

THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING OF IRENÆUS AND OUR CHURCH CATECHISM.

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IT seems to be the fate of the theological writings of Irenæus, Bishop of Lugdunum, to be preserved only in translations and quotations. We are, however, most grateful to those whose studies and work have preserved them in that manner and revived the Church's interest in them from time to time. The treatise *Against the Heresies* was, of course, his *magnum opus*. It is examined and reviewed at length in a work recently published by the Cambridge Press. The tract, which is addressed to Marcianus, was a comparatively slight work. It is mentioned by Eusebius. But it was for centuries an "unknown quantity" until an Armenian version of it was found in 1904 in the library of the Church of Erivan, by an Armenian clergyman, Dr. Karapet Ter-Mekerttshian, who, with the help of a colleague, edited it with a German translation in 1907. An Armenian version of Books IV and V of the Greek treatise was also found bound with it. The editors assign the Armenian to the seventh century. Dr. Conybeare, in the *Expositor*, 1907, assigned it to the fifth. It is possible it may be only a translation of a Syriac original. Dr. Conybeare, however, doubts this. We have now two English translations of this tract, one by the discoverer, Ter-Mekerttshian, with the assistance of Dr. S. G. Wilson, published in the *Patrologia Orientalis* last year. A French translation also accompanied it.

A second German translation was published by Dr. S. Weber in 1912. This year it has been rendered into English from the Armenian by the Dean of Wells. The Dean gratefully and gracefully acknowledges the help he received from the German translations. This version is without doubt most carefully and conscientiously made. The editor's notes on passages of theological importance, comparing corresponding passages in the treatise, are valuable. A considerable space is devoted to the many references to the writings of Justin Martyr in this tract, and the general influence of Justin upon his

teaching. This was set forth by the present writer in the *Journal of Theological Studies* (January, 1908). But Dean Robinson gives long sections from both writers, e.g., a portion of c. 44 f. appears to be based upon Justin's *Dialogue* (56). The latter's Second Apology (c. vi.) helps to elucidate certain points in c. 53 of this tract, and c. 57 has many touch points with the First Apology, c. 32. The explanation of Christ, as He through Whom the Father *anointed* all things, and of Jesus as *Healer* (as if connected with *iasis*), are both in the style of Justin. A long chapter is devoted to a consideration of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Justin and Irenæus. Needless to say, the subject is not treated with theological precision by the former, but at least he emphasized the work of the Spirit in connection with prophecy, "Who spake by the prophets," and he finds the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in Plato. The subject is treated with greater fulness in Irenæus, both in connection with the Creation, the Spirit as Wisdom co-operating with the Word—the "Hands" of the Father; and also in the Incarnation, in co-operation with the Word, 'Who,' is also represented as the Spirit who came upon the Virgin both in Justin (*Dial.* 100) and in this tract, c. 71, "being the Spirit of God, Christ became a suffering man." The expression "generated" ("sown") from God by the Holy Spirit is the nearest approach to "conceived of the Holy Ghost."

The light thrown by this tract on the great Father's doctrine of the Trinity, especially the relations of the Son and the Spirit to one another and the Creation and Incarnation, was discussed by the present writer in *Hermathena*, the Dublin University journal, of 1908. But the tract has not only value for theological students; it must profoundly interest all religious minds. It may be divided into five parts. Part I, which covers cc. 1-8 inclusive, forms a prologue, and contains a short summary or catechism of the rule of faith and life. The second part embraces cc. 9-29, and supplies an historical sketch of the providential dealing of God with His people, more particularly of His revelation and plan of salvation since the Creation to the Mosaic legislation. The third part (cc. 30-42) gives a summary of prophecies and promises made to Abraham and David fulfilled in and by Christ. Part IV. (cc. 43-85) may be regarded as the Christological section of the tract. It supplies a catena of prophetic passages bearing upon Christ, His Incarnation, Suffering, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. The fifth and concluding portion

(cc. 86-100) is perhaps the most modern in its spirit. Here we have the moral conclusions and spiritual reflections of the writer as he sums up his letter to his friend. Here we have revealed as in a mirror the depth, insight, and true religious fervour and spiritual idealism of the ancient saint who found in his faith in Christ the sheet-anchor of his life, and in his love for Christ the inspiration of his soul. It brings us closer to him than the treatise, which is sublime and unapproachable in many ways. Faith and love were welded together in his inner life as they were in his sentence, "Christ has through our faith in Him developed our love to God and our neighbour, by which we are made religious, righteous and good."

Its Greek title in Eusebius is *εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος*, "for a proof of the Apostolic Preaching" (*eis epideixin toū Apostolikou Kerugmatos*). In *Adv. Haer.* II. 35, 4, Irenæus refers to "Apostolorum dictatio," among other branches of Catechetical instruction, such as "Domini magisterium," "prophetarum annuntiatio," and "legislationis ministratio." And in c. 46 of this tract Irenæus refers to the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which might possibly be the well-known *Didachê*. This tract before us is saturated with the expressions and ideas of the treatise. In c. 47 we have a reference to "the economy of our redemption," and "the economy of the Incarnation" (c. 99), of which Irenæus had spoken in *Adv. Haer.* I. 10, 1. In c. 47, he says "the holy oil" of Psalm xlv. is "the Holy Spirit with whom Christ is anointed"; while in the Treatise III. 18, 3, he writes: "The Father anointing, the Son anointed, and the Spirit the Unction." "All the principal points of the religious teaching of the great treatise are to be found here," writes Dr. Harnack. "They were not theology, but religion to Irenæus. Echoes of the Gnostic controversy are heard now and again, but the chief object of the book is to point out how Judaism leads up and proves Christianity." The Jews are, indeed, the great proof of Christianity. "The Jews, sir." Marcianus seems to have been wavering between the two and inclined to Judaism. The tract itself throws no new light upon the life of the great Bishop, but it shows how systematic was his mind and how deep and kindly was his interest in his people. As Dr. Harnack says: "We learn from it how strong and living were the thoughts which he had developed in his work, *Adversus Haereses*." We have an allusion to the treatise in c. 99 of this tract, where he indicates the three groups

of heresies concerning God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These, he says, he has exposed in "the Refutation and Detection of so-called science." The tract was, accordingly, written after the treatise. There is also a reference to the political situation and the state of the Church in c. 48, where he speaks of "kings who now hate Him and persecute His Name," an allusion to the persecution of Severus (199). The inference is that the tract was composed about that time.

The scriptural quotations of the tract are chiefly from the Old Testament. Some of these are after the version of Justin. Others follow the LXX, and others still show independence of both, and closer relation to the Hebrew.¹ One fact of interest regarding the phrasing of the tract is its use of Justin's works. There are also many affinities, literary and spiritual, with the Church Catechism. Cf. the English Prayer Book.

The introduction contains the address to Marcianus, whose faith Irenæus desires to confirm, and accordingly sends him this little book, *The Preaching of the Truth*, to have by him as a concise account of all the articles of the faith, or as "all the members of the body of the truth." Marcianus may have had a tendency to lapse back into Judaism. Irenæus says rather pointedly in c. 95: "We dare not return to the first legislation"; and the whole trend of his argument is to prove that the promises to Abraham were fulfilled in Christ and inherited by the Gentiles. The prophecies, therefore, rather than the Gospels are laid under contribution. The Anti-Judaic character of the book may also reflect the style of the earliest catechisms of the Christian Church, and may be compared in this regard with Justin Martyr's *Apologia*. Prof. Rendel Harris would refer this instruction back to an original work against the Jews, entitled *Testimonies Against the Jews*.²

The aim of the tract is not merely to inculcate correct belief, but also right conduct. While the treatise is mainly concerned with the speculative aspect of religion, it has chiefly to do with its practical expression. The tract, however, throws an interesting light on Irenæus' doctrine of the "Trinity."³ That is the basis of the work (see c. 6), as it is of the Church Catechism. Like that Catechism,

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies*, Sep. 1907, "The Apostolic Preaching of Irenæus," by the present writer.

² *Expositor*, March, 1907. See also *Testimonies*, Part I. (Cambridge Press), 1917, by Rendel Harris, with Vacher Burch.

³ *Apostolic Preaching of Irenæus* (Hermathena, 1907), by present writer.

it insists upon personal purity, as well as true belief (c. 2). Like that Catechism, it places Holy Baptism in the forefront of the instruction (c. 3). This chapter (3) is of remarkable interest. The second chapter having concluded with a description of the heretics, "They sit in the seat of the wicked and corrupt those who receive the poison of their teaching," he now proceeds: "Now, in order that we suffer not such (poison) we must hold the canon of the Faith steadfastly, and perform the commandments of God, *believing* in God, and *fearing* Him as He is Lord, and *loving* Him as our Father. Doing proceeds from believing. . . . And now, whereas the faith is the constant preserver of our salvation, it is necessary to pay much attention to it, that we may gain a true insight into the realities. It is the *faith* that gives us this, the faith as the Elders, the disciples of the apostles,¹ have handed it down to us. First of all, it teaches us to remember that we have received Baptism for the forgiveness of sins in the Name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who became incarnate and died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit of God; and that this Baptism is the seal of everlasting life and regeneration into God; so that we are the children of the everlasting God, and that the Eternal and Constant One may be in us . . . and that God may be the Sovereign of all and that all may be of God."²

"Therefore," he writes in c. 7, "the baptism of our regeneration proceeds through these three points, while God the Father graciously leads us by His Son, through the Holy Spirit, to our regeneration. For they who carry the Spirit of God in themselves are led to the Word, that is, to the Son, but the Son leads them to the Father, and the Father allows them to receive immortality."

With these words compare especially the answers in the first part of the Catechism: (1) "In my Baptism, wherein I was made the child of God"; (2) "that I should renounce the devil and all his works . . . and all the sinful lusts of the flesh . . . that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life"; (3) "I heartily thank our heavenly Father that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me

¹ Cf. *Adv. Haer.*, V. 36, 1. "The presbyters, the disciples of the Apostles."

² Cf. "The Gospel of our adoption" (c. 81).

His grace that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

Also notice that the Catechism bases right conduct upon right belief, and rehearses the Creed before the Commandments. Similarly, Irenæus, in cc. 4, 5, 6, gives a summary with explanations of the true faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This, he says, is the " canon of our belief, the foundation of our building, and the security of our *walk*." Cf. our Catechism's words : " *Walk* in the same all the days of my life." And also the words of this tract (c. 1) : " It behoves thee, and all who care for their *salvation*, stedfastly, staunch, and surely to finish the walk by faith."

The conclusion of the tract, cc. 87-100, which seems to be the most important portion of the work, is an expansion of the words of Matthew xxii. 37 : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind " ; and the second is like unto it, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." These words are similarly developed in " My duty towards God " and " My duty towards my neighbour " in the Catechism.

" The love of God," Irenæus writes in c. 95, " is far from all sin, and love to one's neighbour works no ill to one's neighbour." Cf. the Greek Fragment (IV) of Irenæus : " In as far as one can do good to one's neighbour, and does it not, he must be considered a stranger to the love of God." This principle is applied to the Decalogue in c. 96, with the same searching inwardness, and love is shown to be the fulfilling of the law (c. 87). In this same chapter he combines the three leading ideas of our Catechism, faith, love, and duty, in one striking phrase : " He has through our faith in Him developed our love to God and to our neighbour, by which we become pious, and righteous, and good." The greater part of the tract is, however, taken up with the Old Testament prophecies relating to the Messiah as Son of God, as Pre-existent, as Incarnate, Crucified, Risen and Ascended, and as our future Judge. This seems to be an expansion of *Adv. Haer.* IV. 33, 9, *et seq.*, written to prove that Christ fulfilled the words of the prophets. Irenæus explains our Lord's work in the light of the Old Testament as to a Catechumen, and the Scriptures are interpreted in the same allegorical manner of " seeking the type " which he had followed in the treatise. (iv. 31. 1.)

An interesting quotation from Baruch (3, 29-4, 1) occurs in c. 97. The principal verse (3, 37), " Afterward did He show Himself upon earth and conversed (or walked) with men," is also cited in

the Treatise IV. 20, 3, and the same application is made in both places, namely, that "through Christ there is union and communion between God and man." Communion with God established through Christ; immortality conferred on man by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the restoration in man of the image and likeness of God by both the Son and the Holy Spirit—these are the three points round which the mind of Irenæus revolves both in the treatise and the tract. The quotations are given for the most part in the same order and form as in *Adv. Haer.* IV. 33, 9-14.

The most remarkable statement in the *Apostolic Preaching*¹ is, that Pontius Pilate was the procurator of Claudius (A.D. 41-54). This was evidently due to a desire to make the sentence under Pilate coincide with the date required by those who held that our Lord lived over forty years. See *Adv. Haer.* II. 22, 6: "He was not far from fifty years; and therefore they said unto Him, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?'" (John viii. 57).

There are many echoes of Justin's *Apologia* and *Dialogue*, as well as of the treatise, *Adversus Haereses*, in this tract. We have the same parallels of Mary and Eve, of the Tree of Knowledge and the Cross; the "recapitulation," or summing-up of all things in Christ; the "prophetic Spirit"; the name Immanuel; the jealousy of the Devil; the "indescribable generation" of the Christ. Many of his own phrases slightly altered occur, e.g., "the rule of the truth" becomes "the rule of the faith." The Son is "the image of God" in the tract; in the treatise "the visible of the Father." The perfection of man, the resurrection of the body, its corruption (c. 32, and III. 21, 10, *Adv. Haer.*), the adoption in Christ, His Incarnation and Virgin Birth, the Church as the seed of Abraham, Adam and Eve in the Garden represented as boy and girl, innocent and virgin created from the virgin soil (*Adv. Haer.* III. 22, 3), the free-will and responsibility of man, and the founding of the Churches by the Apostles—these topics are treated in the same way in both treatise and tract.

It may be interesting to note that he has taken over from the Gnostics "the seven heavens," of which he writes in the treatise (I, v. 2) and in the tract (c. 9). He has, however, abandoned his old explanation of the name "Satan," which he interpreted as "Apostate" in *Adv. Haer.* V. 21, 2, but which he here (c. 16)

¹ C. 74.

correctly explains as "adversary." This is doubtless the reason why we do not meet with the *apostasia*, which figures so largely in the treatise, e.g., V. I, I, and which represents in the system of Irenæus the rule of Satan.

An interesting coincidence in phrasing is found in the tract and the Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity. The Collect is from the Sacramentary of Leo, Bishop of Rome (440), and it runs: "Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, etc." In c. 47 of the tract we have: "His fellows are the prophets, the righteous ones, and the apostles, and all who have part in the fellowship of His Kingdom, that is, His disciples."

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CORRESPONDENCE.

ST. JOHN XIX. II.

(To the Editor of THE CHURCHMAN.)

DEAR SIR,—With you I regret the death of the Rev. Werner H. K. Soames since his strictures on my paper on "John xix. II" were written, but I claim the right of a respectful though firm reply thereto.

1. I submit that it *is* "scholarship" and not "common sense," which is frequently at variance with the evidence of the senses, as in the case of the words of Institution in the Lord's Supper, that can decide "the true meaning" of this passage. Anyway the eminent authorities I adduced in support of my contention were not of this opinion; neither (may I add in all modesty?) are they who have since testified to the conclusiveness of my arguments.

2. I did not disclaim Pilate's "power" as being "ordained by God," for I wrote distinctly (p. 41): "Of course, primarily and ultimately, the power to judge and condemn Christ, to whomsoever given, came from God by actual concession or passive permission—as it does in all exercise of power here below, i.e., directly or indirectly," but my point was, "Why should, and how does, the power given to Pilate directly by God to work out His purposes accentuate the guilt of the deliverer or deliverers?"

3. Mr. Soames further seems to exonerate Pilate from all blame when he asserts that "he could *not* well *avoid* 'trying' any one brought before him. Hence he was not to blame (was *not* sinful) for so doing." But I never held that the act of trial constituted