iniquity—" (Commandment Sixth, chap, ii., p. 359,) and these originate all evil and all good. There is even an angel over the beasts. Hermes is acquainted with this angel's name. It is Thegri (Vision iv., 2, p. 346). From these angels he receives much valueless information. Mosheim says of his work: "It seems to have been written by a man scarcely sane, since he thought himself at liberty to invent conversations between God and angels, for the sake of giving precepts, which he considered salutary, a more ready entrance into the minds of his readers. But celestial spirits with him talk greater nonsense than hedgers, or ditchers, or porters among ourselves" (Ec. Hist., pt. ii., chap, ii., sec. 21; vol. i., p. 69, 1863). If we bear in mind that this book was the most popular among the primitive Christians, we shall have a good idea of the extent of their attainments. In his work on Christian affairs before the time of Constantine, Mosheim gives his opinion of this Father that "he knowingly and wilfully was guilty of a cheat." "At the time when he wrote," continues Mosheim, "it was an established maxim with many of the Christians, that it was pardonable in an advocate for religion to avail himself of fraud and deception, if it were likely that they might conduce towards the attainment of any considerable good" (vol. i., p. 285; Vidal tr., 1813). He has also been deemed the forger of the Sibylline oracles. It is curious that in his second vision he confounds an old woman, who is said to represent the Church, with the Sibyl (Ch. iv., p. 331). Neither his reputation for veracity nor the value of his ethical teaching, as given by angels, is enhanced by his statement that when commanded to love the truth he said to his angelic messenger: "I never spoke a true word in my life, but have ever spoken cunningly to all, and have affirmed a lie for the truth to all; and no one ever contradicted me, but credit was given to my words." Whereupon the divine visitor informs him that if he keeps the commandments now, "even the falsehoods which you formerly told in your transactions may come to be believed through the truthfulness of your present statements. For even they can become worthy of credit" (Commandment Third, p. 351).

The testimony of such a man would be of very little value indeed, but it is certain that he gives none whatever to the New Testament, and this, although his writings are the most extensive of any of the Apostolic Fathers. Dr. Teschendorf even does not suggest that Hermas gives any indication of acquaintance with our Gospels, and although Canon Westcott, who admits "it contains no definite quotation from either Old or New Testament" (on the Canon, p. 200, 1881), strives to show that some of his similitudes, such as that of the Church to a tower, may have been derived from the New Testament, Canon Sanday, another Christian apologist, admits that these references are very doubtful. The only direct quotation from Scripture is from a part which is not included in our Holy Bible, and which, indeed, is no longer extant. In the Second Vision, chap. iii., he says: "The Lord is near to them who return unto Him, as it is written in Eldad and Modat, who prophesied to the people in the wilderness." In Numbers xi, 26, 27, we read of Eldad and Medad who prophesied in the camp, and a book under their name appears in the Stichometria of Nicephorus among the apocrypha of the Old Testament.

Having thus cursorily reviewed the writings of the first five Fathers, who are usually, though unwarrantably, denominated "Apostolic," we will briefly examine

## THEIR TESTIMONY TO THE GOSPELS.

The matter indeed might be summarily dismissed with the remark that they afford no testimony to the

Gospels whatever. But so much stress is laid upon them in this respect by orthodox writers (and necessarily so, for if the so-called Apostolical Fathers testify not of the Gospels, there is no evidence of their existence until the latter half of the second century) that we must pause and examine how far they bear the burden that is laid upon them.

We have already seen that both the age and the authorship of every one of these works is of a most doubtful character. The names of every one of the twelve apostles, of Paul, of Ignatius, of Polycarp, of the Diognetus mentioned in Acts xvii, 34, of Clement, of Linus, and of other early Christians of repute, have been appended to the most unblushing forgeries. Among these so-called genuine remains, as found in Archbishop Wake's version and the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, those attributed to Barnabas and Hermas are almost as certainly forged. Of the epistles assigned to Ignatius, Professor Andrews Norton says: "There is, as it seems to me, no reasonable doubt that the seven shorter epistles ascribed to Ignatius are, equally with all the rest, fabrications of a date long subsequent to his time" ("The Evidence of the Genuineness of the Gospels," p. 350, vol. i., 2nd ed., 1847). The second of the epistles attributed to Clement is recognised by most scholars as spurious. The only remaining documents which we can at all allow to be genuine are the first epistle of Clement and that of Polycarp. Even these have not been undisputed. The former has been challenged as a forgery by Mr. J. M. Cotterill, in a curious work, entitled "Peregrinus Proteus," published by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1879; and the latter by Blondel, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, Tayler, and others, and it is generally allowed to be interpolated.

Dr. Giles ("Christian Records," p. 109, 1877,) says: "The writings of the Apostolical Fathers labor under a more heavy load of doubt and suspicion than any other ancient compositions either sacred or profane. In former times, when the art of criticism was in its infancy, these writings were ten times as extensive as they are now, and they were circulated without the slightest doubt of their authenticity. But, as the spirit of inquiry grew, and the records of past time were investigated, the mists which obscured the subject were gradually dispersed, and the light of truth began to shine where there had previously been nothing but darkness. Things which had chained and enslaved the mind for ages, dissolved and faded into nothing at the dawn of day, and objects that once held the most unbounded sway over the belief, proved to be unreal beings, creatures of superstition, if not of fraud, placed like the lions in the path of the pilgrim, to deter him from proceeding on the way that leads to the heavenly city of truth."

In another place Dr. Giles remarks in regard to the question of the age and authorship of these Fathers: "The works which have been written on this question are almost as numerous as those which concern the age, authorship, and authenticity of the Gospels themselves, but the general issue of the inquiries which have been instituted, has been unfavorable to the antiquity of these works as remains of writers who were contemporary with the Apostles, but favorable to the theory that they are productions of the latter half of the second century. That was the time when so many Christian writings came into existence, and all the records of our religion were sedulously sought out, because tradition was then becoming faint, original and even secondary witnesses had gone off the stage, and the great increase of the Christian community gave birth to extended curiosity about its early history, whilst it furnished greater safety to those who employed themselves in its service" ("Christian Records," chap. xi., p. 89).

If the Gospels were written by eye-witnesses of the miracles, and these so-called Apostolic Fathers had conversed with them, it is scarcely credible that they would have omitted to name the actual books themselves which possessed such high authority. This is the only way in which their evidence could be of real service to support the authenticity of the New Testament writings as being the work of Apostles. But this they fail to supply. There is not a single sentence in all their remaining works in which an unmistakeable allusion to the Gospels, as we have them, is to be found. It is in vain that Christian evidence-mongers appeal to their citations of certain sayings of Jesus or certain doctrines of Christianity. No one disputes that these were in general vogue early in the second century. But the point to be proved to the Rationalist is that the supernatural events of the four Gospels were testified to by eye-witnesses, who published their accounts at the time and in the place where the alleged supernatural occurrences took place. And of this the Apostolic Fathers afford no scrap of evidence. Of the supernatural history of Jesus they know no more than Paul. They neither mention his immaculate conception nor his miracles; nor do they refer to any of the circumstances connected with his alleged material resurrection. This especially applies to the possibly genuine writings of Clement and Polycarp. Hermas, as we have mentioned, has no reference to any of the acts of Jesus. Barnabas has an allusion to "great signs and wonders which were wrought in Israel," but he does not say what they were nor when they happened. Ignatius alone, in a probably spurious epistle to the Ephesians, chap. xix, alludes to the virginity of Mary, her offspring, and the death of the Lord as "three mysteries of renown;" but the details he gives concerning the brilliant star which appeared, and how all the rest of the stars and the sun and moon formed a chorus to this star, and its light was exceedingly "great above them all," and how "every kind of magic was destroyed, and every bond of wickedness disappeared," show that the writer referred to other sources of information than those found in Matthew and Luke. In the full part of the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Trallians, he gives almost the whole of the Apostles' creed. This in itself would be sufficient evidence of its spuriousness.

Stress is laid by all writers on the external evidences upon certain alleged quotations from our gospels, which are said to be found in the early Fathers. But the question naturally arises, if they considered them to be of Apostolic authority why did they not mention them by name? They say Moses says, but they never say Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John says. They cite the words of Jesus, but not of his Evangelists. They also say "The Lord *said*" rather than saith, which indicates they were rather indebted to tradition than to written accounts. Irenæus says he heard Polycarp repeat the oral relations of John and of other hearers of the Lord, and Clement may have received his knowledge in the same manner. We shall see from the testimony of Papias that he at least preferred tradition to the books with which he was acquainted. Moreover, such quotations of the sayings of Jesus as occur are never given in the same words nor in the same order. Attempts are made to account for this by saying that they quoted loosely from memory. But is it likely they would quote loosely words which they believed to be written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost? This does not say much for their intellectual ability. Clement and Polycarp, for instance, both give, "Be pitiful that ye may be pitied," word for word; while the Gospel shews, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Clement says,

"Forgive that it may be forgiven you;" Polycarp, "Forgive and it shall be forgiven you." The nearest to which is, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Such facts have constrained Mr. Sanday to admit in his work on the Gospels in the Second Century that "The author of Supernatural Religion is not without reason when he says they may be derived from other collections than our actual Gospels" (p. 87, 1876.) Canon Westcott himself in summing up the results says:— (1) No Evangelic reference in the Apostolic Fathers can be referred certainly to a written record. (2) It appears most probable from the form of the quotations that they were derived from oral tradition" (p. 63, 1881.) We shall see, however, that whether they went to other collections or relied upon oral traditions, their Evangelic references are never exactly the same as in our gospels. They manifestly had other sources of information. Moreover it must be borne in mind that the Christian sayings very frequently crept into the text by way of gloss. An illustration of this kind of interpolation is found in the "Epistle of Barnabas," chap, xix., p. 133, where we read, "Thou shalt not hesitate to give, nor murmur when thou givest." "*Give to everyone that asketh thee, and thou shalt know who is the good Recompenser of the reward.*" But for this supposed quotation being omitted in the oldest MS., the "Codex Seaiticus," it would be considered evidence that the writer of the epistle was quoting from Luke vi., 30. In copying manuscripts there was no such strictness as in a modern printing-office, where "follow your copy" is the compositor's rule. If a transcriber at the time when our Gospels were in vogue (and be it remembered we have no manuscripts either of the Fathers or of the New Testament older than the fourth or fifth century after Jesus) saw a quotation different from the way in which he had been accustomed to see it, he would not hesitate to alter it. So that many of the alleged literal quotations from our Gospels may be only emendations of the scribes who found the quotations were wrong and put them right. Dr. Donaldson, in the introduction to his Apostolical Fathers, chap, iii., p. 27, tells us how "Each transcriber, as he copied, inserted the notes of previous readers into the text, and often from his heated imagination added something himself." He also informs us (p. 28) "That we know for certain that even in the second and third centuries the letters of bishops and others were excised and interpolated in their lifetime." So pure is the stream through which our Gospels have descended!

The able and learned author of "Supernatural Religion" well puts the argument: "When, therefore, in early writings, we meet with quotations closely resembling, or we may add, even identical with passages which are found in our Gospels, the source of which, however, is not mentioned, nor is any author's name indicated, the similarity or even identity cannot by any means be admitted as proof that the quotation is necessarily from our Gospels, and not from some other similar work now no longer extant, and more especially not when, in the same writings, there are other quotations from sources different from our Gospels" (vol. i., pp. 213, 214, 1879.) That citations similar to those found in our Gospels are not necessarily taken therefrom may be instanced from Ignatius, or the writer who used his name who in his Epistle to the Smyrnæans, chap, iii., p. 242, says: "When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter He said to them: 'Lay hold, handle me and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.'" According to Jerome (Vir. Illust. 16) this quotation is from the Gospel of the Nazarenes. But for this direct statement, it would of course be assigned by orthodox traditionalists to a quotation from memory of Luke xxiv., 39. Origen, however, quoted this self-same passage from another work well known in the early Church, but since lost or destroyed, the "Preaching of Peter."

But whilst similarity would not prove their use, variation from the Gospels is the best proof that they were not used. Such passages abound. Clement, for instance, says: "Our Apostles also knew, through the Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the episcopate" (chap, xlv., p. 38.) He says "it is written cleave to the holy, for those that cleave to them shall themselves be made holy" (chap, xlvi., p. 40.) He also quotes (chap. 1., p. 43) "I will remember a propitious day, and will raise you up out of your tombs," which is probably from the apocryphal fourth book of Ezra. Barnabas declares: "The Lord says 'He has accomplished a second fashioning in these last days. The Lord says I will make the last like the first'" (chap, vi., p. 3, Sinaitic.) He quotes as a saying of Jesus: "Those who wish to behold me, and lay hold of my kingdom, must through tribulation and suffering obtain me" (chap, vii., p. 114.) And again: "For the Scripture saith, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Lord will deliver up the sheep of His pasture and their sheepfold and tower to destruction" (chap, xvi., p. 129.) Other instances might be given. In the second Epistle of Clement there are at least five such passages, but these suffice to show that other documents than the Gospels were referred to, and that even where the sentiment is similar the expression is different. It must be borne in mind also that we have it on the authority of Luke in his preface that already in his time *many* had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed among Christians.

Mosheim, in his "Ecclesiastical History" (pt. ii., chap. ii., sec. 17, p. 65, Stubbs' ed., 1863) speaks of "A variety of commentaries, filled with impostures and fables, on our Savior's life and sentiments composed soon after his ascent into heaven, by men who without being bad, perhaps were superstitious, simple, and piously deceitful. To these were afterwards added other writings, falsely ascribed to the most holy apostles by fraudulent individuals." But these fraudulent individuals were Christians, and the purpose of their frauds was to subserve the interests of the Church. We have record of many other Gospels, not to mention Acts of Apostles and Revelations. Some of these were certainly anterior to our own. Such were probably the Gospel of Paul, whence Marcion's Gospel and Luke's were derived, the Gospel of Peter from which possibly Mark was compiled. The Oracles or Sayings of Jesus which probably entered into the construction of Matthew together with the Gospel to the Hebrews. The Gospel of the Egyptians, which we have already seen as quoted by Clement, the original of which C. B. Waite thinks "may have been in use among the Therapeutæ of Egypt a long time before the introduction of Christianity, the passages relating to Christ being afterwards added" ("History of the Christian Religion to the year 200," p. 77, Chicago, 1881.) According to Origen, Theophylact and Jerome, this Gospel was written before the Gospel of Luke, and many learned moderns have deemed it earlier than any of the Canonical Gospels. At least contemporary with these were the Gospel of James or Protevangelion, the Gospel of Thomas or Infancy, and the Gospel of Nicodemus or Acts of Pilate, all of which remain, although the Christian Church has lost the doubtless equally respectable Gospels of Matthias, of Philip, of Bartholomew, of Andrew, and even of Judas Iscariot.

## IV.

We have thus far seen that the five earliest Fathers of the Christian Church have no claim to be considered Apostolic, and that, so far from bearing testimony to the authenticity of our canonical Gospels, their own age and authorship are disputed. We have noticed that their works never mention by name any of the writers of the New Testament with the exception of Paul; that the sayings they ascribe to Jesus, while often similar to those found in our Gospels, are never identical with them, and that they contain much that is evidently derived from other sources. We have in addition seen that there were numerous Gospels current in the early days of the Christian Church; thus confirming the account of Luke that *many* had taken in hand to set forth in order the things believed among them.

The early Christian ages were characterised by anything rather than by investigation, or even by accuracy of representation. Deception in literary productions appears to have been the rule rather than the exception. It was not only practised but defended. The author of "Supernatural Religion" says of these Fathers (pp. 460—1, vol. 1, 1879):—"No fable could be too gross, no invention too transparent, for their unsuspecting acceptance, if it assumed a pious form or tended to edification. No period in the history of the world ever produced so many spurious works as the first two or three centuries of our era. The name of every Apostle, or Christian teacher, not excepting that of the great Master himself, was freely attached to every description of religious forgery. False gospels, epistles, acts, martyrologies, were unscrupulously circulated, and such pious falsification was not even intended or regarded as a crime, but perpetrated for the sake of edification. It was only slowly and after some centuries that many of these works, once, as we have seen, regarded with pious veneration, were excluded from the canon; and that genuine works shared this fate, whilst spurious ones usurped their places, is one of the surest results of criticism."

Yet we are to suppose that while words written for edification were falsely ascribed to other Apostles, it was utterly impossible with regard to our four Evangelists. We shall be better able to judge this question upon examining the testimony of the first person who mentions the writings of the first two.

## PAPIAS.

The first information we get concerning this Father shows him to have been acquainted with other stories than those found in our Gospels. It occurs in Irenæus against Heresies (book v., chap. xxxiii., sec. 3 and 4, p. 146, vol. ix., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*). Speaking of the rewards which will come in the flesh to Christians, he tells us that "elders who saw John the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another cry out, 'I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.'"

Taking Smith's Bible Dictionary as authority for the value of a metrete, viz., eight and two-thirds of a gallon, it follows that the product of one millennial grape-vine will make a quantity of wine equal in bulk to the planet Mercury, and allowing to the thousand million of the earth's inhabitants enough to keep them constantly intoxicated, say two gallons of wine a day to each person, it would keep them all dead drunk for the space of thirty thousand million years! What a jolly old Father was this! or, if he is to be believed, what a jolly Jesus to promise and jolly John to report such a millennial prospect. It beats the Mahomedan Paradise. Irenæus continues:—

"In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions; and that all animals feeding on the productions of the earth should become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man. Sec. 4. And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled by him. And he says in addition, 'Now these things are credible to believers.' And he says that when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, 'How then can things, about to bring forth so abundantly, be wrought by the Lord? The Lord declared, They who shall come to these [times] shall see.'" Which, in evasiveness, is on a par with some of the utterances of Jesus in the Gospels. Dr. Donaldson ("Apostolical Fathers," p. 897, 1874,) says: "There is nothing improbable in the statement that the Lord spoke in some such way, and it is not at all improbable that Papias took literally what was meant for allegory." Dr. Giles seems to concur in the view that Papias repeated words of Jesus.

J. Jones (on the Canon, vol. i., p. 370, 1827,) thinks Papias both the manufacturer of the doctrine of the Millennium and of this passage ascribed to Christ calculated to support it. The idea he considers borrowed from the Jews. Perhaps it was, but it certainly finds some countenance in the Apocalypse.

The statement that Papias was a hearer of the Apostle John conflicts with the account in Eusebius (Ec. Hist. iii., 89), which implies that he received information from John the Presbyter after all the Apostles were dead. According to Eusebius (Ec. Hist. iii, 36,) and Jerome (De Viri Illust. xviii.), Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis, a city of Phrygia. He is supposed to have suffered martyrdom about 163 or 167. His work, in five books, was entitled "An Exposition of the Oracles (or Words) of the Lord." Eusebius, in the third book of his Ecclesiastical History, chapter 39, gives us most of our information about Papias. His estimate of him, as a man of very

limited understanding, does not deter us from regretting the loss of his writings. The fragments which remain cast such radiance on some of the dark points of the Christian evidences. Paley and all the school of evidence-writers cite him as proving the existence of our Matthew and Mark. But he is now generally seen to prove the very reverse.

Let us first examine his statement in regard to Matthew. As given on the authority of Eusebius, it reads that "Matthew composed the *logia* [oracles or sayings] in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone interpreted them as he was able."

Now it is somewhat curious that Papias, probably in the second half of the second century, should be the first to give currency to the tradition that Matthew wrote a Gospel if that Gospel had been in existence 100 years.

But that the work referred to was not the same we now have is manifest from its name *logia*, discourses, sayings, or oracles. It would be an utter misnomer for an historical narrative beginning with a detailed history of the genealogy, birth and infancy of Jesus, and the preaching of John the Baptist, and concluding with an equally minute account of his betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, giving all his movements and miracles, and which has for its evident aim throughout the demonstration that Jesus was the Messiah. Our Gospel, not written by, *but according to* Matthew, has no such title.

Moreover, ours is a Greek and not a Hebrew Gospel. The testimony of Papias on this point is explicit. It is, moreover, confirmed by a consensus of all the Fathers: Irenæus, Pantænus, Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Augustine, and all others who allude to Matthew's Gospel declare that it was written in Hebrew. Now our Gospel is considered by the most competent authorities an original document. There is no ground whatever for considering it a translation, even if we knew that Matthew's Gospel had been properly translated, instead of everyone interpreting it as he was able. Many of the quotations in it from the Old Testament are taken not from the Hebrew but directly from the Greek Septuagint. Its turns of language have the stamp of Greek idiom, and could not have come in through translation. So that there is no reason for even indirectly connecting our Canonical Gospel according to Matthew with the *logia* which Papias had heard were composed by him.

This position is somewhat strengthened when we find in the Fragments of Papias, p. 442: "Judas walked about in this world a sad example of impiety; for his body having swollen to such an extent that he could not pass where a chariot could pass easily, he was crushed by the chariot, so that his bowels gushed out." Theophylact, after quoting this passage, adds other particulars, as if they were derived from Papias. He says that Judas's eyes were so swollen that they could not see the light, that they were so sunk that they could not be seen, even by the optical instruments of physicians; that the rest of his body was covered with runnings and worms, etc.

If Papias knew from Matthew that Judas had already hanged himself, and further from the Acts of the Apostles that he had fallen headlong in a field and burst asunder, it was really too hard to inflict on poor oft-killed Judas these additional cruelties. Surely it were better *that* man had never been born, though in that case we know not how Christian Salvation would have been brought to the world. It seems as if each new Christian writer felt himself at liberty to invent a new death for Judas, who was divinely appointed to bring about their redemption. By Paul's saying Jesus appeared to the twelve (1 Cor. xv., 5), it is evident he knew nothing of Judas's suicide.

Among the fragmentary remains of Papias is one found in Eusebius, who tells us that: "He also relates the story of a woman accused of many crimes, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews." It would thence appear likely that if Papias saw and quoted from any Gospel, though we have no other evidence than this that he did either, it was from the Gospel to the Hebrews, which some have thought the original of Matthew, and which would agree with the language in which he declares Matthew to have written. Orthodox writers endeavor to make out that here Papias alludes to the story found in the eighth chapter of John. But surely if Eusebius knew the story in John was the same he would not have ascribed it to another Gospel. In truth there is no evidence that John's narrative of the woman taken in adultery was extant even in the time of Eusebius. It is an undoubted interpolation contained in no ancient manuscript of value, and may have been taken from some tradition similar to that found in Papias, yet certainly not the same since Papias speaks of many crimes, John only of one.

We think the reader will agree with Dr. Samuel Davidson, who in his "Introduction to the Study of the New Testament," vol. i., p. 383, 1882, says: "There is no tangible evidence to connect the present Gospel with the Apostle Matthew." Even the orthodox apologist, Neander, admits "Matthew's Gospel, in its present form, was not the production of the Apostle whose name it bears, but was *founded* on an account written by him in the Hebrew language, chiefly (but not wholly) for the purpose of presenting the discourses of Christ in a collective form" ("Life of Christ," cap. ii., sec. 4, p. 7). An admission sufficient to destroy the credit of any profane work much less a divinely inspired record of the sayings and doings of an alleged God.

The author of "Supernatural Religion," vol. i. p. 486, 1879, says: "It is manifest from the evidence adduced, however, that Papias did not know, our Gospels. It is not possible that he could have found it better to inquire 'What John or Matthew, or what any other of the disciples of the Lord.... say, if he had known of Gospels such as ours, and believed them to have been actually written by those Apostles, deliberately telling him what they had to say. The work of Matthew being, however, a mere collection of discourses of Jesus, he might naturally inquire what the Apostle himself said of the history and teaching of the Master. The evidence of Papias is in every respect most important. He is the first writer who mentions that Matthew and Mark were believed to have written any works at all; but whilst he shows that he does not accord any canonical authority even to the works attributed to them, his description of those works and his general testimony comes with crushing force against the pretensions made on behalf of our Gospels to Apostolic origin and authenticity."

We will now look at his testimony to Mark. "Mark," he tells us, "having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered, though he did not arrange in order the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a

regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard and not to put anything fictitious into the statements."

This description likewise shows that our actual second Gospel could not, in its present form, have been the work of the Mark referred to. Mark or Marcus was an extremely common name in the early Christian period.

In the first place, our Gospel is no more like a man's preaching than it is like an epic poem. It has, moreover, no Petrine characteristics. Mark does not give the important passage about Christ's church being built upon Peter (Matt, xvi., 18); nor the distinguishing addition "called Peter," in the calling of Simon; nor the narrative of Peter's miraculous draught of fishes; of his walking on the sea; his being sent to prepare the Passover, or the reproachful look of Jesus when Peter denied him. It also omits the expression "bitterly" when the cock crew, and Peter wept. These omissions have been attributed to Peter's excessive modesty. Apart from the absence of any evidence of this trait in the Apostle whom Paul withstood to his face because he was to be blamed, it must have been a peculiar kind of modesty indeed to omit important passages and events lest the chief Apostle should seem too prominent, and to suppress the bitterness of his penitence!

But Irenæus tells us the Gospel of Mark was written after Peter's death, while Clement of Alexandria makes out that he wrote it at the request of friends which, when Peter knew, he neither hindered nor encouraged. So from these accounts, neither of which accord with Papias, it would appear that Mark had no motive for lessening the prominence of Peter. Peter is alleged to have died about the year 60; so that, Papias dying about the year 165, and writing late in life, his evidence on behalf of Mark's Gospel would be about 100 years after it is alleged to have been written. This applies with equal force to Matthew. But so marvellous are the contents of these Gospels that even the most certain evidence of their existence 100 years later would be very unsatisfactory.

It will also be noticed that Papias no more mentions a *Gospel* of Mark than he does of Matthew. What he speaks of is not an inspired narrative, but records written from memory. Now if Mark wrote from memory he did not write from inspiration. The argument of the genuineness of the Gospel is at the expense of its inspiration. But the evidence from the numerous passages in which Mark agrees with Matthew and with Luke is overwhelming that it is not an original document written from memory at all, but with the writer having other documents directly before him. This is admitted by all the best critics.

Papias says Mark did not arrange in order the things which were said and done by Christ, and that he was careful to omit none of the things which he heard. How can this apply to our Gospel, which we have seen omits many most important things with which Peter was most especially concerned, and which moreover is the most orderly and consecutive of the Gospels. Canon Sanday says ("Gospels in the Second Century," p. 151): "The second Gospel *is* written in order, it is *not* an original document. These two characteristics make it improbable that it is in its present shape the document to which Papias alludes." And again (p. 155): "Neither of the two first Gospels, as we have them, complies with the conditions of Papias' description to such an extent that we can claim Papias as a witness to them." Once more (p. 159), "I am bound in candor to say that, so far as I can see myself at present, I am inclined to agree with the author of 'Supernatural Religion' against his critics, that the works to which Papias alludes cannot be our present Gospels in their present form."

Dr. Davidson (Introduction to N. T., vol. i., p. 539, 1882,) declares: "A careful examination of Papias's testimony shows that it does not relate to our present Gospel, nor bring Mark into connection with it as its author. All we learn from it is, that Mark wrote notes of a Gospel which was not our canonical one."

The description of Papias would lead us to expect, not a regularly concocted Gospel, but fragmentary reminiscences of Peter's preaching. It seems altogether more likely that the allusion is to the work known as the "Preaching of Peter," which was undoubtedly popular in early Christian times, and which was used by Heracleon and Clement of Alexandria as authentic canonical Scripture. Since Papias gives no quotations whatever from these alleged writings of Matthew and Mark the whole matter remains a bare tradition resting on the authority of this weak-minded Father. We are unaware if he took the slightest pains to test the truth of the statements made. It is highly improbable that he did anything of the kind. Dupin says: "The judgment that ought to be given concerning him is that which hath been already given by Eusebius, that is to say, that he was a very good man, but very credulous, and of very mean parts, who delighted much in hearing and telling stories and miracles. And since he was exceedingly inquisitive, and inclined to believe everything that was told him, it is not to be admired that he hath divulged divers errors and extravagant notions as the judgments of the Apostles, and hath given us fabulous narratives for real histories, which shows that nothing is so dangerous in matters of religion, as lightly to believe, and too greedily to embrace, all that hath the appearance of piety without considering in the first place how true it is" ("A New History of Ecclesiastical Writers," vol. i., p. 50, 1692).

Traditions coming from such a source could be of very little value. It is, however, certain that Papias preferred tradition to any book with which he was acquainted. He says: "For I imagined that what was to be got from books was not so profitable to me as what came from the living abiding voice"—a saying which doubtless included the books of Matthew and Mark he referred to, and possibly others of the "many" who had written "a declaration of those things which are surely believed among us," referred to by Luke. Jeremiah Jones thinks he refers to spurious productions, as "he never would have said this concerning any inspired book" ("New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament," vol. i., p. 24). The idea of a Christian bishop preferring uncertain tradition to the sure and certain testimony of an infallibly inspired revelation is well-nigh incredible to a Protestant apologist.

This extreme credulity is evinced throughout the slight fragments which has come down to us. He relates on the authority of Philip's daughters that a man was raised to life in his day. He also mentions another miracle relating to Justus, surnamed Barsabas, how he swallowed a deadly poison and received no harm. After this we are not surprised at the information that the government of the world's affairs was left to angels, and that they made a mess of it. It is noticeable that while mentioning Matthew and Mark, and especially mentioning John, he never ascribes to the latter any such writing as our fourth Gospel. The only saying which he does ascribe to him: "The days shall come when vines shall grow, having each ten thousand branches," etc., is not only uncanonical but entirely dissimilar to the style of both Gospel and First Epistle,

though not to that of the Apocalypse. Dr. Davidson considers his notices of St. John preclude Papias from having believed him to be the author of a Gospel. Had he known of such a document he would surely have mentioned it as much as Matthew and Mark, and Eusebius would not have failed to reproduce the testimony.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, seems to have been a fair average specimen of the early Christian. Probably he was very devout and pious, but most certainly he was not strong in intellect, and was ready to give credence to old wives' tales concerning the Christ or his Apostles. It is upon such authorities as these that the whole fabric of historical Christianity rests.

## V.

### JUSTIN MARTYR.

Justin, who is said to have derived his surname from having suffered martyrdom about a.d. 166-167, is the first of the Fathers who shows any detailed acquaintance with the statements found in the Gospels. A large number of spurious works have been attributed to him, but we take as genuine the Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew. In the first of these (chap. xlvi.) he indicates that he wrote about 150 years after the birth of Jesus. He was born at Neapolis in Palestine, being by descent a Greek, and in the early part of his life a heathen. He tells us he was converted to Christianity by an old man, whom his biographer, Father Halloix, thinks may have been an incarnate angel. Tillemont, the learned Catholic historian, considers this highly probable. Fabricius thought it was Bishop Polycarp, but Credner considers the narrative a fiction. It is difficult to believe that his Apologies were ever presented to the Roman Emperors or that his Dialogue with the Jew represents an actual controversy with an opponent.

Dr. Jortin speaks of Justin as "of a warm and credulous temper" ("Remarks on Ecclesiastical History," chap. xv., p. 243, vol. i., 1846), and Mosheim declares "The learned well know that Justin Martyr is not to be considered in every respect as an oracle, but that much of what he relates is wholly undeserving of credit" ("Commentaries," vol. i., p. 112; 1813). The Rev. John Jones includes him among those who did not scruple to use forged writings.

In chapters 20 and 44 of his first Apology, for instance, he appeals to the Sibylline book of prophecies respecting Christ and his kingdom, which it has been proved to a demonstration by David Blondell and others, were forged by some early Christians with a view to persuading the ignorant and unsuspecting heathen that their oracles had foretold Christ. Celsus, the heathen, detected and pointed out this falsification.\* He quotes spurious productions of Hystaspes, of Orpheus and Sophocles, in which Christians had foisted their own ideas. For not content with counterfeiting the writings of celebrities among themselves, they were equally unscrupulous in regard to the writings of the Pagans.

*\* Origen, bk. vii., 53; p. 475:—The Sibyl was appealed to by Theophilus and other early Christian apologists. The author of "Questiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos," a work falsely ascribed to Justin, says that Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, appeals to the writings of the Sibyl. In the present version there is no such allusion.*

Justin confidently affirms that Plato and Aristophanes mention the ancient Sibyl as a prophetess, and he gravely relates concerning her being the daughter of Berosus, who wrote the Chaldean history.

He says (1st Apol., chap. xxi., p. 25): "And when we say also that the Word, who is the first birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that he, Jesus Christ, our teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again and ascended into heaven, we propound *nothing different* from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter." He argues (chap. xxiii., p. 27) that devils inspired the heathen poets and priests to relate beforehand the Christian narratives as having already happened; and makes out (chap. liv.) that the devils, knowing the prophetic words of Moses, invented the stories of Bacchus and Bellorophon; "And when they heard it said by the other prophet Isaiah that he should be born of a virgin, and by his own means ascend into heaven, they pretended that Perseus was spoken of." And so with Hercules and Æculapius. All of which puts us in mind of the learned divine who argued that God put the fossils into the earth less than 6000 years ago, in order to deceive the geologists and exhibit the vanity of human knowledge.

Justin also informs us (Apol., lxvi.) that through the suggestions of wicked demons, bread and wine were placed before the persons to be initiated into the mysteries of Mithras in imitation of the Eucharist. He could believe that Jesus, sitting at a table, actually offered his own body and blood to eat and drink, but the idea that the Christian Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was copied from the Mysteries never struck him. Having plenty of devils he put them to a deal of use. He tells us how they came into existence: "God committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom he appointed over them. But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons" (2nd Apol. v., p. 75). These subdued the human race partly by magical writings and partly by fears and punishments. Not content with inventing the heathen mythology they raised up the Samaritans, Simon and Menander, "who did many mighty works by magic." This is what he says the Jews said of Jesus (Dial. chap. Ixix). Justin twice has the audacity to assert that the Romans erected a statue to the Samaritan Simon, as a god. He gives the inscription *Simoni Deo Sancto*. To Simon the Holy God. This, if not a fraud, was

a very gross error. Apart from the unlikelihood of the story and its absence of corroboration by any heathen writer, a fragment has been found with the inscription "Semoni Sanco Deo," being probably the base of a statue erected to the Sabine Deity, Semo Sancus. He further charges the Romans with human sacrifices in celebrating the mysteries of Saturn; a charge absolutely false and unsupported by any Pagan author, although repeated by the Christian Fathers, Tatian, Cyprian, Tertullian, Lactantius, Epiphanius, etc. Justin also says the devils put forward and aided Marcion the follower of Paul, who accused the other apostles of having perverted the Gospel doctrines. He frequently alleges that the Christians cast out devils in the name of Jesus Christ, and that women and men among them possessed prophetic gifts, but he gives no special instance of any miracle wrought in his own time. He makes maniacs and demoniacs to be possessed by the spirits of the dead, and appeals to "necromancy, divination by immaculate children, dream-senders and assistant spirits" in proof of life after death (immortality he seems to have considered the gift of God). All the early Fathers believed in necromancy. Lactantius ("Divine Institutes," book iv., chap. xxvii.) calls it the most certain proof of Christianity, because those who are skilled in calling forth the spirits of the dead bring Jupiter and other gods from the lower regions, but not Christ, for he was not more than two days there. Justin says we ought to pray that the evil angel may not seize our soul when it departs from the body.

He makes the victory over Amalek a type of Christ's victory over demons, and declares that Isaiah said evil angels inhabit the land of Tanis in Egypt. He declares of the Jews in the wilderness: "The latches of your shoes did not break, and your shoes waxed not old, and your garments wore not away, but *even those of the children grew along with them*" ("Dialogue with Trypho," 131, p. 266.) This is a very consistent addition to the fable found in Deut xxix., 5.

He charges (Dial., chap. lxxii.) the Jews with having removed passages from Ezra and Jeremiah, and in the following chapter with having taken away the words "from the wood" in the passage from the ninety-sixth Psalm, "Tell ye among the nations the Lord hath reigned '*from the wood*.'" To which the note appended in the "Ante-Nicene Christian Library" edition (p. 189) is "These words were not taken away by the Jews, but added by some Christian."—Otto. Tertullian follows Justin in regard to this passage.

He complains of their rejecting the Septuagint version, and gravely tells how Ptolemy, King of Egypt, had seventy different translators shut up in seventy separate cots or cells for the purpose of translating the Hebrew Scriptures. After the completion Ptolemy found the seventy men "had not only given the same meaning but had employed the same words," whereupon he believed "the translation had been written by divine power." Byway of proof that he narrates no fable, he says, "We ourselves, having been in Alexandria, saw the remains of the little cots still preserved" ("Address to Greeks" chap. xiii., p. 300). Ptolemy, however, he makes contemporary with Herod (Apol. xxxi., 33.) Christ, he says, suffered under Herod the Ascalonite. He calls Moses the first Prophet, yet declares "He was predicted before he appeared, first, 5000 years before, and again 3000, then 2000, then 1000, and yet again 800; in the succession of generations, prophets after prophets arose" (1st Apol., chap. xxxi., p. 38). David, he makes to have lived 1500 B.C.

Speaking of the Polygamy of the patriarchs (Dial., chap. cxxxiv., p. 269) he tells us "certain dispensations of weighty mysteries were accomplished in each act of this sort." "The marriages of Jacob were types of that which Christ was about to accomplish." The bloodthirsty General Joshua was a type of Christ, and the sun standing still by his order shows "how great the power was of the name of Jesus in the Old Testament" He tells us the two advents were prefigured by the two goats, and continually finds clear prophecies of Christianity in passages which have not the remotest allusion to it. To give one instance, he says: 'And that it was foreknown that these infamous things should be uttered against those who confessed Christ, and that those who slandered him, and said it was well to preserve the ancient customs, should be miserable, hear what was briefly said by Isaiah, it is this: 'Woe unto them that call sweet bitter, and bitter sweet.' Such interpretations are innumerable in Justin.

In his 1st Apology, chap. iv., "On Symbols of the Cross," he says the seas cannot be sailed without cross-shaped masts, nor the earth tilled save with cross-shaped instruments. "And the human form differs from animals in nothing else than in its being erect and having the hands extended, and having on the face, extending from the forehead, what is called the nose, through which there is respiration for the living creature, and this shows no other form than that of the cross. And so it was said by the prophet, 'The breath before our face is the Lord Christ,' which is a perversion of Lam. iv., 20: 'The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord.'"

He put into the mouth of his antagonist Trypho, the following words which possibly represent the usual position taken up by the Jews: "But Christ—if he has indeed been born and exists anywhere—is unknown, and does not even know himself, and has no power until Elias come to anoint him, and make him manifest to all. And you having accepted a groundless report, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake are inconsiderately perishing" (chap. viii., p. 97). In answer to this home thrust, Justin promises "I shall prove to you as you stand here that we have not believed empty fables." Justin was acquainted with the works of Josephus, and if the passage had been then in existence concerning Jesus being the Christ, who was punished on the Cross, and who appeared again the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and many other wonders about him; here was the opportunity to bring it forward. Instead of doing so, or stating who testified to the existence of Christ and his wonderful works, he rambles off to his favorite argument from prophecy and piles up a heap of interminable nonsense, which if put forward as a serious defence of Christianity at the present time, would either excite suspicion of covert infidelity or be greeted with derision.

In his Apology he twice calls in evidence the Acts of Pilate, but as with the books of the Sibyl, it is again a Christian forgery and not a heathen document he refers to. This is clear from one of the passages he refers to being found in the extant Acts of Pilate or Gospel of Nicodemus. If any official report had been sent by Pilate, it is not likely to have related the miracles of the person put to death. Nor is it probable that Justin would have known the contents of such a document.

Justin, in the beginning of the second half of the second century, being the very first Father who tells us of Jesus being God, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, dead and rising again and ascending into heaven (for the spurious epistles attributed to Ignatius must be dated after Justin's time) it is important to know where he got his startling information from. He never once mentions Gospels by either Matthew,



Mark, Luke, or John. He refers indeed at least thirteen times to "Memoirs" or "Memoirs of the Apostles," but without the least indication of their nature, number or extent. In one place (Dial., 106) he seems to identify them with the Gospel of Peter, referred to by Serapion, Tertullian and Origen. Canon Westcott, who argues that it refers to the Gospel of Mark, commonly placed under the authority of Peter, thus translates the passage: "The mention of the fact that Christ changed the name of Peter, one of the Apostles, and that the event has been written in his (Peter's) Memoirs." The best authorities agree that upon strictly critical grounds the passage refers to Peter. The "Ante-Nicene Christian Library" (p. 233) however reads: "And when it is said that he changed the name of one of the Apostles to Peter; and when it is written in the memoirs of him that this so happened." Making the work referred to to be the memoirs of Jesus.

The only direct mention Justin makes of any writer in the New Testament is the following: "And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place" (Dial., chap, lxxxi., p. 201). The author of "Supernatural Religion" says: "The manner in which John is here mentioned after the memoirs had been so constantly referred to, clearly shows that Justin did not possess any Gospel also attributed to John" (vol. i., p. 298; 1879).

This conclusion is corroborated by many circumstances also adduced by Dr. Davidson. For instance, his doctrine of the Logos is different from that in the Gospel ascribed to John. He does not mention any of the miracles found in that Gospel, and instead of knowing the long discourses given therein, declares "Brief and concise utterances fell from him, for he was no sophist" (Apol. i., chap, xiv., p. 18).

That he does name John, however, as the author of the Apocalypse, and refers by name to the Old Testament writers no less than 197 times, while in about as many passages from the "Memoirs" he never identifies their writer, unless in that concerning Peter, is surely incompatible with the idea that they were the Canonical Gospels.

The whole question of the identity of these "Memoirs" with our Gospels is ably and lengthily dealt with in English on the orthodox side, by Lardner, Bishop Kaye, Professor Norton, and Canons Westcott and Sanday. These arguments the inquiring reader should compare with those of Bishop Marsh, Dr. Giles, Dr. Davidson, and the author of "Supernatural Religion."

It is evident that the account of the sayings and doings of Jesus in the "Memoirs" are, in the main, very similar to the Synoptics, especially Matthew, and it is likely they were the principal materials from which our canon was formed. But it is not certain if Justin had one document, two, three, four, or a dozen. In his first Apology (chap, lxvi.) there is certainly found this expression: "For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, *which are called Gospels*, have thus delivered unto us," etc. (p. 69). But Dr. Donaldson says of the words in italics "Schliermacher, Marsh, and others, regarded these words as an interpolation, and they certainly look like one" (Critical History of Christian Literature, vol. ii., p. 329; 1866).

Except in one or two instances, parallels with our Gospels are only made by patching together passages from different Gospels. By this process the connexion is broken, while the quotations in Justin have for the most part a consecutive order, and, as is shown by the context, had such an order in the "Memoirs" from which they were taken. While quoting them nearly 200 times he makes hardly a single allusion to those circumstances of time and place which are found in our Gospels. He also gives particulars not to be found in the Canonical books. Thus he says (Dial., chap, lxxviii.) that Jesus was born in a cave, and cites Isaiah xxxiii., 16, as prophesying this. This contradicts Luke but is found in the Gospel of James, the Gospel of the Infancy, and the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Matthew and Luke give discrepant accounts of the genealogy of Jesus. Justin differs from both. He traces the Davidian descent of the Christ through Mary, which again agrees with James. He nine times mentions the Magi coming from Arabia, not from the East. His quotation of the angel's message to Mary (Apol. i., 33) agrees better with the Gospel of James than with Luke or Matthew. Speaking of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, Justin says: "On the occasion of the first census which was taken in Judaea, under Cyrenius, he (Joseph) went up from Nazareth, where he lived, to Bethlehem, to which he belonged, to be enrolled." The differences between the account of Justin and that in Luke are manifest.

He states that Jesus made ploughs and yokes as a carpenter, which is found in the Gospel of the Infancy. Thrice he speaks of John as "sitting by Jordan" (Dial. 49, 51, and 88), and he even narrates that when Jesus stepped into the water a fire was kindled in the Jordan. This also was from the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Epiphanius gives it from a version found among the Ebionites. It was also mentioned in another early Christian publication the "Preaching of Paul." Justin has the Holy Ghost say to Jesus at his baptism: "This is my beloved son; to-day have I begotten thee." The same form of expression was used in the Gospel of the Hebrews, and was so quoted by others of the Fathers.

He says (Dial., ciii.) that when the Jews went out to the Mount of Olives to take Jesus there was not a single man to help him. This is in contradiction to all our Gospels. He says that when Herod succeeded Archelaus, Pilate, by way of compliment, sent to him Jesus bound (chap, ciii). He tells how they sat Jesus on the judgment seat, and said "Judge us" (Apol., chap, xxxv.) He also relates that Jesus said: "In whatsoever things I apprehend you, in those also will I judge you." Grotius and others think this taken from the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Upon two occasions Justin says that the Jews sent persons about the world to spread calumnies.

So manifestly has Justin gone to other sources than our four Gospels that Canon Sanday admits: "Either Justin has used a lost gospel or gospels, besides those that are still extant, or else he has used a recension of these gospels with some slight changes of language and some apocryphal additions" ("The Gospels in the Second Century," p. 129; 1876). We conjecture that the "Memoirs" of Justin were the materials from which our Gospels were compiled, and that they were similar to or used in conjunction with the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

Credner argues that he used the Gospel of Peter. It is noticeable that the Diatessaron of Justin's pupil, Tatian, was called by Epiphanius the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Theodoret tells us that the Nazarenes

made use of the Gospel of Peter, and we know by the testimony of the Fathers generally that the Nazarene Gospel was that commonly called the Gospel according to the Hebrews. That Justin used this once celebrated Gospel seems all the more probable since we have the express testimony of Eusebius ("Ec. History, iv.," 22) that it was used by Hegesippus, his contemporary and compatriot.

## ELEUTHERIUS

Nearly all our information concerning this worthy is derived from Eusebius. He was born in Palestine of Jewish parents, and wrote five books of memoirs or commentaries no longer extant.

As he therein mentions Pope Eleutherius they must have been written after B.C. 177. The date 185 is a probable one. The work of Hegesippus appears to have been the earliest attempt to give a history of early Christianity, and as it is evident he represented the Jewish anti-Pauline school, which eventually was swamped by the Gentile element, the loss or destruction of his writings is much to be regretted. Such fragments as Eusebius has thought proper to preserve certainly makes one curious for more. The longest fragment concerns no less a person than the brother of the incarnate God. Eusebius gives it in the second book of his "Ecclesiastical History," chap. xxiii., from which we extract the following:—

"James the brother of the Lord, who, as there were many of this name, was surnamed the Just by all, from the days of our Lord until now, received the Government of the Church with the Apostles. This Apostle was consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head" [i.e., He was a Nazarite, see Numbers vi., 2-5; Judges xiii, 4-7; and xvi., 17. Jesus, we are told in the Gospel, came eating and drinking, and ordered his disciples when fasting to anoint the head.] Hegesippus tells us of James, his brother: "He never anointed with oil" [see James v., 14—17]; "and never used a bath." [In this latter respect too many holy saints have followed his insanitary example], "He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary. He never wore woollen, but linen garments. He was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees and interceding for the forgiveness of the people; so that his knees became as hard as a camel's in consequence of his habitual supplication and kneeling before God."

In another fragment he takes to task Paul and those who say "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that fear him." Hegesippus says that "those who say such things, lie against the divine scriptures and our Lord who says, 'Blessed are your eyes which see, and your ears which hear, 'etc.'"

All of which is very suggestive of the variety of faith and practice which existed among primitive Christians.

## VI.

## IRENÆUS.

The accounts of this father which are given in various biographies are purely conjectural. His very existence has been disputed in a little book published by Thomas Scott, of Ramsgate,\* the author of which contends that the Greek word *Eirenaïos*, meaning "peaceful" is simply the title of a treatise against heresies, the object of which was to allay sectarian discord, and that Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, is a purely mythical personage. Certain it is that very little is known of this old saint. But in that respect he in no way differs from the other early founders of Christianity.

\* *Irenæus: A Leaf of Primitive Church History Corrected and Re-Written,* 1876.

Dodwell makes him to have been born in the year 97, but Dupin and the best modern authorities place his birth about 140; a number, however, strike a medium at about 120. The importance of his date is evident since the work against heresies is the first writing which makes any mention of the four Gospels, and Irenæus claims to have been a disciple of Polycarp, who was a hearer of John. This claim can only be made at all plausible by giving each of these holy martyrs an exceedingly long life, for we have the word of Eusebius, that the book against heresies was composed in the time of Eleutherius, the twelfth Pope, between 177 and 192, and Irenæus lived until the third century. He is said to have been made bishop of Lyons in 178, but how he managed to get transplanted from Asia Minor to Gaul, is one of those things which are left to our faith and wonder.

The fact is, it is extremely doubtful if the author of the book against heresies ever saw Polycarp, and still more doubtful if Polycarp ever saw John. He says John leaped out of the bath when he saw Cerinthus. Now Cerinthus was a heretic, who lived about the middle of the second century. He described John as wearing the *petalon*, the bishops insignia of office. Fancy the retired fisherman, the beloved disciple, who was told by his master to carry neither purse nor scrip, wearing the priestly robes of office! George Reber, in his curious

book, "The Christ of Paul," (New York, 1876), says (p. 178): "The studied dishonesty of Irenæus in attempting to palm off the Presbyter John for the Apostle, is as dark a piece of knavery as is to be found in the history of a church, which has encouraged such practices from the time it claimed to be the depository of all the divine wealth left by the apostles."

Irenæus is alleged to have suffered martyrdom about 202, but there is no evidence of this prior to the ninth century, when Gregory of Tours first circulated a story to that effect. Even such orthodox writers as Cave, Basnage, Dodwell, and others, doubt the martyrdom, since neither Tertullian, Eusebius, Theodoret, nor other early writers refer to it. Two churches in Lyons disputed for centuries about the possession of his relics, which the Catholics allege were afterwards sacrilegiously despoiled by the Calvinists: a story often refuted. His sacred head is said to have been kicked about in the gutters, but of course it was miraculously restored to its place, and the skull, we believe, may be seen for a consideration at the present day. The original Greek text of the book against heresies is lost, and it exists only in a barbarous Latin version. At whatever time it was written, and it may probably be dated between 182 and 188, it testifies to the existence of numerous heresies in the Church. It contains many statements respecting the Gnostics, particularly the Valentinian heresy. There we may read of their peculiar theories concerning God and Christ. Some thought the Hebrew Jahveh a malignant deity whom Christ had come to destroy. Others were foolish and wicked enough to ask whence God got the matter for his creation. Cerinthus and his followers denied the virgin birth. Carpocrates and his school held that Jesus was the son of Joseph, and just like other men with the exception that inasmuch as his soul was steadfast and pure a power descended on him from the Father that by means of it he might escape from the creators of the world. Basilides taught that Jesus did not suffer death, but Simon of Cyrene, being compelled, bore the cross and was crucified in his stead. Irenæus does not forget to denounce these heretics as blasphemers and shameless sophists who speak not a word of sense. He calls them slippery serpents and other choice epithets such as the orthodox usually have in store for heretics, so that the reader is tempted to wish that the wretches could show cause why they should not summarily be damned. It is a notable fact that none of the heretical books or heretical gospels have been preserved; they come to us only through the medium of such representations as their opponents chose to make of them.

George Reber says: "The Fourth Gospel was written with no other purpose than to prove the incarnation, and that purpose is so persistently kept up in every line and verse, from the beginning to the end, that if we strike out this, and the miracles which are mere supports of the main idea, there is nothing left, and so with the third book against Heresies—it has but one theme. The writer sets out with the *Logos* idea of this gospel, which is never lost sight of. He finds proof in the traditions of the Church—in every page of the Old Testament—in the Synoptics as well as in the fourth Gospel; and as we read his misapplication of words and sentences, we should conclude that he was a lunatic if we did not know he was something else" (p. 188). "As we read whole pages in Irenæus, charging his adversaries with forgeries and false interpolations, we smile at the impudence and audacity of the man, who has done more to pollute the pages of history than any other, and whose footprints we can follow through the whole century, like the slime of a serpent" (p. 216).

Reber, it will be seen, can be as abusive as Irenæus himself. He calls him "one of the most dishonest historians of any age" and "the great criminal of the second century;" and endeavors to make out, on quite insufficient grounds, that he was the forger of the Gospel according to John.

Dr. Samuel Davidson, in his able work on "The Canon" (p. 155; 1880), says "Irenæus was credulous and blundering," and our case against him will be sufficient if we prove these charges.

The orthodox Dr. Donaldson observes: "What he says about the apostle John has the appearance of being, to say the least, highly colored" ("History of Christian Literature," vol. i., p. 157; 1864). The whole purport of his account concerning John was to refute heretics by the allegation of an apostolical succession which rests on his unsupported testimony alone. The author of the work against Heresies was essentially a priest, dwelling much on the authority of the priesthood and priestly traditions. He did more perhaps than any other to lay the foundations of the Romish hierarchy. In his third book, chapter four, he gives the opinion that every Church should agree with the Church of Rome on account of its pre-eminent authority.

He considers oral traditions of no less importance than Scripture, and cites Clement, Polycarp, and those who were alleged to have heard the apostles as decisive authorities. Hermes he calls divine Scripture. To be outside the Church is to be outside truth. Holy Scripture is only safely interpreted under control of the bishops.

Our Father cites the authority of John, and all the elders in Asia, for the assertion that the ministry of Jesus lasted twenty years, and that he was over fifty years of age when he was crucified. In the twenty-second chapter of his second book, he discusses the question at considerable length, and quotes John viii., 56-57, as establishing his opinion. For he argues the Jews would not have said to Jesus "Thou art not yet fifty years old," if he had only been thirty. Their object being to remind him of the short period he had been on earth, they certainly would not extend it eighteen or twenty years. If Irenæus was right in this important matter, the evidence of the Gospel history is falsified; if wrong, what is the worth of his testimony as to the origin of the four Gospels?

In regard to these he tells us there are mystic reasons why there could only be four Gospels. "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds [or four Catholic Spirits] while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the pillar and ground of the Church is the gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh" (Book iii., chap. xi, sect 8., p. 293). Dr. Giles in his "Christian Records" (p. 137), points out that as this work was written many years after the apologies of Justin Martyr, there was ample time in the interval for the compilation of our Gospels, out of the authentic "Memoirs of the Apostles" and "Sayings of our Lord."

In his third book, chapter xxi., Irenæus follows Justin in his foolish tale about the seventy Jewish elders, who made separate translations of the Bible into Greek in the very same words from beginning to end. He further tells us there was nothing astonishing in this since God inspired Ezra to re-write all the words of the former prophets and to re-establish the Mosaic law, destroyed during the captivity in Babylon. The object of making the Septuagint version of Divine authority, was because the quotations in the Christians' Scriptures

were taken from it, strangely enough, had the writers of those Scriptures been Jews. But despite their boasted accuracy, Irenæus (book iii., chap. xx., sec. 4) quotes Isaiah as saying, "And the holy Lord remembered his dead Israel, who had slept in the land of sepulture; and he came down to preach his salvation to them that he might save them." In another place he quotes this same passage as from Jeremiah, but it is in neither prophet Justin in his dialogue with Trypho had brought it forward as an argument against him, and accused the Jews of having fraudulently removed it from the sacred text. The passage is, however, found in no ancient version or Jewish Targum, which fact may be regarded as a decisive proof of its spuriousness.

He follows Justin also in his tales of miracles asserting "some do certainly and truly drive out devils. Others have foreknowledge of things to come, they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years." As with the other Fathers, he gives only general statements not particular instances. He allows that the heretics Simon and Carpoerates and their followers also perform miracles, "but not through the power of God but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions." None of these Christian miracles were known to the heathen, and, as Dr. Conyers Middle ton pointed out, in his "Free Enquiry into the Miraculous Powers in the Christian Church," at this very same time when one Autolycus, an eminent heathen, challenged his friend Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, a convert and champion of the Gospels, to show him but one person who had "been raised from the dead, on the condition of him turning Christian himself," Theophilus made plain by his answer that he was not able to give him that satisfaction.

Irenæus follows Justin in making the angels mix with the daughters of men, and also in his absurd typology. He even makes Balaam's ass a type of the Savior. The cohabitation of Lot with his two daughters was providential and typical of the two sister synagogues, the Jewish and the Christian.

In common with all the early Fathers he asserts the doctrine of the millenium, and this in the grossest sense. We have already seen the quotation which he gives from Papias as the actual words of Jesus upon this matter. He believed it would be a purely earthly glory and felicity after the sort depicted in the Jewish apocalypses. This portion of his writings, having been utterly discredited, is very often omitted. He believed the end of all things was near at hand. The world would last six thousand years because made in six days. Antichrist would come from the tribe of Dan and reign three years and five days in Jerusalem, when he would be vanquished. The fall of Antichrist and the end of the world would coincide with the fall of the Roman Empire, for the mysterious name of the beast is *Latinus*. Then the Lord was to come, and there would be no more labor "but unlimited wine swilling."

Irenæus affirms also on the same authority of tradition delivered to him by those who had received it from the apostles, that Enoch and Elias were translated into that very Paradise from which Adam was expelled, and that this was the place into which St. Paul was caught up. This is affirmed also by all the later Fathers, both Greek and Latin.

Our space will not permit us to further enlarge on the vast appeals to faith made by Irenæus. Nor can we pause to deal with Tertullian, who, with more impetuosity and no less acerbity, championed the same orthodoxy, shrinking not from the "credo quia absurdum est," and who ended by turning heretic. Nor with the learned Clement of Alexandria, whose high speculations led also into contempt of the world and its ways of science, art, and civilisation. Nor with the ascetic and self-emasculated Origen, at once profound and prolific, who, in his attempt to reconcile Christianity with reason, fell into such errors as believing in the pre-existence and pretemporal fall of souls, and the redemption of the inhabitants of the stars and even of Satan himself.

We must reserve a brief space for the great ecclesiastical historian.

## EUSEBIUS.

It is to this eminent Father that we are indebted for almost all we know of the lost Christian literature of the time preceding the establishment of Christianity by Constantine. He was born about 264 or 270, and was a priest in the time of Diocletian.

During the persecution in that reign he retired to Egypt, where, however, he was imprisoned, but speedily released. This gave rise to a suggestion that he had apostatised. "Who art thou, Eusebius?" exclaimed Potamon, Bishop of Heraclea, at the Council of Tyre, where Eusebius violently conducted the "persecution of Athanasius," "to judge the innocent Athanasius. Did'st thou not sit with me in prison in the time of the tyrant? They plucked out my eye for the confession of the truth. Thou comest forth unharmed. How didst thou escape?"

In 315 he became Bishop of Cæsarea. His friendships were among the Arian party in the Church, and his views, to say the least, inclined that way, and Dr. Newman, in his "History of the Arians in the Fourth Century," speaks of him as "openly siding with the Arians, and sanctioning and sharing their deeds of violence." This, however, did not stand in the way of his sitting beside the Emperor Constantine, at the Council of Nice, to anathematise and put down the Arians. He subscribed the Nicene Creed, apparently with some reservations, as to the word *consubstantial*. It is noticeable that his history breaks off abruptly before the Council of Nice. Perhaps it was one of those matters he thought best to suppress as little to the credit of the Church or himself. Athanasius, Petavius, Baronius, Montfaucon, and Moller consider him an Arian. Bull, Cave, and Hely, defend his orthodoxy.

On account of his Arianism he has been violently attacked by Cardinal Baronius, who impugns the faith of the bishop, the character of the man, and the sincerity of the historian. He makes out Eusebius to have been simply an ambitious and cruel courtier; calls him a calumniator, a panegyrist rather than an historian, and

accuses him of falsifying the edicts of Constantine.

Gibbon, in his sixteenth chapter, says: "The gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius himself, indirectly confesses that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of religion. Such an acknowledgment will naturally excite a suspicion that a writer who has so openly violated one of the fundamental laws of history has not paid a very strict regard to the observance of the other; and the suspicion will derive additional credit from the character of Eusebius, which was less tinged with credulity, and more practised in the arts of courts than that of almost any of his contemporaries."\* "No one," says Scaliger, "has contributed more to Christian history, and no one has committed more mistakes." C. B. Waite, ("History of the Christian Religion," p. 28) goes further and says: "Not only the most unblushing falsehoods, but literary forgeries of the vilest character darken the pages of his apologetic and historical writings." G. Reber (p. 104) says: "If we except Irenæus, no writer has so studiously put himself to work to impose falsehoods on the world as Eusebius."

*\* Dean Milman, in his Notes to Gibbon, vol. ii., p. 285; 1854, speaks of "the loose and, it must be admitted, by no means scrupulous authority of Eusebius."*

Constantine said of him that he ought not only to be bishop of Cæsarea, but bishop of the whole world. In his life of that emperor he amply repays the flattery. That work is not an history but an extravagant rhetorical panegyric upon the man who murdered his son Crispus, his nephew Licinius, suffocated his wife Fausta, and who, to revenge a pasquinade, was with difficulty restrained from the massacre of Rome, and who used the altar of the Church, which promised absolution and offered atonement for all sins, as a convenient footstool to the throne of the empire. In regard to Constantine's murders, Gibbon says (chap. xxviii.): "The courtly bishop who has celebrated in an elaborate work the virtues and piety of his hero, observes a prudent silence on the subject of these tragic events."

He makes Constantine to have been converted by the miraculous appearance of a cross in the sky. It is a great question if his account of his baptism is correct or if he was baptised in Rome by Pope Sylvester. Indeed, it is a question if Constantine was anything but a Pagan at heart until the end of his days.

The title of the thirty-first chapter of Eusebius's twelfth book of "Evangelical Preparation," is a caution. It reads "That falsehood, may be employed by way of medicine for those who need it." He ascribes to Porphyry (a learned Pagan who had written against Christianity, but whose works were destroyed by order of Theodosius) a forgery of his own time, called "The Philosophy of Oracles," and then cites it as evidence for Christianity. He gives a forged passage ascribed to Phlegon, where that Pagan is made to speak of the darkness which happened at the death of Jesus. If such a passage had been in existence it would have been mentioned by Origen, who refers to Phlegon, but who in his comment on Matthew xxvii., 45, concludes we must not be too positive that he spoke of this darkness in Matthew. He also makes Thallus, another heathen, bear testimony to the eclipse of the sun—another forgery.

At the very outset of his "Ecclesiastical History," he knocks us over with a pretended correspondence which passed between Jesus, who, Jerome says, knew not how to write, and Abgarus, king of Edessa.

This correspondence, wherein Jesus is made to cite the words of the Gospel of John, written probably a hundred years after, long did duty among Christian evidences, but is now given up by every critic of note as a forgery. Addison was one of the last to quote it as genuine.

As it would occupy too much space to follow this Father through all his misstatements, we shall confine our attention to his misrepresentations of Josephus. One of the most notorious of these is the account of the death of Herod Agrippa, grandson of the monster who is supposed to have ordered the slaughter of all the male children in the inland town "Bethlehem, and the coasts thereof," on account of an obscure prophecy. In the 12th chapter of Acts it is stated that Herod, as the people were calling him a god, was smitten by an angel and was eaten by worms. Josephus says: "Agrippa, casting his eyes upward, saw an owl, sitting upon a rope, overhead." Eusebius, in order to make Josephus agree with the Acts of the Apostles, in transcribing the text of Josephus, struck out about the owl and substituted an angel. Lardner says: "I know not what good apology can be made for this." Nor do we, unless that one-winged fowl is just as good as any other.

He makes Josephus' account of Theudas confirmatory of Acts v., 36; while, in fact, it disagrees with that account so much as to give commentators the utmost perplexity. He also, tries to reconcile Josephus with Luke by confounding the taxing in the time of Herod with that after the banishment of Arche-laüs, who reigned for nine years after Herod's death. Dr. Lardner's works (vol. i, p. 344) says: "I must confess I ascribe that not to ignorance but to somewhat a great deal worse. It is impossible that a man of Eusebius's acuteness, who had the New Testament and Josephus before him, should think a census made after Archelaüs was the same with that before Herod died; but Eusebius was resolved to have St. Luke's history confirmed by the express testimony of the Jewish historian, right or wrong."

Such instances make us suspect Eusebius in regard to the celebrated interpolation in which Josephus is made to give evidence to Jesus as the Christ (Antiq. xviii., hi., 3). He at any rate first cited the forgery, which was unknown to Origen, and distinctly asserts that Josephus did not acknowledge Christ. Dr. Lardner tells us the style of the paragraph is very Christian, if it be not the composition of Eusebius himself, as Tanaquil Faber suspected.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FRAUDS AND FOLLIES OF THE FATHERS \*\*\*

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