

BARNABAS AND HIS GENUINE EPISTLE.

BUT why should the Roman Church be a special authority on the authorship of this Epistle, especially if Barnabas was its author? The Barnabas of the New Testament was essentially an apostle of the Eastern Mediterranean. Why then should Romans father a work on him of all apostolic men? Some satisfy themselves with the rather obvious reply, "This only shows that the letter was at any rate written to Rome." Yet many of the phenomena, especially those already referred to touching the course of the disciplinary problem in Rome, seem to point quite the other way. At least let us at this stage consider an alternative answer, namely that Barnabas had actually visited Italy, if not Rome. The memory of this might soon fade in all quarters of the Church save those most concerned; and yet it has a footing in written tradition, as preserved for us in the *Clementine Recognitions*.¹ This work (i. 7) represents Clement as having heard the Gospel from Barnabas in Rome. Dr. Hort thought it was written in Rome; yet it assumes that Barnabas' ministry in Rome preceded that of Peter. It is hard then to see how such a notion could take root in the very stronghold of Petrine traditions save on a basis of well known fact. That basis would seem to have included both Barnabas' presence in Rome (or at least Italy) and some personal relations between him and Clement, in the early days of the latter's Christian faith. This circumstance would fully account for the abundant use of Hebrews in Clement's own Epistle; while it is doubtful whether this fact is a sufficient cause for the Clementine legend of their first meeting, as found in such a work as the *Recognitions*.

¹ Where Barnabas is also assumed to be a personal disciple of Christ. It is probable that the Roman phase of the tradition existed already in the common basis of the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, which can hardly have been later than the latter half of the second century (So Lipsius, cf. Hort, *Clementine Recognitions*, who [p. 87] traces the "Circuits of Peter," the written nucleus of both works, to c. A.D. 200.)

But in any case the presence of Barnabas in Italy seems the irreducible minimum needful to get the legend started at all. And of this we have confirmation in certain other legends,¹ some of which connect him with Rome, and others with Milan. But it is to be noted that the latter, which seem to go back to the early part of the fourth century at latest,² presuppose the visit to Rome. And conversely the recognition of the Milanese tradition by Roman authorities, suggest that the latter were glad to transfer Barnabas from their own Church to its northern sister, since this helped to obscure the memory of the earlier tradition that Barnabas had preached in Rome before Peter. As Harnack has said, *Barnabas Roma expellitur*.³ Thus the two traditions support each other as to the fundamental fact that Barnabas was once in Rome, which, as Lipsius observes, is "the relatively oldest tradition" as to Barnabas. That the tradition touching Barnabas' presence in Rome, even before Peter's arrival, goes back to more than the Clementine romance, is not only likely in itself, but seems proved by evidence coming from quite another theological quarter and with every appearance of independence. In the Gnostic *Actus Petri Vercellenses* we read that Barnabas, as well as Timothy, had been sent from Rome to Macedonia by Paul before his "own journey into Spain."⁴ Here the idea that

¹ Eastern as well as Italian. Thus Lipsius shows that the Alexandrian and Cyprian legends, as a rule, bring Barnabas to Alexandria only after visiting Rome. Zahn thinks the *Encomium* on Barnabas by Alexander, a Cyprian monk of the sixth century, nowhere betrays dependence of the Clementines, though he makes Barnabas visit Rome.

² I cannot see that the doubts cast on the genuineness of the inscriptions in the names of Mirocles and Protasius, bishops of Milan about A.D. 313 and A.D. 350 respectively, are well grounded. Nor does it seem safe to press the *Arg. c. silentio* applied to Ambrose; for he had no need to carry his appeal to tradition against Arianism back behind Mirocles, i.e. beyond Arian's day.

³ Quoted by Lipsius, *Die apocr. Apostelgeschichten, u. s. w.*, II. ii. 275; cf. Salmon, *Introd. to N. T.* 448 note.

⁴ Et non minime fratres scandalizabantur ad invicem (on seeing the specious marvels of Simon Magus in Rome), præterea quod non esset Romæ Paulus neque Timotheus neque Barnabas, quoniam in Macedoniam missi erant a Paulo.

Barnabas and Timothy were together with Paul in Rome, is most noteworthy; for there is nothing in the New Testament itself to suggest it, save to those who already believed that Barnabas was the writer of Heb. xiii. 23, and that from Italy.

As to the assumption underlying the Clementine *Homilies*,¹ that Barnabas visited Alexandria; this, though a secondary element in the legend,² is quite credible in itself. It would be natural for a Hellenist of Cyprus to visit the nascent Church of Alexandria, which had no apostolic founder. The very fact that the Epistle which the Alexandrian Church came to father on Barnabas presupposes a visit of the writer to his readers (as having introduced him to them and them to him), suggests that its early traditions knew of such a visit to Barnabas, and that in fact its theory of authorship was based, in part at least, on this coincidence of conditions. Whether Barnabas died a martyr's death we cannot say. It is a suspicious fact that this is characteristic of the Cyprian form of his legend, which makes his martyrdom occur in Salamis, at the hands of certain Jews. But in any case, no tradition regards him as surviving the fall of Jerusalem.

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Here, Timothy being named first (cf. Acts xix. 22 for the idea) there was no need to bring in Barnabas, unless tradition had it that he was actually with Paul during part of the latter's stay in Rome.

¹ i. 8, ii. 4.

² Witness the lame way in which it is tacked on to the narrative, according to which Clement was carried by stress of weather to Alexandria (i. 8), while sailing from Rome to Caesarea, as in the *Recognitions* (i. 12).