THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES OF THEMISON.

II.

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THEMISON.

IT is probable, therefore, that some time between 180 and 185, Themison, the Montanist Bishop of Pepouza, sent forth the Epistle of Eleutherus, as a Catholic Epistle of St. Peter, to the neighbouring churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

The order of the provinces named has always presented some difficulty. This difficulty is lessened if it was sent off from Pepouza. Pontus lay on the Euxine, at the north-east corner of Asia Minor, on the borders of Armenia Minor. The road to Pontus lay through Ancyra, in Northern Galatia. In Pontus itself Christianity had gained a hold as early as 87 A.D. In 112 Pliny speaks of many renegade Christians at Amisos, the important Greek port of Pontus.[1] In 170 Christianity was widely spread throughout Pontus. Lucian says: "The whole land is quite full of Atheists and Christians."[2] There were many churches under a Metropolitan, who resided at Amastris, to which church a letter was addressed by Dionysius of Corinth. Dionysius had been requested to write by Bacchylides and Elpistus, and in his epistle he treated on the subjects of marriage and chastity and commanded them to receive those who came back after any fall, whether it be delinquency or heresy.[3] Harnack refers to a passage in Hippolytus which proves conclusively that Montanism was established there at the end of the second century, and thus gives reason for inferring that the questions discussed by Dionysius were the Montanist ideas on marriage and discipline. Hippolytus, in his Commentary

[1] Pliny, *Ep.* 96; cp. *Encyc. Bibl.* iii. 3807.
[2] Harnack, *Mission.* p. 473. [3] Eus. *H.E.* iv. 23, 6.

on Daniel, makes mention of a certain Bishop in Pontus, a pious and humble-minded man, who did not give so much heed to the Scriptures as to the visions which he saw. After two or three dreams, at last he addressed the brethren as a prophet. "This I saw, and this will come to pass; know, therefore, brethren, that after a year the judgment will come." They, when they heard his foretelling that the day of the Lord was at hand, began with weeping and mourning night and day to pray the Lord that they might have the coming judgment before their eyes. And so far did fear and terror seize the brethren that they left their lands and fields waste, and most of them sold their possessions. And he said unto them, "If it happen not as I said, let no one believe the Scriptures, but do each as he wishes." The year passed, the prophecy was unfulfilled, the prophet was proved to be a liar, the Scriptures were proved to be true, and the brethren were offended, so that the virgins married and the men went back to their husbandry, and those who had sold their possessions in vain were found at last as beggars.[1] This illustrates the presence of Christianity, if not of Montanism, and the leading motive for placing Pontus first among the provinces to which the letter was addressed by Themison.

Galatia lay between Phrygia and Pontus. It is clear from the anonymous anti-Montanist that Themison had a strong following in the city of Ancyra. "Being recently at Ancyra in Galatia, I found the church there greatly agitated by this novelty. . . . We disputed in the church many days concerning these and other matters separately brought forward by them."[2] One of the opponents of Themison was Zoticus, bishop of the village Comana,[3] identified by Ramsay with Konana (?) to the south-west of Apameia, and within the province of Galatia.[4] Galatia was

[1] Hipp.; cp. Harnack, *Mission.* p. 474.
[2] Eus. *H.E.* v. 16. 4. [3] *Ibid.* v. 16, 17. [4] Ramsay, *Phrygia*, p. 482.

indeed the centre of the Montanist movement, and the primitive Christian ideas of which to some extent it was the survival were maintained far into the third century. Laymen were allowed to teach in the presence of the bishops at Laranda in Isauria, and at Iconium in Pisidia about the year 218.[1] A synod was held in Iconium between 230 and 235 in reference to the movement.[2]

Cappadocia lay to the east of Galatia, south of Pontus. Tertullian, speaking of the judgments which fell upon the persecutors of Christianity, makes mention of Claudius Lucius Herminianus, in Cappadocia, whose wife joined the Christian Church. He was so enraged that he persecuted the Christians, and when struck down by a loathsome disease, said, "Let no one know of it, lest the Christians rejoice, lest the Christian women hope."[3] Harnack dates this persecution between 180 and 196.[4] The special mention of "Christianae" may point to the high position and influence of women among the Christians of Cappadocia. The letter of Themison would have brought encouragement to those who were the victims of this persecution. In the early part of the following century the special features of Cappadocian Christianity come to light. Juliana, the learned virgin of Caesarea, was the friend and hostess of Origen. Firmilian of Caesarea, in his letter to Cyprian, speaks of a prophetess, probably in some way related to the Montanist prophetesses, who stirred up the whole Christian community and gained over to her side a presbyter and a deacon.[5] The efforts of Themison to strengthen his cause in Cappadocia by forwarding to them the letter of Eleutherus was not without result.

Asia had been associated with Phrygia in the letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons. The cradle of Montanism

[1] Eus. *H.E.* vi. 19. 18. [2] Harnack, *Mission.* p. 480.
[3] Tert. ad Scap. 3.
[4] Harnack, *Mission.* p. 468. *Ibid.* p. 469. [5] *Ibid.* 469.

was itself in the province of Asia. There is some evidence of the spread of the Montanist movement to the western parts of the province. Melito was about this time Bishop of Sardis. He was an eunuch, a man whose life was lived in the Holy Ghost. He was a great writer, a Quartodeciman, a man of great weight in the Church. His attitude to Montanism is not altogether clear. He appears to have had leanings towards it and sympathy with it, so much so that Tertullian spoke of him as a prophet.[1] Eusebius numbers him among the orthodox writers of the Church ;[2] but McGiffert notes that there was so much in his writings with which he was not in sympathy that he does little more than mention the titles of his works.[3] His Chiliasm was another point of contact with the Montanists. Themison may have had cause to think that he might win him over wholly to his side.

Thyatira, to the north-west of Sardis, was a Christian city at the beginning of the third century.[4] It was also so strong a centre of Montanist activity that Epiphanius speaks of it as almost wholly given over to Montanism, and quotes the letter to the Angel of the Church at Thyatira in reference to it (Rev. ii. 18). The toleration of the woman "Jezebel," which calleth herself a prophetess, shows the proneness of the Church of Thyatira to this particular phase of the movement.[5] The Acts of Carpas, Papylas and Agathonike, the martyrs of Pergamos (161–169) also show that the soil of Asia was favourable to Montanist ideas. Harnack will not allow that either Papylas, the citizen of Thyatira, or Agathonike were Montanists, but says that the visions which are contained in the Acts and the silence of Eusebius respecting them show that "we are on ground that was favourable to Montanism."[6]

[1] Harn. *Alt. Chr. Litt.* p. 246. [2] Eus. *H.E.* iv. 21.
[3] McGiffert, *Eus.* p. 203. [4] Harn. *Mission.* p. 435.
[5] Epiph. *Haer.* li. 33. [6] Harn. *Chr.* i. 363.

Bithynia lay to the north of Asia, and was united to the province of Pontus. The testimony of Pliny's letter to Trajan is evidence of the strong hold which Christianity had in the provinces in the years 111–113. "Neque civitates tantum sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quae videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certe satis constat prope jam desolata templa coepisse celebrari et sacra solemnia diu intermissa repeti pastumque venire victimarum, cujus ad hoc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur."[1] Beyond this important witness of Pliny the only reference to Bithynia before the time of Origen is the letter of Dionysius of Corinth to the Nicomedians on the heresy of Marcion.[2]

With the exception, therefore, of Bithynia, there is evidence of Montanist activity in all the provinces to which this letter is addressed by Themison.

The recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity, 1 Pet. i. 2, agrees with the testimony of Epiphanius: "They hold with the Catholic Church in their faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."[3] It is through the Holy Spirit that we attain to obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This may account for the precedence given to the Holy Spirit in the passage.

It has been suggested that 1 Peter i. 10–12 is an addition by the author of the opening and closing verses. The thought of *v.* 13 links on directly with that of *v.* 9; and the conception of the work of the Holy Spirit is unique in the New Testament except in 2 Peter i. 19–21. The prophets (1 Pet. i. 10) referred to may therefore be the Christian prophets of the first age to whom the later prophets are compared, as in the Didache (xi. 11). The Spirit of Christ in them testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should come after them.

[1] Harn. *Miss.* p. 464.
[2] Eus. *H.E.* iv. 23, 4.
[3] Epiph. *Haer.* lviii. 1.

There is also a contrast between the revelation to these former prophets and the announcement now made through those that preached the Gospel by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven. This last phrase is a very strong statement of the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit, and would have special force to those who believed in the claims of the Montanist prophets. The anonymous writer, speaking of the influence of Montanus on his followers, says: "Some imagined themselves possessed of the Holy Ghost and the prophetic gift."[1] The claim of Montanus is recorded in his own words by Epiphanius: "I am the Lord God Almighty come down among men."[2] The prophet thus inspired and moved by the Holy Ghost is more privileged than the angels "who desire to look into the things which are revealed by the Holy Ghost" (v. 12). To this again there is a close parallel in the words of Montanus: "I am come neither as an angel nor as an ambassador, but as the Lord God, the Father."[3]

The opening verses stamp the letter with the apostolic authority of St. Peter. The closing verses introduce the names of Silvanus and Mark. Silvanus is introduced in a very strange phrase in 1 Peter v. 12. He is described as "the faithful brother as I account him." The name, like that of Peter, is certainly pseudonymous. He has been thought to be, jointly with St. Mark, the author of the Epistle;[4] but if Harnack's reasoning for the later date of these verses be accepted, this theory must be given up. Why then is Silvanus named? The form of the name is that found in the Epistles of St. Paul only (2 Cor. i. 19, 1 Thess. i. 1, 2, 2 Thess. i. 1). He is termed in one of these Epistles an apostle of Christ (1 Thess. ii. 6). Nothing is known of him after these Epistles, which date from about

[1] Eus. *H.E.* v. 16, 8. [2] Epiph. *Haer.* xlviii. 11.
[3] *Ibid.* xlviii. 11.
[4] *Handcomm.* v. Soden, p. 124

54 A.D. There is no evidence of his fellowship with St. Peter beyond that of the First Epistle of St. Peter. He is the Silas of the Acts, the prophet who accompanied St. Paul and St. Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts xv. 27, 32). He was St. Paul's companion through the region of Phrygia and Galatia on his second journey (Acts xv. 40, xvi. 6). He shared his imprisonment at Philippi (Acts xvi. 19, 25, 29). He stayed with Timothy at Berœa while St. Paul went to Athens (xvii. 14). They both rejoined him at Corinth (xviii. 5). There is no record of his accompanying St. Paul when he again passed through the region of Galatia and Phrygia on his way to Ephesus (xviii. 23). The name would appear to be used in this Epistle in memory of his prophetic activity and his authority and work in Phrygia. There is also a further reason. The Montanist prophets claimed descent from him,[1] and his name as a prophet must have been held in high esteem in the Montanist Churches. He added by his name prophetic authority to the apostolic authority of St. Peter.

The "true grace of God" (v. 12) is an unique phrase. It is fitting in the writing of an apologist. "He that is at Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you" (v. 13). It would be hard to identify Babylon with Rome if the homily had been given its Petrine character in that city. Here it has probably the mystical meaning of the Apocalypse (Rev. xvii. 5). The word "elect city" occurs on the inscription on the tomb of Avircius Marcellus, and refers exoterically to Hierapolis, esoterically to the heavenly city. It shows that the term was familiar at that period.[2]

The addition "and so does Marcus, my son," is also fitting in a district where the tradition of St. Mark as the interpreter of St. Peter has been preserved in the writings of Papias of Hierapolis.

[1] Eus. *H.E.* v. 17, 3.
[2] Ramsay, *Phrygia*, p. 724.

The contact of these verses (1 Pet. i. 1–2, 10–12; v. 12–14) with the ideas of Montanism give some ground for thinking that the Epistle owes its present form and ascription to Themison. He made the fewest possible changes in the text of the Epistle of Eleutherus, and in conformity with the practice of the period issued it with a short introduction and conclusion under the name and with the imprimatur of St. Peter.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF THEMISON.

The opposition to Montanism increased between 185 and 195. The anti-Montanist writers charged them with false prophecy, because they broke the tradition of the Church by the frenzy and ecstasy in which they prophesied.[1] They were regarded also as false teachers, opposers of the truth.[2] In consequence of this opposition the Montanists were expelled from the Church and debarred from communion.[3]

The opposition did not come only from the Church authorities. Equally bitter was the hostility of the Alogoi, who rejected the writings of St. John and the Apocalypse.[4]

The burden of responsibility lay, therefore, heavily on Themison. He had to defend his followers against a double attack, for it is impossible to view the Alogoi as a party within the Church. He had also, as an upholder of the true faith, to defend it against the Gnostic and Monarchian heresies which were prevalent in his time in Asia. It was to this end that he wrote a Catholic epistle in defence of the Christian faith. This, in the words of Apollonius, was written "in imitation of the apostle, to instruct those whose faith was better than his own."[5] Does not the Second Epistle of St. Peter agree with the purpose of Themison? It is a Catholic epistle, it is writ-

[1] Eus. *H.E.* v. 16, 4, 7. [2] *Ibid.* 16, 5. [3] *Ibid.* 16, 10.
[4] Neander, *Gesch. der Chr. Rel.*, 1828, i. 667, 668.
[5] Eus. *H.E.* v. 18, 5.

ten in imitation of the Apostle, it is a defence of the faith once for all delivered to the Church, it attacks with vigour the evils of false prophecy and false teaching. It was moreover for nearly two centuries looked upon with suspicion by the Church, its authority as a document valuable as a protest against false teaching being almost confined to Cappadocia and the Alexandrian writers, Clement and Origen, who derived their knowledge of it through Cappadocia.

It takes to some extent the form of a covering letter, enclosing a large portion of the Epistle of Jude. The writer, however, makes freer use of this Epistle than he did of the Epistle of Eleutherus. He published the Eirenicon as the (First) Epistle of St. Peter, with only the smallest additions of his own; in this (Second) Epistle he incorporates the work of Jude into his own work. He is a writer rather than a transcriber.

What are the antecedents of the Epistle of Jude? Harnack[1] and v. Soden[2] agree that it is prior to 2 Peter. The additional reflections on the trial of Lot (2 Pet. ii. 8) and the deliverance of Noah (ii. 5) was a digression from the line of argument with the object of strengthening the faith of those addressed. This sharpening of the purpose speaks decidedly for the priority of Jude 5–7. There is also a softening down in the references to Enoch which proves the priority of Jude.[3]

The object of the Epistle of Jude was to defend the faith, and to refute a certain group of heretical teachers whose ideas were partly libertine (*vv.* 4, 8, 16, 18), partly Gnostic (*v.* 10), and who made claim to visions and revelations, regarding themselves as "pneumatic" in contrast to those who were merely, as they thought, "psychic." The heresy is in advance of any heresy known in apostolic

[1] *Chr.* i. p. 465. [2] *Handcomm.* p. 203.
[3] v. Soden, pp. 221–223.

times, if indeed the reference to the apostles in *v.* 17 did not prove conclusively that these times were long past. He speaks of the faith as "once for all delivered to the saints" (*v.* 3), the "most holy faith" (*v.* 20). It is too definite to be a Catholic epistle, and was addressed to some one Church or group of Churches.[1] V. Soden, who is inclined to attribute it to a younger brother of our Lord, dates it between 80 and 90.[2] Harnack places it between 100 and 130.[3]

He does not think the Carpocratian heresy is referred to, but among the Syrian-Palestinian group of heresies—Gnostics, Phibionites, Kainites, Nicolaitans—he makes special mention of the Archontikoi. These heretics had spread throughout Greater and Lesser Armenia. They had many ideas common to the Gnostic heresies of the neighbouring districts. They denied the resurrection of the flesh; they rejected baptism; they repudiated the Holy Mysteries.[4] The picture which Epiphanius draws is perhaps as much in advance of the false teaching condemned by St. Jude as that is in advance of the heresies of the apostolic age. There are, however, two points of special importance, one of which may have drawn the attention of Themison to this Epistle. The Archontikoi gave prominence to the prophetic gift and they made use of Apocryphal literature. They commemorated two prophets, a certain Martiades and Marsias, who were caught up into heaven and came down again on the third day. "Many other fables they accept, blaspheming God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Archon and inventor of all iniquity.[5] They held in high repute two books called the Symphonies, and deduced many arguments from the Ascension of Isaiah and other apocryphal books of the same character.[6]

[1] Harn. *Chr.* i. 465. [2] *Handcomm.* p. 204. [3] *Chr.* i. 468.
[4] Epiph. *Haer.* xl. 2. [5] Epiph. *Haer.* xl. 7. [6] *Ibid.* xl. 2.

The Epistle of Jude points only to the beginning of such a heresy. Its place in the Muratorian Canon suggests that it cannot be in the latter portion of the period 100–170. Harnack thinks that the mention of the Twelve (*v.* 17) points to Palestine as its birthplace, though in the later "Apostolic" Fathers the Twelve are recognized over a larger sphere.[1] He suggests the name of Judas, one of the early bishops of the Jewish Christian Church of Jerusalem, as the author.[2]

But may not the name bear another interpretation? Harnack refutes the idea of v. Soden that the author of the Epistle was the "brother of James"; the late date of the Epistle, its tenor and language are against such an authorship. Jülicher thinks the words may be an interpolation or an episcopal title.[3] The superscription may therefore have been originally "Judas the servant of Jesus Christ." The letter, short as it is, has some analogy with the prophetic spirit which appears in the New Testament Canon. Enoch is referred to as a prophet. Balaam the Prophet is put forth as a warning. Is it a work of the prophetic school of the early part of the second century, written under the pseudonym of Jude the Prophet, the companion of Silas? If this were so, it would be another reason why Themison should have made use of it. Judas is mentioned with Silas in the list of those who are regarded as the forerunners of Montanus.[4] Nothing is known of Judas after he left Antioch. He may have worked in Armenia or Asia Minor, and thus suggested the superscription and authority to the writer of 100–130. Lesser Armenia bordered on Pontus, and its errors may have spread into Pontus and Cappadocia. Themison, when he incorporated the Epistle of Jude into his own Catholic Epistle, was at once giving his support to

[1] Hermas, *Sim.* xvii.
[2] Harn. *Chr.* i. p. 468.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 467.
[4] Eus. *H.E.* v. 17, 3.

previous refutations of heresy, and strengthening it with the imprimatur of St. Peter.

The Montanists accepted the Faith of the Church "nam de Patre et Filio ac Spiritu Sancto eadem cum Ecclesia Catholica sentiunt."[1] They differed chiefly, if not wholly, in the ecstatic manner of their prophecy and the strictness of their life.

The Epistle opens with a recognition of the faith of the Church. It is addressed "to those who have received a like precious faith with us" (2 Pet. i. 1). "Jesus is our Lord whose Divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (i. 3). "He has called us by His own glory and virtue, through which He has given to us His precious and exceeding great promises" (i. 4). The reference is to the coming of the millennial kingdom, "the new heavens and new earth" of the Apocalypse (2 Pet. iii. 13). The Montanists looked for the speedy coming of Christ to set up His Kingdom on earth, and are therefore to be numbered with the Chiliasts.[2]

He sets these privileges before his hearers, adding that through them they may become partakers of the Divine nature, "fleeing from the corruption that is in the world by lust" (i. 4), The reference may be to the privileges which the Montanists believed to be theirs through the indwelling of God, privileges which they wished others to share in to check the progress of corruption.

The great need is moral effort, a stricter standard of morality; they are to give diligence to add to "their faith virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly love; to brotherly love, charity" (i. 5–7). Thus practice must be added to privilege if the "calling

[1] Epiph. xlviii. 1.
[2] McGiffert, *Eus.* p. 229.

and election is to be sure" (i. 10). The practice of asceticism will ensure an "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (*v.* 11). The millennial promises will be fulfilled as the reward of virtue. This hope it was which supported them and encouraged them in their ascetic exercises.

The writer then goes on to strengthen his moral lesson, though he allows that his hearers are themselves established in the truth by the vision of the Transfiguration. He makes it the more impressive by stating his conviction that his end is near. He had had a special vision to warn him of his death: "the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me" (i. 14). The transfiguration is narrated in the form of a vision, the form being suggested perhaps by the visions enjoyed by the Montanist prophets. It is recorded either of Quintilla or Priscilla that, when asleep at Pepouza, Christ appeared to her as a woman, in shining raiment, gave her wisdom, and revealed to her that Pepouza was the holy place, and that there Jerusalem was to come down from heaven.[1] The writer, however, is anxious to avoid extravagancies, and records the vision as nearly as possible in the traditional manner. "We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty" (i. 16).

The description of the vision is followed by the praise of prophecy. "We have the prophetic word the more sure, to which ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star shine in your hearts; knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, but those who were moved by the Holy Ghost spake as men from God" (i. 19–21). The claim to the prophetic word is as strongly

[1] Epiph. *Haer.* xlix.

worded as is the passage in 1 Peter i. 12, and may be compared with the words of Montanus: "Behold a man is as a lyre, and I flutter as a plectron. The man sleeps and I watch. Behold the Lord is He who excites the hearts of men, and giveth men hearts."[1]

Such is the introduction—a recognition of the true faith, an exhortation to virtue, a defence of the prophetic gift. The central portion of the Epistle consists of an attack on false prophecy, in which is incorporated the words of the Epistle of Jude. This false prophecy, the raving perhaps of prophets like those of the Archontikoi, was associated with false teaching, teaching contrary to the Christian faith and the customs of the Christian Church. "There are false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings, by reason of which the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of" (ii. 1–2). The denial of Holy Baptism, and the recognition of the God Sabaoth as author of the Law, which were among the errors of the Archontikoi, were such a denial of the Master who bought them."[2]

The judgments of Jude, when once the deliverance from Egypt is recorded (*v.* 5), are unrelieved with a touch of mercy (6–16). The judgments of 2 Peter are brightened by the mercies shown to Noah (ii. 5) and to Lot (ii. 7–8). The judgments are three: the rebel angels, the old world before the flood, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (ii. 4–8). They are brought forward as much to comfort the godly in their trials as to warn the ungodly in their wickedness (ii. 9). It is perhaps to the libertinism of the Archontikoi,[3]

[1] Epiph. *Haer.* xlviii. 4.
[2] Epiph. *Haer.* xl. 2.
[3] *Ibid.* xl. 2.

and other heretics of the same type, that the stern language of denunciation which is based upon and enlarged from the Epistle of Jude is applied. The addition "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unsteadfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing" (ii. 14) is of special interest when read along with the charges of Apollonius and other anti-Montanist writers. Montanus was accused of having been beguiled by the artifice and craft of the devil.[1] Apollonius says that Themison himself was clothed with plausible covetousness.[2] The Balaam incident is enlarged by reference to the rebuke of the madness of the prophet (xii. 16); the "way of Cain," and the "gainsaying of Korah" are omitted. The writer, while defending the prophecy, wishes to defend himself and his followers from the charge of frenzy and madness brought against them by their enemies. The writer then passes away from the latter part of the judgment of Jude, omitting all reference to Enoch, and emphasizes the dangers of apostasy. The evil teachers were by their lasciviousness enticing those who were "just escaping from those that live in error" (ii. 18), promising them liberty, while they themselves were bond-servants of corruption (ii. 19). The temptation must have been strong in a condition of society where the Church was rapidly becoming worldly. Those who were endeavouring to live the ascetic life which Montanus and his followers advocated would be specially liable to these promises of freedom, whether made by Churchmen or by Gnostics. They needed not only the promises of the new coming of Christ, but the authoritative encouragement of their leaders to keep them firm. "For if after they have escaped the defilement of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again

[1] Eus. *H.E.* v. 16, 9. [2] *Ibid.* v. 18, 5.

entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse than the first" (ii. 20).

He then reverts to the promise of the Kingdom which formed the basis of encouragement in the first chapters. He speaks of this as his second Epistle (iii. 1) and reminds them that the holy prophets and apostles had already spoken of these promises. It was necessary to repeat it because of the doubts of the mockers: "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things remain as from the beginning of the world" (iii. 2–4). The Montanists based much of their Chiliastic belief on the Apocalypse of St. John; Papias, of Hierapolis, agreed with them in this belief.[1] It was perhaps on this ground that the Alogoi rejected the Apocalypse.[2]

Is there any key to the era referred to, "the falling asleep of the fathers," the close of the apostolic age? Epiphanius, in his book on the Alogoi, made use of an earlier treatise against the heresy which has been attributed to Hippolytus.[3] In this earlier treatise a limit of ninety-three years is given to the apostolic age from 29 A.D. to 122 A.D.[4] It may be that the year 122 was the date of the death of the daughters of Philip, the last survivors of the age of the Apostles in Asia Minor,[5] and that this is the era referred to in 2 Peter iii. 4. The presence of a definite era in this Epistle and in the anti-Alogist writer in Epiphanius strengthens the view that the author of 2 Peter is at least living in surroundings similar to those of the Alogoi, if indeed he is not actually refuting the Alogoi themselves.

The writer then endeavours to meet their objections, and to prove to them that the rejection of the Apocalypse

[1] Eus. *H.E.* iii. 39, 12. [2] Epiph. *Haer.* li. 33.
[3] Harn. *Chr.* i. 378.
[4] Epiph. *Haer.* li. 33. [5] Harn. *Chr.* i. 378.

of St. John is not fatal to the cause of Chiliasm he quotes the authority of the Apocalypse of Peter. Harnack emphasizes the parallelism in character and expression between 2 Peter iii. 5–12 and the Apocalypse of Peter, and decides upon the priority of the latter, which he dates 110–160.[1] Whether it belongs to the same circle as the Epistles of St. Peter is uncertain. But there are certain points of contact between this second Epistle of St. Peter and the Apocalypse which bear upon the question. The writer of the Apocalypse condemns certain Christians who slander the way of righteousness; the writer of the Epistle says: "It were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness" than to apostatize (ii. 21). Again, in the opening verses of the Apocalypse: "Many false prophets there will be from among them, who will teach the ways and manifold doctrine of perdition; and they shall become sons of perdition." The writer of the Epistle uses the same language, "There are false prophets also among the people who shall privily bring in sects of perdition" (ii. 1). The same group of ideas is found in the letter of Vienne and Lyons: "As sons of perdition they blasphemed the way through their apostasy."[2] The sympathy of the Gallic martyrs with the Montanists, the Jewish affinities of early Chiliasm, the Jewish ideas of the Montanist prophet, are grounds for suggesting that the Apocalypse of Peter belongs to the same group of writers who, out of their reverence for the Apostle of the Circumcision, put forth the two Epistles under his name. Harnack is not able to discover any connexion between 2 Peter and the Kerugma Petri, but adds in a note: "That there is a reference to the Kerugma in 2 Peter i. 15 is a possibility which unfortunately cannot be established with

[1] Harn. *Chr.* i. 470–472.
[2] Eus. v. 1, 48.

certainty, but is nevertheless attractive."[1] It may be added that it was in Hierapolis that the Gospel of St. Mark was held to have the imprimatur of St Peter."[2] Was there in Asia and Phrygia a Jewish Christian community which formed a collection of Petrine writings, Gospel, Preaching, Epistles, and Apocalypse?

The writer, having met the objections of his opponents, perhaps the Alogoi, who repudiated the millennial expectations, sums up his own hope in the words of the Apocalypse of St. John: "But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 13; cp. Rev. xxi. 1).

He does not wish to fall into the error of the Alogoi in rejecting any works of apostolic authorship. He will not have it thrown against him that, if he accuses the Alogoi of rejecting the evidence of St. John, he himself is guilty of overthrowing that of St. Paul. He does not wish his followers to suppose that the Church leaders alone have a monopoly in their reverence for the Pauline Epistles. He wishes them to be taken in their true sense, and not perverted in any way by those who out of respect for them may drive their exegesis too far. There were some evidently who wrested the meaning of St. Paul's words to their own ends. Who would be so likely to do so as the followers of Avircius Marcellus, who called himself the follower of St. Paul? The writer of 2 Peter accepts, therefore, whole-heartedly against every phase of doubt the Epistles of St. Paul: "Wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own perdition" (2 Pet. iii. 16).

The Epistle ends, as it began, in hope of the Great Day in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Grow in grace,

[1] *Chr.* i. 474. [2] Papias ap. Eus. *H.E.* iii. 39, 15.

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, both now and unto the Day of Eternity" (iii. 18).

Such is in outline the second Epistle of Peter. McGiffert, writing of the Catholic Epistle of Themison, says: "The Epistle is no longer extant. Its blasphemy against the Lord and His Apostles lay undoubtedly in its statement of the fundamental doctrine of the Montanists, that the age of revelation had not ceased, but that through the promised Paraclete revelations were still given which supplemented or superseded those granted the Apostles of Christ."[1] The claim of 2 Peter is a very strong one: "We have the word of prophecy made more sure" (i. 19). There are, even to-day, many to whom it is a shock that any but an eye-witness should be bold enough to describe himself as "an eye-witness to the majesty of Christ" (i. 16). And it would appear from the history of the Epistle in the early Church that its boldness was the great stumbling-block to its acceptance. If this be taken into account, do not the words of Apollonius characterize the Epistle very faithfully, "Themison, though he should have been humble on the account of covetousness (ii. 14), dared to boast as a martyr (i. 14), and in imitation of the Apostle (i. 1, 18), he wrote a certain Catholic Epistle (iii. 1) to instruct those whose faith was better than his own (i. 1), contending for words of empty sound (ii. 10–12, 17–18) and blasphemy against the Lord (i. 16), and the Apostles (iii. 2), and the Holy Church (iii. 15–16)."[2]

Is there any further evidence for the identification of this Epistle? It has been said of the Jews of Phrygia that they did not adopt the philosophy and education of the Alexandrian Jews.[3] The independence of the writer of Alexandrian

[1] McGiffert, *Eus.* p. 235.

[2] Eus. *H.E.* v. 18, 5.

[3] Ramsay, *Phrygia*, p. 674.

ideas is traceable in the language of the Epistle. There are in the additional verses in 1 Peter and in 2 Peter forty-two words not found elsewhere in the canon. Twenty-two of these words do not occur at all in the LXX; six are absent from the LXX version of the Hebrew Scriptures; ten are not found in classical use. The reference to the proverb in Proverbs xxvi. 11, departs from the LXX reading and introduces a non-classical word in its place (ii. 22). Mr. Falconer says: "There is no trace of Alexandrianism in his thought. Imagery and ideas are Hebraic. It is evidently written by a Hebrew, who often limps in his attempts at Greek style." [1] If the Jews of Phrygia had forgotten their language, they had not so far emancipated themselves from their own turn of expression as not to colour the language of their adoption.

Another clue to the Phrygian origin of the Epistle is the reference to the judgment of the Flood (i. 5). This is not mentioned among the judgments of Jude, though referred to in another context in 1 Peter iii. 20.[2] Ramsay has brought some important evidence to bear on the Legend of the Flood in Apameia. "On Apamean coins struck under Severus, Macrinus and Philip there appears the same type of a chest or ark inscribed *NΩE*, floating on water; within it are two figures, and standing beside it a male and female figure. On the top of the chest a raven, and above a dove carrying an olive branch." Reasons have been stated for the belief that the coin engravers used as their models a picture exhibited in a public place in the city, probably one of a series of illustrations of Apamean legends which adorned some public buildings, such as a stoa. Some time during the second century, probably an artist represented the tale of Noah as

[1] Expositor, July, 1902, p. 47.

[2] It has been suggested since the publication of the first part in July that *vv.* 19–22 break the sequence of thought between 1 Pet. iii. 18 and 1 Pet. iv. 1. It may be therefore that the reference to the Flood in both Epistles is due to Themison.

an Apamean scene. "It is known from other sources that the legend of Noah was localized at Apameia. The Sybilline books refer to the ark as having rested on the hill where the Marsyas rises, and there is some connexion between the by-name of the Kibotos and the legend of the Flood."[1] The hill of Kelainai was considered by the Apamean Jews to be the spot where the ark had rested.[2] This addition of the flood to the judgments of Jude would be natural, therefore, to a Phrygian writer.

Another link with Asia is the use of the term *ἀρετή* and *θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*. *Ἀρετή* and *θεία δύναμις* are current in the inscriptions of Caria.[3] An inscription of the Phrygian Pentapolis at Brouzos speaks of *τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ θεοῦ*, which may be compared with *ἐπόπται τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος* (2 Pet. i. 16).[4]

It must appear at first a difficulty that a group of Montanist writings should have been gradually admitted into the Canon of Scripture. If, as seems proved, they belong at least to the period of the Montanist movement, and are so very closely linked in with Phrygia, is it not more likely that they are both of them works of the Catholic authorities in the Church? The inscription of Avircius, the leading opponent of Montanism, seems to answer this question most decidedly in the negative. The Catholic Church was Pauline in its origin, and loyal to the authority of the Apostle of the Gentiles. It would not have issued its apology under the aegis of St. Peter.

And if it had done so, would not the second Epistle have had a safer place in the canon? Tertullian quotes the first Epistle by the name of Peter; Irenaeus quotes it by name; so also does Clement of Alexandria; none of these writers are, however, independent of Asiatic influence. No question

[1] Ramsay, *Phrygia*, p. 669. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 670–1.
[3] Falconer, Expositor, July 1902, p. 56.
[4] Ramsay, *Phrygia*, p. 700.

was afterwards raised as to its authenticity.[1] The evidence with regard to the second Epistle is very different. No trace of it is to be found in early Christian literature. The Peschito admitted 1 Peter but excluded 2 Peter. "Neither the Epistle of Barnabas, nor Justin Martyr, nor Theophilus of Antioch, nor Irenaeus can be fairly adduced as citing or alluding to our Epistle . . . Neither does Tertullian, nor Cyprian, nor Clement of Alexandria in any of his extant works."[2] The silence of the Muratorian fragment is impressive, for the writer specially rejects the works of the Montanists; and if this canon was formed amid the controversies of Caius and Proclus, the silence is still more significant. The Epistles, being in high esteem by the Montanists, would be rejected, especially at Rome, by the Church.

The evidence as to Origen is conflicting, though of importance owing to his residence in Cappadocia and his connexion with Firmilian and Alexander in Cæsarea and Jerusalem. In the works which have survived in the Latin version of Rufinus, it is quoted by name as scripture. "In his extant Greek works we nowhere find the Epistle quoted. Nay, it is more than once by implication excluded from the number of the Catholic epistles."[3] It is clear, however, on the testimony of Rufinus, that Origen was acquainted with and somewhat doubtful as to its origin.

Traces of it are found in the Philosophoumena. The early life and birthplace of Hippolytus are wrapped in obscurity. He was, however, in his early life associated with Irenaeus. "It is hardly possible to read any considerable fragment of his other extant works (other, i.e., than the Compendium and Philosophoumena) without stumbling upon some thought or mode of expression which

[1] v. Soden, *Handcomm.* p. 115.
[2] Alford, vol. iv. p. 149.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 151.

reminds us of Irenaeus or the Asiatic elders. When and where was this communication held? Hippolytus might himself have migrated, like Irenaeus, from Asia Minor in early life: and thus the instructions which he received from his master may have been given in his original Asiatic home. But his extant writings contain no trace that he was ever in the East; and we therefore look to Rome itself."[1] It is difficult to trace his exact position in Rome. In the following century he was accused of the Novatian heresy. Lightfoot has shown that this was chronologically impossible.[2] But may there not be reference to his leaning towards the Montanist heresy?

The two had much in common, and the affinity in later times in the Asiatic Churches was so marked that an adherent of the Montanist heresy might have been called an adherent of the Novatian. It is no longer possible to consider him the author of the Dialogue with the Montanist Proclus. Lightfoot attempted it,[3] but Harnack proves that the authorship of Caius is established.[4] Had this dialogue been by him, it would not be possible to regard him as in sympathy with Montanism. But there is proof that Hippolytus wrote certain "Capita adversus Caium,"[5] the anti-Montanist champion in Rome; and that in the refutation he dismisses the heresy of Montanism very briefly.[6] His character as revealed to us in the Philosophoumena is that of a strictly, even rigidly, moral man of a puritanic disposition, who believed in drawing the rein very tight, and allowing to the members of the Christian Church no licence.[7] The evidence for 2 Peter in the Philosophoumena is not therefore independent of Montanist influence.

[1] Lightfoot, *Clem. Rom.* ii. p. 422.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 427.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 380.
[4] *Alt. Chr. Lit.* i. p. 601.
[5] *Ibid.* pp. 602, 624.
[6] Lightfoot, *Clem. Rom.* ii. p. 385.
[7] McGiff. *Eus.* p. 270.

The evidence of Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, is of equal importance. He was familiar with the first and second Epistles of St. Peter as having been addressed to the Church of Cappadocia, of which Cæsarea was the Metropolitan See. His words in the Latin version are these: "Petrum et Paulum beatos apostolos . . . qui in epistolis suis haereticos execrati sunt, et ut eos evitemus monuerunt." The reference certainly includes 2 Peter, seeing that it is in this only that heretics are inveighed against by St. Peter.[1] It has already been stated that the Epistle of Jude was written against a type of heresy which is most closely akin to that of the Archontikos of Armenia. The Petrine version of that Epistle in the Catholic Epistle of Themison met the special form of this heresy prevalent in the Church of Cappadocia. The Bishops of Cæsarea, familiar on the one hand with the Montanist-Novatian communities, on the other with the Gnostic and Antinomian heresies, were well able to disdistinguish between them. The former were orthodox in their faith, if rigid in their discipline; the latter were unorthodox and licentious. Half a century had enabled the Church of Cappadocia to see the true value and inspiration of the Epistles of St. Peter. They recognized their importance as a refutation of heresy and a defence of the faith, and under the direction of the two great bishops, Alexander and Firmilian, successively Bishops of Cappadocia in the first half of the third century, admitted the Epistles into the Cappadocian Canon.

The letter, though received by these bishops at a time when heresy pressed heavily on the Church, was not even then quite assured in the Cappadocian Church. St. Gregory Nazianzen a century later writes: "Some say there are seven Catholic epistles; some say that only three ought to be received."[2]

[1] Alford, vol. iv. p. 151. [2] Alford, iv. p. 152.

Eusebius reckons it among the antilegomena[1]; St. Jerome says: "a plerisque negatur."[2] St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who may have inherited the Cappadocian tradition through his predecessor Alexander, though himself a most virulent opponent of the Montanist heresy—if indeed he knew of it except through its most violent opponents—quotes the second Epistle: "According to the blessed Peter, we become partakers of the divine nature."[3] It was finally admitted into the Canon at the Council of Hippo in 393.[4]

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[1] Eus. *H.E.* iii. 3, 1, 25, 3.
[2] *St. Jer. de vir. ill.* i.
[3] *Cat. Lect.* xxii. 3.
[4] McGiffert, *Eus.* p. 133.