

*JESUS MIRRORED IN MATTHEW, MARK,
AND LUKE.*

II. THE REALISTIC PICTURE OF MARK.

THAT Mark is the earliest of the first three Gospels might be inferred from its comparative brevity, and also from the fact that it treats only of the public life of our Lord, giving no particulars concerning His birth such as we find in Matthew and Luke. But apart from these considerations this Gospel contains unmistakable internal marks of a relatively early date. These marks are such as suggest an eye and ear witness as the source of many narratives, and a narrator unembarrassed by reverence. This feeling, we know, does come into play in biographical delineations of men whose characters have become invested with sacredness, and its influence grows with time. The high esteem in which they are held more or less controls biographers, and begets a tendency to leave out humble facts, and tone down traits indicative of pronounced individuality, and so to construct a story smooth and commonplace in all that it reports of word or deed, and exhibiting a character free from all peculiarities over which the weakest might stumble, and just on that account devoid of interest for all who can discern and value originality and power. It may seem bold even to hint that any such influence can be traced in any of the evangelic memoirs. It would be contrary to fact to say that any of them exhibit the characteristics of biographical writing arising out of the sense of decorum in a highly developed form, though calm investigation may constrain the admission that the rudiments of these are to be found in one of them. What I am concerned at present to point out is, that wherever such characteristics may be discovered in the Gospels, they have no place in Mark's narratives. If, as we have already seen, the presentation of Jesus in the

first Gospel is influenced by prophecy going before, and if, as we shall see, the presentation of Jesus in the third Gospel is to a certain extent influenced by reverential faith coming after, it may be said with truth of the second that its picture of Jesus is not coloured by either of these influences.

Mark is the realist among the Evangelists. It has often been observed concerning his style that it is graphic, vivid, pictorial. The observation is not only not the whole truth, but it is even to some extent misleading. The epithet "pictorial" suggests the idea of an author who employs heightening phrases, and introduces unimportant particulars simply for effect. So used it is a doubtful compliment tending to lower rather than increase our respect for a writer. Now the thing to be noted about Mark is not the use or heightened or accumulated phrases so much as the avoidance of toning down, of reticence, of generalized expression, or of euphemistic circumlocution. He states facts as they were, when one might be tempted not to state them at all, or to show them in a subdued light. He describes from the life, while Matthew describes from the point of view of prophecy, and Luke from the view-point of faith. In this respect Mark occupies a place among the Gospels somewhat analogous to that of the Vatican codex,¹ which differs from all other ancient manuscript copies of the Greek New Testament by the measure in which it has kept free from modifications of the original due to regard for religious edification on the one hand, or to literary tastes on the other. The text of the Vatican codex has on this account been called "neutral," to distinguish it from the *paraphrasing* type of text current in the West, and from the *refining* type which had its source in Alexandria. Mark likewise may be called "neutral," not, indeed, in the sense in which the term has sometimes been applied to him, as implying a deliberate attitude of neutrality in reference to two conflict-

¹ Referred to in critical editions of the Greek New Testament by the letter B.

ing theological tendencies,¹ but in the sense that he reproduces the story of Jesus from the life, uninfluenced to any appreciable extent either by the prophetic interest of the first Evangelist, or by the delicate sense of decorum characteristic of the third.

In this neutrality of Mark we have a guarantee of first-hand reports and early redaction not to be despised. The realism of the second Gospel makes for its historicity. Therefore we may have the less hesitation in making this feature prominent by going somewhat into detail. I have tried to make an apologetic point of the occasional weakness of Matthew's prophetic references; I hope now to make an additional point by the exhibition of Mark's realistic delineations.

1. I begin with a biographic hint found only in this Gospel concerning the private life of Jesus previous to the commencement of His public career. It is contained in the question of His fellow-townsmen on the occasion of His visit to Nazareth, after He had for some time carried on His work elsewhere: Is not this the *Carpenter*?² This is the one fact we learn from the second Evangelist concerning the history of Jesus previous to the eventful day when He left Nazareth for the scene of the Baptist's ministry. Mark, unlike his brother Evangelists, has no account of Jesus' birth, and no genealogy proving Him to be a lineal descendant of David. "A son of the hero-king of Israel," say Matthew and Luke; "a carpenter," says Mark, with somewhat disenchanting effect. And yet Mark's solitary realistic contribution to the early history of Jesus is perhaps of more importance to the permanent significance of Christianity than the other fact, which, while recognising it in his narratives, he takes no pains to verify. To make good the title "Son of David" as applicable to Jesus was an important

¹ Such was the view of Dr. Ferdinand Baur and other members of the famous Tübingen school.

² *Mark* vi. 3.

function of the apologetic of the apostolic age, especially in a work like that of Matthew probably written for the benefit of Jewish Christians. But that title, in the literal or physical sense, can hardly be vital to the faith of Gentile believers and of all generations. Our faith that Jesus is the Christ does not depend on our being certain that He was physically descended from David. We may satisfy ourselves on independent grounds that He meets all our spiritual needs, and therefore is a true Christ for humanity. And when we have done this, we will have no difficulty in applying to Him the prophetic promise of a seed to David, at least in a spiritual sense, which in this case, as in the case of the Messianic *kingdom*, might conceivably be all the fulfilment the promise was to receive. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed," argued St. Paul.¹ So we, following the same style of reasoning, may say: If Jesus be Christ (shown to be such by what He was and did), then was He David's seed, ideally at least, if not physically.

On the other hand, that Jesus, before He began His prophetic career, occupied the lowly state of a carpenter, is of universal, permanent, and, one may add, ever-increasing significance as a symbolic revelation of the genius of the Christian religion. It is by no means a merely outward, indifferent fact, too trivial for mention in even the fullest account of the life of so great a Personage. It has distinct and great ethical value, both as a biographical fact, and as a means of propagating Christian faith. How much that humble, yet not ignoble, occupation signifies as an element in the education of Jesus! What possibilities it provided of keen insight into the heart of human life, and what protection it afforded against the unrealities and insincerities attaching to more favoured social conditions! Let us not rob it of its significance by remarking that to learn a trade was a fashion among Jews irrespective of

¹ Gal. iii. 20.

rank. The artisan experience of Jesus was more than a fashion complied with ; it was a social necessity endured. Jesus was a real, not an amateur, carpenter, the difference being as great as between a volunteer soldier and one who engages in actual fighting. Then what a power lies in this one fact, Jesus a carpenter, to enlist for Him the interest of the million ! The toiling multitude in every land and in every age can say : He is one of ourselves. He knows us, and we know Him and trust Him. He fought a good fight for us, for man stripped of adventitious distinction ; all honour to His name. It was well for all reasons that the Founder of a universal religion came up out of the humbler social levels with guaranteed sympathy for the many. And it is well that the fact has been distinctly stated in at least one Gospel, for "faith cometh by hearing."

2. Our next example of Mark's realism shall be taken from his account of "The Temptation." "The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness."¹ Note the word *driveth*, much the strongest to be found in any of the accounts. It points to a powerful force at work, of some kind. And we can have no doubt as to its nature. Of course it was not a physical force exerted to compel a reluctant person to go whither he would not, into the inhospitable regions of a stony desert, where "wild beasts" were the only available companions. The force of the Spirit, as the Evangelist conceives the matter, is brought to bear inwardly, and acts through thought and feeling. In other words, the driving implies and denotes *intense mental preoccupation*. Jesus is thinking earnestly, passionately, of His new vocation and of the future it will bring, and instinctively, inevitably, as if under an irresistible impulse, He retires into the solitudes of Nature congenial to one in so absorbed a mood. What a flash of light this one realistic word "driveth" throws on

¹ Mark i. 12.

the spiritual endowment and disposition of Jesus! A deep thinker, with a profoundly earnest, passionate temper, and a spirit capable of single-hearted, consuming devotion to a great end: this is what we see by aid of this momentary illumination. And the knowledge we have gained is not confined to the particular experience to which the word is applied. It gives the key to the whole life in all its leading phases; therefore to those that already lie behind. It explains the departure from Nazareth, and the baptism in the Jordan. It helps us to understand why, and in what mood, Jesus left the home of His childhood and early youth, and the place and instruments of toil. The Spirit was driving Him then and there also; for we must on no account conceive the Spirit as coming upon Him for the first time after His baptism. The descent of the Spirit recorded by all the Evangelists is rather the objective symbol of an antecedent subjective fact, an inner possession reaching far back into the past years, and at last culminating in the resolve to make that eventful journey southwards. The resolutions of deep, strong natures are not formed suddenly. They are the ripe fruit of early dreams, and lengthened brooding, and much wistful solitary thought. But when the crisis comes, purposes are formed with intense decision, and promptly carried into effect. Then the driving, tempestuous action of the spirit begins, when men called to great careers act in a way that surprises all who do not know what silent processes of preparation have gone before. So it was with Jesus when He left Nazareth; so when He demanded baptism; so when He retired into the wilderness. These were three consecutive scenes in the first act of the great drama which terminated on Calvary. Jesus passed through all three by Divine constraint. He *must* leave Nazareth, He *must* be baptized, He *must* bury Himself amid the grim retreats of the wilderness, to master there the abstruse problem of His

new vocation, that He may enter on its duties with clear vision, confirmed will, and pure, devoted heart.

3. A third example of Mark's manner may be found in his account of the first appearance of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum.¹ Jesus now appears actually engaged in the work of His high calling, and that account gives a vivid idea of the impression He made immediately upon the people. He did two things on that occasion. He preached, and He cured a man suffering from a disease described as possession by an unclean spirit. By both functions He created astonishment, significantly reflected in the comments of those present, as reproduced in the life-like report of the Evangelist. "What is this?" said they to each other, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."² They were astonished at the immediate cure of the demoniac by an authoritative word, and this is not surprising; but not at that alone. They were not less astonished at the novel kind of preaching, which ordinary readers of the Gospel, I suspect, fail sufficiently to realise. And yet the Evangelist does his best to direct our attention to the fact by an observation brought in at an earlier stage in his narrative.³ In that observation he points out the remarkable feature in Christ's preaching. It was the note of authority, he explains, that took the hearers by surprise. Authority, commanding power in word and deed: that was what struck the worshippers in Jesus as He appeared before them that Sabbath day. And yet they had been accustomed to authority in doctrine. They were constantly hearing in the synagogue of what had been said by the ancients.⁴ Their Rabbis or scribes were never done quot-

¹ *Mark* i. 21.

² *v.* 27, as in the Revised Version, which is based on a different reading in the Greek from that to which the Authorised Version corresponds, according to which the wonder referred only to the act of healing.

³ *v.* 22.

⁴ *Matt.* v. 21.

ing the opinions of those who sat in Moses' seat, and interpreted the meaning of the law. But there was a wide difference between this new Rabbi and all the rest. The Evangelist remarks on it: "Not as the scribes," and we may take for granted that it had struck the people in the synagogue. Jesus spake not *by* authority, like the scribes, citing the names of renowned doctors, but *with* authority—"as one that had authority." He quoted no opinions of others; He simply uttered His own thoughts, and so uttered them that they came home to the minds of listeners with swift, sure effect, producing conviction, admiration, and sudden thrills of pleasure and awe. All this we learn from the simple words, "a new teaching!" reported by Mark as uttered on the spot. Peter was present. Papias, a Church Father, living about the beginning of the second century, tells us that that apostle was the source from whom Mark derived his information. It looks like it here. That lively exclamation: "a new teaching!" sounds like the report of one who had been there, and on whom the spontaneous expression of popular admiration had made an indelible impression.

4. A curious and at first puzzling instance of Mark's realism is supplied in his account of what may be called the *Flight of Jesus from Capernaum*. The story he tells is this:—

"And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with Him followed after Him: and they found Him, and say unto Him, All are seeking Thee. And He saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for to this end came I forth."¹

"To this end came I forth," *i.e.* from Capernaum early this morning. Luke gives the matter a different turn. He

¹ Mark i. 35-38, from the Revised Version.

makes no mention of a flight at an early hour, and he changes the apology for flight into a statement by Jesus as to the aim of His mission in general.¹ We must not, in the well-meaning but somewhat officious spirit of the harmonists, force the second Evangelist to say the same thing as the third. Mark's version is historical, not theological; and if we will take it so, we shall get clearer insight into the spirit of Jesus, and the situation in which He was then placed. We assume then that what Jesus said to Peter and the others was that He had left Capernaum in order that He might preach in other towns. From this we learn that Jesus had formed a plan for a preaching tour in Galilee, and that the appearance in the synagogue of Capernaum on the previous day was simply the beginning of its execution. Having delivered His message there, He desires to visit other Galilean synagogues, that He may speak in them words of similar import. That we now fully understand to be His earnest, deliberate purpose. But why such haste, and why such secrecy? Why not stay a little longer in Capernaum, where His words and works are so greatly appreciated, say another week; and why not leave, when He does leave, in open day? There must be urgent reasons for the haste and the secrecy. The reason for the *secrecy* is obvious. All were seeking Him. The people of Capernaum had not had enough of Him, either of His preaching or of His healing power, and they would do their utmost to prevent His going; therefore He stole away while they were asleep. But what was the reason of the *haste*? It must be found in that which constitutes the penalty of sudden and great popularity—the jealousy, envy, and ill-will of those whose vanity or interest is compromised thereby. Jesus taught not as the *scribes*. The scribes knew that as well as the people, and even if no comparisons were made by other hearers, they themselves, such

¹ Luke iv. 42.

of them as were in the audience, would carefully note the difference, and find in it a source of annoyance. Jesus instinctively apprehended danger, and took His measures accordingly. Being earnestly minded to preach in other synagogues, He hastened away, fearing that His opportunity might soon be cut off. He could not speak in the synagogues without the consent of the officials, and who could tell how soon and how far the incipient dislike of the scribes in Capernaum might spread, proving a barrier in His way wherever He went. Therefore He said to Himself: "I must go at once on this preaching mission, that I may speak in as many synagogues as possible, before there has been time for opposition to be organised."

Here was a complicated perplexing situation: immense popularity on the one hand; ill-will in the professional heart, likely ere long to develop into overt action, on the other. We are not surprised to learn that Jesus spent part of that morning in prayer. He did not pray as a matter of course in pursuance of a habit, engaging as it were in His wonted morning devotions. The prayer was special, in reference to an urgent occasion; and though no particulars are mentioned, we can easily imagine its purport. The emergency suggested petitions such as these: that the people in the various places He meant to visit might lend Him a willing ear; that opportunity might not be too soon cut off by the plotting of evil-minded men; that He might be able to speak the word of the kingdom sweetly and graciously, unruffled in spirit by opposition experienced or apprehended; that impressions made on friendly hearers might not run into a merely superficial enthusiasm, or degenerate into an interest having its root in a desire for material benefit. How luminous and instructive that puzzling realistic anecdote of Mark's has at length grown!

5. Our next instance is the remarkable statement peculiar to the second Gospel that the relatives of Jesus at a certain

period said of Him : " He is beside Himself.¹ The passage is somewhat obscure partly owing to its brevity, and as a Catholic commentator long ago remarked,² it is rendered more difficult than it really is by a piety that will not let itself believe that any one could think of Jesus as seems to be reported. But it is best to look the unpleasant fact fairly in the face in hope that it will bring to view some new and notable features in the picture of Jesus.

One thing the fact stated very evidently bears witness to : the moral originality of Jesus. The thought of His relatives simply exemplifies the incapacity of the ordinary man to understand the extraordinary man. Unusual force of mind, or depth of conviction or sincerity in utterance, anything out of the common course in conception or in conduct, is a mystery or even an offence to the average man. It would be his wisdom to stand in silent awe, hat in hand so to speak, before the mystery, as unscientific persons would stand in the presence of a mysterious phenomenon in the physical universe. But men will talk about their moral superiors, they will have their opinions and theories about them, and they have little hesitation in uttering these, however disrespectful or injurious. And so it came to pass that even the friends of Jesus thought and said that He was out of His senses, thereby bearing involuntary testimony to the exceptional greatness of His personality.

The rude speech of these stupid friends testifies further to the enthusiasm of Christ's humanity. It was while He was so busily occupied with His usual work among the people, preaching and healing, that He could not find time to take food that the friends arrived on the scene, and watching His behaviour, came to their sapient conclusion. Much benevolence, they thought, had made Him mad, and in their goodness they desired to rescue Him from the crowd and the excitement, and take Him home to quietness and

¹ *Mark* iii. 21.

² Maldonatus.

rest. Let us pardon their stupidity for the sake of their most reliable testimony to the intensity of Christ's devotion to His beneficent toil. The madness was only in their imagination, but the benevolence was a great indubitable fact. A sacred passion for doing good to others was one of the outstanding characteristics of Jesus; that is what we learn in an emphatic manner from this new instance of Mark's blunt way of telling his story.

From this same instance we may learn further the extensive and extraordinary character of the healing ministry of Jesus. It was so obtrusive a fact that men found it necessary to invent theories to account for it. The friends of Jesus had their theory; looking on while He taught and healed, they said to one another, He is suffering from a disordered mind. Theirs was not the only theory broached; King Herod had his likewise. When he heard of the fame of Jesus as a Healer, he said: It is John the Baptist risen from the dead—just come back to earth from the spirit-world and wielding its mysterious powers.¹ And the scribes and Pharisees had their theory, especially with reference to the cure of demoniacs; Mark places it side by side with that of the friends as if inviting us to compare the two. He casteth out devils, said they, by the prince of devils.² Very unsatisfactory theories all three; the first stupid, the second grotesque, the third malicious and dishonest. Never mind. They all serve an important purpose, that of showing that the healing ministry was a great fact. Men do not theorise about nothing. When theories arise, something has occurred that arrests attention and demands explanation.

Before passing from this instance it is due to Mark to say that he has supplied materials which enable us to see how utterly unfounded was the judgment of the "friends." It is not to be denied that incessant exciting work among the "masses," especially such as makes heavy demands on

¹ *Mark* vi. 14.

Mark iii. 22.

sympathy, brings dangers both to bodily and to mental health. There is need not only for intervals of rest, but for occupations and interests of a different order to help the mind to maintain its balance, and to keep the spirit in perpetual calm. That these were not wanting in the case of Jesus clearly appears in Mark's narrative. Just before he has shown Jesus occupied with the formation of a *disciple-circle*, first selecting from the great crowd a larger group of susceptible spirits with whom He retires to the mountain top, and thereafter by a gradual process choosing from these a smaller circle of twelve.¹ With these chosen companions He remains up there for some time communicating to them such deep wise thoughts as those preserved in Matthew's *Sermon on the Mount*. This might be made clearer to the ordinary reader by a different verse-division and a slightly amended translation, the words "And He cometh into a house"² "being made an independent verse, and the phrase "into a house" being replaced by the one word "home." The narrative will then stand thus,—

V. 19, "And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him (the close of the disciple-list).

V. 20, "And He cometh home."

V. 21, "And the multitude cometh together again so that they could not so much as eat bread."

By leaving a blank space between *v.* 19 and *v.* 20 we convey the impression of a considerable interval between the ascent of the mountain (*v.* 13) and the return to the plain, or the coming *home*, which of itself implies absence for an appreciable time. The blank is the place at which Mark's report of the Teaching on the Hill would have come in had it entered into his plan to record it.

6. Yet another instance of Mark's realistic style must be briefly noticed. It is the tableau of Jesus on the way

¹ *Mark* iii. 13, 14.

² *Mark* iii. 19.

to Jerusalem, and the final crisis presented in these words :—

“ And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them, and they were amazed, and they that followed were afraid.”¹

Again the same intensity which had filled “ friends ” with astonishment and alarm. But this time the subject which engrosses the thoughts of Jesus is not His beneficent work among the people but His own approaching passion. Walking in advance of the twelve and the larger crowd who followed in the rear, He is as solitary in spirit as He is isolated on the ascending path. Emotions agitate His soul in which His fellow-travellers have no part. The inward mood reveals itself in His outward bearing in such a way as to inspire in spectators wonder and fear. How much was in His mind at that hour: the holy supper, the farewell words, Gethsemane, the cross, all there by vivid anticipation! And how much in His manner as it met the eye: a tragic mood, a hero's air, the step of one going forward to battle! He told the twelve what He was thinking of, but it was not necessary; they saw it all and were filled with awe. And we see it through the evangelist's vivid, rapid portraiture, in which gesture is made to tell the tale of unspeakable pathos, firm resolve, heroic daring, faithfulness even unto death.

The foregoing are samples of realistic touches peculiar to Mark and their number might easily be increased. There are others equally significant in which he does not stand alone, Matthew having introduced them into his narrative probably from the pages of his brother Evangelist. Among these may be named the realistic description of the process of digestion in the discourse concerning that which defileth,² the discouraging word to the Syrophenician woman, It is

¹ Mark x. 32.

² Mark vii. 19.

not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs,¹ and the stern word to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan,² all omitted by Luke, to which may be added in the sphere of action the realistic description of the cleansing of the temple.³ If any one desires to know what is meant by realism, let him compare with Mark's account of that transaction the mild, mitigated report of it given by the third Evangelist. I content myself with a bare reference to these instances, and close with an illustration of Mark's manner taken from the sphere of *doctrine*.

7. Mark's account of the teaching of our Lord is, by comparison with that in the other Gospels, very meagre. Yet it is remarkable that two of the most characteristic utterances of Jesus have been preserved by him alone. These are the saying concerning the Sabbath being made for man,⁴ and the parable of the *Blade*, the *Green Ear*, and the *Ripe Corn*.⁵ The former admirably illustrates the comment on Christ's manner of teaching, "not as the scribes." The saying, the Sabbath exists for man not man for the Sabbath, is diametrically opposed to the scribal method of teaching in religious tendency and spirit. In effect their doctrine was precisely that man existed for the Sabbath. Originally given, as Jesus hinted in the first part of His saying, for man's benefit, as a resting day for weary men, a day of emancipation from toil and drudgery, they had converted it into a day taken from man by God in an exacting spirit, and so established in connection with it a new form of bondage—slavish subjection to an institution. A boon turned into a tyranny—such was the Sabbath as enforced by the scribes; a tyranny restored to a boon—such it became through the redemptive word of Jesus. That word was equally opposed to the scribal method of teaching in manner. No authorities cited, no Rabbi referred to as the

¹ Mark vii. 27.

² Mark viii. 33.

³ Mark xi. 15-18.

⁴ Mark ii. 27.

⁵ Mark iv. 26-29.

first to utter so bold a thought. Jesus speaks in His own name, and on His own authority; a grave word on a vital question, incisive, decisive, final. Once more that word presents a complete contrast to the teaching of the scribes in its ethical character. The scribal mind moved within the region of positive rules, the more minute and unreasonable the better; the thoughts of Jesus spurned these narrow limits, and were conversant with great moral principles and ultimate truths in religion. No better voucher for this statement could be offered than the saying in which He stated the true relation between the Sabbath and man.

Equally remarkable is the parable of the Blade, the Green Ear, and the Ripe Corn. It states in distinct terms the law of growth or gradual development as a law obtaining in the spiritual world not less than in the natural. It is the most precise, indeed I may say the only precise, enunciation of that law, as reigning in the spiritual sphere, to be found in the New Testament. Some have doubted the genuineness of the parable, regarding it as a secondary form of some other parabolic utterance of Jesus. Surely a groundless doubt! Who but Jesus could have spoken so felicitous and so philosophical a word? Not one man known to us in the apostolic age, not even the Apostle Paul. Indeed so far is the great Master above the attainments of the primitive Church in this part of His teaching that one is thankful the parable has been preserved at all, even in a single Gospel. The same remark applies to the saying concerning the Sabbath. Both utterances were, if I may say so, too deep and too thorough-going for the comprehension and sympathies of average disciples. And it is just on this account that I think they may legitimately be used to illustrate the *realism* of Mark. He reports, as they were spoken, these striking words, when the temptation was either to omit or to qualify. He did this doubtless on the authority of one who heard them as they fell from the lips of the Master,

and who, though he might not understand or fully appreciate, could never forget.

These two invaluable words are a welcome contribution in a Gospel in which Jesus appears chiefly as an energetic original actor. They show that the force of His intellect was equal to the force of His will. They also prove that the impassioned temperament was balanced by a deep imperturbable tranquility of spirit; for such great, universal, eternal thoughts visit only minds blessed with perennial repose.

A. B. BRUCE.

THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE OF THE GALLICAN CHURCHES IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

It is commonly assumed that the date of this Epistle is fixed by Eusebius as the seventeenth year of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, A.D. 177. I shall endeavour to show (1) that this is an error, (2) that there are reasons for thinking it to be the seventeenth year of Titus Antoninus Pius, his predecessor, A.D. 155.

It is commonly assumed that certain martyrs who are described by Eusebius as writing to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome—but not bishop till A.D. 177—belong to the number of those mentioned in the Gallican Epistle. I shall endeavour to show (1) that this may not be his meaning, (2) that if it is, he was probably confusing some martyrs who suffered in a later persecution (perhaps A.D. 177) with those who suffered in the earlier persecution recorded in the Gallican Epistle of A.D. 155.

§ 1. "THE SEVENTEENTH YEAR."

The statements of Eusebius as to the Emperor, and the year of the Imperial reign, are brought into connection with each other in the following extracts: (*H.E.*, v., *Proem.*