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THE
CHURCHMAN

MARCH, 1895.

ART. I.—HERMAS AND THE FOUR GOSPELS.

PART III.

THE "Shepherd" is a work made up of distinct parts, in which the writer delivers his message "in many ways." A leading thought expressed in one part of it is apt to reappear with new features and accessories, and what has once been obscurely hinted at we may hope to find again in some fresh form or disguise. The thing most prominent in the book is its comparison of the Church to a tower; and this is given in some detail in the third Vision, and repeated with much amplification in the long ninth Similitude.

Whatever was meant in Vis. iii. by the four feet of the Church's seat, which are compared to the four elements (*στοιχεῖα*) of the world, the same thought was presumably present to the author when he wrote in Sim. ix.: "So they became four rows (*στοῖχοι*) in the foundations of the tower." If, in the one place, the canonical Gospels are hinted at as the "elements of the faith of the Church," it would follow that they are perhaps alluded to in the second place under the figure of the four tiers of stones which support the whole superstructure, which is ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἐκκλησίας (Origen), the spiritual analogue of the world. In rabbinic Hebrew the four *elements* are the four "yesodoth," or *foundations*. A reviewer dismisses the suggestion that the four rows do accordingly carry a reference to the Four Gospels with the remark that "it is of no importance to Dr. Taylor that Hermas himself furnishes a different explanation of the four rows." This "different explanation" is a step in the proof that the Gospels are referred to.

The following extracts from the ninth Similitude are from Mr. Harmer's version:

"2. And in the middle of the plain he showed me a great white rock rising up from the plain. The rock was loftier

than the mountains, being four-square, so that it could contain the whole world. Now, this rock was ancient, and had a gate hewn out of it; but the gate seemed to me to have been hewn out quite recently. . . . And around the gate stood twelve virgins.

"3. And there went up ten stones square and polished. . . . And the virgins laid the first ten stones that rose out of the deep on each other, and they carried them together, stone by stone.

"4. Those ten stones then were joined together, and they covered the whole rock. And these formed a foundation for the building of the tower. And the rock and the gate supported the whole tower. And after the ten stones other twenty-five stones came up from the deep, and these were fitted into the building of the tower, being carried by the virgins, like the former. And after these, thirty-five stones came up. And after these came up other forty stones, and these all were put into the building of the tower. So four rows were made in the foundation of the tower.

"5. 'I would fain know, Sir,' say I, 'what is this building of this tower, and concerning the rock and gate, and the mountains, and the virgins, and the stones that came up from the deep, and were not shaped, but went just as they were into the building; and wherefore ten stones were first placed in the foundations, then twenty-five, then thirty-five, then forty.'

"12. 'This rock,' saith he, 'and gate is the Son of God.'

"13. 'The tower . . . this is the Church. . . . For this cause thou seest the tower made a single stone with the rock.'

"15. 'But the stones, Sir,' say I, 'that came from the deep, and were fitted into the building, who are they?' 'The first,' saith he, 'even the ten, that were placed in the foundations, are the first generation; the twenty-five are the second generation of righteous men; the thirty-five are God's prophets and His ministers: the forty are apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God.' 'Wherefore, then, Sir,' say I, 'did the virgins give in these stones also for the building of the tower and carry them through the gate?' 'Because these first,' saith he, 'bore these spirits, and . . . if they had not had these spirits with them, they would not have been found useful for the building of this tower.'

The rock loftier than the mountains is the ancient prophets' "mountain of the Lord's house." It is large enough to contain the whole world (2), and the base of the tower covers it completely (4). The primeval rock represents the Son of God as pre-existent and older than the creation, and the "recent" gate represents Him as "made manifest in the last days of

the consummation" (12). The tower and its stones become *monolith* with the rock, in token that the faithful are one with Christ (13).

The likeness and affinity of the words *στοῖχος*, *row*, and *στοιχείον*, "properly *one of a row*," suggested that the *four rows* (Sim. ix. 4) and the *four elements* allude to the same thing, the general subject of both contexts being the tower, or Church. Having seen reason to think that the Gospels were referred to in the earlier passage, I was prepared to see an allusion to them in the latter, having regard to the writer's habit of reiteration. But he gives us to understand that the four rows mean something different, and makes no mention of the Gospel in interpreting them, except in connection with the last (15). The difficulty was too patent to be overlooked, and some time elapsed before I saw how to meet it. Its solution is contained in the complete answer to the question of Hermas: *Wherefore did the virgins give in these stones also for the building of the tower?*

The four rows are four "generations" of generations, or Ages of the World, from the creation of man to the writer's own time, the fourth and last being the age of "the preaching of the Son of God." There is, perhaps, some hidden meaning in the numbers ten, twenty-five, thirty-five, forty of the stones in the rows; but in the case of the first age the "Shepherd" agrees with the Talmud tract "Pirké Aboth," which reckons "ten generations from Adam to Noah." These are, according to Gen. v. 1-29, the generations of Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. St. Jude calls Enoch "the seventh from Adam."

Three of the rows of stones representing the generations which had passed away before and without "the preaching of the Son of God," we may ask, with Hermas, "Wherefore did the virgins give in these stones also for the building of the tower?" Why were pre-Christian, unbaptized people included in the Church as represented by the tower?

Before the patriarchs could be built into the Church of Christ, Christ must somehow have been revealed to them. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad" (St. John viii. 56). "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 1-4). Hermas christens the pre-Christians in his own way in Sim. ix. 16:

“‘Show me still further, Sir,’ say I. ‘What desirest thou to know besides?’ saith he. ‘Wherefore, Sir,’ say I, ‘did the stones come up from the deep?’ . . . ‘It was necessary for them,’ saith he, ‘to rise up through water, that they might be made alive. . . . So these likewise that had fallen asleep received the seal of the Son of God, and entered into the kingdom of God. For before a man,’ saith he, ‘has borne the name of the Son of God, he is dead; but when he has received the seal, he layeth aside his deadness, and resumeth life. The seal, then, is the water: so they go down into the water dead, and they come up alive. Thus to them also this seal was preached, and they availed themselves of it, that they might enter into the kingdom of God.’ ‘Wherefore, Sir,’ say I, ‘did the forty stones also come up with them from the deep, though they had already received the seal?’ ‘Because,’ saith he, ‘these, the apostles and the teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after they had fallen asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached also to them that had fallen asleep before them, and themselves gave unto them the seal of the preaching. Therefore they went down with them into the water, and came up again. But these went down alive and again came up alive; whereas the others that had fallen asleep before them went down dead and came up alive. So by their means they were quickened into life, and came to the full knowledge of the name of the Son of God. For this cause also they came up with them, and were fitted with them into the building of the tower, and were builded with them.’”

Thus it is made out that the generations before Christ received *the preaching* (τὸ κήρυγμα) after their death, so that they came to the full knowledge of the name of the Son of God. Whatever, then, Hermas understood to be the Gospel is said to have been preached to them in its entirety. Thus much may be affirmed without fear of contradiction; for, to repeat words used in a previous number of the CHURCHMAN (March, 1894, p. 282), “the Gospel known to Hermas may have been single or multiple, documentary or oral.” On this point let us now interrogate his narrative of the preachers’ descent into Hades.

Some form of the account of the Lord’s own descent to the underworld lies behind the words of the “Shepherd,” including, doubtless, 1 Pet. iii. 18-20: “For Christ . . . went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved *by water*”—δι’ ὕδατος, as in Vis. iii. 3-5: “Because your life was saved, and shall be

saved, *by water*"; and Sim. ix. 16-2: "It was necessary for them to rise up *through water*, that they might be made alive." At all events, Hermas had received a tradition that Christ went and preached to the antediluvians or others of old time, and it occurs to his inventive mind to make the "apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God" go down and do as He had done. Accordingly, we read, as above, that they preached to the successive Ages of the World, of which we are told that there were four, including their own. It being a recorded fact that God spake to men of old *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως* (Heb. i. 1), we may suppose that the preaching in Sim. ix. 16 to the same persons after their decease varied in form from age to age, each receiving a revelation suited to its idiosyncrasy. For each age or "generation," then, there was a "preaching," or Gospel, and the generations of Hermas are four in number because there were four Gospels.

Turn now again to Irenæus, who writes: *As was the working of the Son of God, which was quadriform, such was the form of the living creatures, and such the character of the Gospel. And on this account there were four catholic covenants given to humanity*—"through Adam, Noah, Moses, and our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Latin version, or through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Christ, according to the Greek text of Irenæus. The Gospels in some order correspond to these, the last in order corresponding to the actual covenant" ("Witness of Hermas," p. 15). With the help of the two versions, it would be as easy to reckon five covenants as four.

Hermas divides the life of the world into four ages; he would have known how to make them five, or seven, or ten if it had served his purpose. But he reckons four only, and says that preachers of the Gospel preached to them after their decease; and nothing in the context forbids a reference to four Gospels corresponding severally to the ages, as Irenæus in the next generation makes the Four Gospels correspond to the "four catholic covenants" given to his four successive ages of humanity.

What has been said above at some length may be recapitulated briefly in the words of a footnote from "The Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels":

"A study of the style of Hermas having led me to expect that his four *στοιχεῖα* would reappear somewhere in some disguise, the allusion to them in the four *στοῖχοι* seemed too obvious to be accidental. At first the writer seemed to say that the *στοῖχοι* had no connection with the Gospels. But afterwards it was seen that he was merely giving their interpretation in two instalments: first, they were the four cosmic

generations from the beginning (xv. 4); next, they had had the Gospel preached to them (xvi. 5), and it was this that qualified them to be four rows in the foundation of the tower (iv. 3), which was, therefore, in a sense, founded upon the fourfold Gospel."

The "rows" themselves are interpreted by Hermas, but their number is chosen arbitrarily, and he leaves the reader—not without suggestive data—to discover its significance. "Let him that hath understanding count the number."

C. TAYLOR.

ART. II.—THE CONSTITUTION OF POPE JULIUS II. ON THE SIMONICAL ELECTION OF A POPE (*CUM TAM DIVINO*), AND ITS BEARING UPON THE PRESENT ROMAN CHURCH BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.

IN the year 1505 Pope Julius II. put forth a constitution on the simoniacal election of a Pope, which, from the universal conviction in the minds of the members of the Court of Rome that simony had reigned in the elections to the Papacy, at least from the period of Alexander VI., produced almost a feeling of consternation in the Curia. Its extreme imprudence at a moment when the Reformation was so nearly approaching, and the corruptions of the Roman Court had called forth the loudest protests from almost every kingdom in Europe, must be apparent to every reader of it. Nor were its dangers unrecognised by the officials of the Court, an eminent member of which published a commentary upon it, pointing out the facilities it would give for originating a schism on every occasion of an election to the Papacy. The writer of this commentary was Petrus Andreas Gammarus, "Auditor of the Apostolic Palace and Vicar of the Pope (Clement VII.) in the city of Rome." It was published there by Calvus, without date, and dedicated by its author to Clement himself, and by the publisher to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. The perils which were opened by the decree were pointed out to our author by a certain great prelate (*quidam magnus antistes*), who declared that it gave a handle to anyone who might be planning a schism.

"Hearing this," proceeds Gammarus, "I took it in hand. I devoured it in a single reading. Its very first aspect terrified me. I read it again and again. I saw that a vast ground for innovation was underneath it, unless it could find a mild interpreter." Further on he writes: "This constitution opens the door to every worst Cardinal, and, indeed, to all the vassals,