

years in Caesarea in close relations with the Church there,"¹ so that he had every opportunity of obtaining the most accurate information; and the probability is that the Gospel and the early part of the Acts were, so to speak, written on the spot.

W. SHERLOCK.

*THE HELVIDIAN VERSUS THE EPIPHANIAN
HYPOTHESIS.*

IN my former article, which appeared in the July Number, I considered this question in the light of what may be gathered from Scripture. In my edition of St. James I had summed up the results of my earlier investigation of the subject in the words (p. xxxvi.): "Even if the language of the Gospels had been entirely neutral in this matter, it would surely have been a piece of high presumption on our part to assume that God's providence must always follow the lines suggested by our notions of what is seemly; but when every conceivable barrier has been placed in the way of this interpretation . . . can we characterize it otherwise than as a contumacious setting up of an artificial tradition above the written word, if we insist upon it that brother must mean not brother, but either cousin or one who is no blood-relation at all, that first-born does not imply other children subsequently-born, that the limit fixed to separation does not imply subsequent union?" My critic in the *Church Quarterly* (vol. lxvi, p. 81) meets this statement with the *argumentum ad verecundiam*: "When such a sweeping condemnation includes names pre-eminent for the furtherance of our Biblical knowledge, such as Lightfoot, Westcott, and Hort, the present Bishop of Birmingham, and Canon Liddon, the charge becomes little short of ludicrous." It is hardly necessary for me

¹ Sir W. Ramsay, paper read before the Victoria Institute.

to say that my argument was impersonal. I had no idea of throwing scorn on great names, whether among those who are still living, or those who have passed away. I was simply pointing out the responsibility of one who acknowledged the facts, but refused to draw the necessary conclusion from them. Of the five names mentioned, the three which stand first were names of men well known to me; Lightfoot, and especially Hort, were among my oldest and dearest friends. It was mainly from them, and from another friend of an earlier generation, Professor John Grote,¹ that I imbibed the principles enshrined in two famous maxims of antiquity: *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*, and *Non tam auctoritates in disputando quam rationis momenta quaerenda sunt. Quin etiam obstat plerumque eis qui discere volunt auctoritas eorum qui se docere profitentur; desinunt enim suum iudicium adhibere, id habent ratum quod ab eo quem probant iudicatum vident.* It is just when the force of public opinion is going most strongly in one direction, that the man who believes it to be mistaken is most bound to give his reasons for that particular aspect of the truth, the defence of which he feels to have been committed to his own charge. Whether he is right or wrong, it can only serve the cause of truth and help to bring about its ultimate triumph, if he does his best to give their due weight to the arguments which have led him to adopt the conclusion he advocates. For myself, I can sincerely say that the further consideration of the question has not only confirmed me in the opinion formed more than sixteen years ago, but that I believe Bishop Lightfoot would have come to the same conclusion if the same considerations had been laid before him.

My critic, whom, as being entirely unknown to me, I

¹ See his *Exploratio Philosophica*, especially the admirable chapter on the Right and Duty of Private Judgment, contained in vol. ii. pp. 271-83.

have denoted by the letter X, assumes that Westcott and Hort favoured the Epiphanian view. I do not remember that I ever heard either of them express an opinion upon the subject; certainly the references adduced by X are anything but conclusive. He says this preference is implied, in the case of Hort, by a phrase which occurs in *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 148: "He who was known as the Lord's brother." But surely this can only imply a wish to avoid all disputable matter: every one would assent to such a description of St. James. Westcott, in his note on the words "His brethren" in John ii. 12, hesitatingly accepts Lightfoot's conclusion in words which do not suggest any special investigation on his own part:—"Most probably the sons of Joseph by a former marriage. See an exhaustive essay by Dr. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, Essay 2." It is just the language I should myself have used after reading the essay, had I not been compelled to go more fully into the subject in preparing my edition of St. James.

I proceed now to consider what light we may gather from tradition upon this subject. X asserts that "but for the intrusion of St. Jerome's theory in the latter part of the fourth century, the value of the traditional belief could hardly have been called in question." "But the original tradition, which did no more than assert that the brethren were sons of Joseph by a former wife, should be carefully distinguished from the Epiphanian presentation of it" (p. 92). In a note he says: "Professor Mayor begins by putting the origin of the Epiphanian theory towards the close of the second century, and recognizes a tradition on the point from then, 'till it was unceremoniously driven out of the field by Jerome.' Yet in his next paragraph he says: 'Historical tradition, therefore, on this subject there was properly none when Jerome wrote, any more than there is now.'"

The guarded language of the last sentence is sufficient to show that a contrast is intended between tradition in the loose sense, and historical tradition strictly speaking. And this contrast would have been more apparent if X had given the exact words of the prior quotation, "we have seen that, *so far as we can speak of a tradition on the subject*, it was in favour of the Epiphanian theory, etc." This distinction is more clearly marked in the fuller discussion contained in p. xxviii. of my edition of St. James. It is said there that, "in our investigation of any so-called tradition, it is of the utmost importance to be on our guard against mistaking manufactured or literary tradition, like that which has grown up round the scenes of many of Scott's romances, for the actual recollection of fact, handed down orally from father to son, or crystallized in literature at some stage of its progress."

I shall now endeavour to show, in opposition to X, not that Hegesippus has not recorded many valuable traditions—I believe he has—but that there was no original historical tradition to the effect that the Brethren were sons of Joseph by a former marriage. The belief rests on two pillars, sentiment and apocryphal fiction, the latter being itself an offshoot of the pre-existing sentiment. This appears from the language used by Jerome and Basil in the fourth century, by Origen in the third, by Clement of Alexandria at the end of the second; nay, it may be inferred from what is said by Epiphanius himself.

In his *Comment. in Matth.* xii 49, Jerome speaks with scorn of the upholders of the Epiphanian view, as "following the ravings of the apocryphal writings, and inventing *quandam Melcham vel Escam mulierculam*, as Joseph's first wife. Similarly, in his answer to Helvidius (c. 17) he contrasts the appeal to later authorities with the appeal to Scripture, in the words *Verum nugas terimus et fonte*

veritatis omisso opinionum rivulos consecramur. He pleads also sentiment in favour of his own view, as extending the range of virginity to Joseph as well as to Mary. On the other hand, Basil the Great is reckoned among Epiphanians by Lightfoot, because he quotes a story about Zacharias which seems to be taken from the *Protevangelium*, where this view is strongly maintained. In the same passage, while announcing his own belief in the perpetual virginity, "since the lovers of Christ cannot bear to hear that the mother of God ever ceased to be a virgin," Basil, nevertheless, allows that it is not a necessary article of Christian belief.

Origen, however, is the writer who brings out the two sides most strongly in his *Comment. in Matth.* tom. x. 17 (Lomm. iii. p. 45). "Some persons, on the ground of the tradition contained in the Gospel according to Peter or the book of James (the *Protevangelium*) affirm that the brothers of Jesus were Joseph's sons by a former wife. Those who hold this view wish to preserve the honour of Mary in virginity to the end, in order that her body, once chosen for so high a purpose, might not be degraded to lower use after the Holy Spirit had come upon her . . . and I think it reasonable that, as Jesus was the firstfruit of purity among men, so Mary should be among women."¹ Here it is to be observed that Origen does not say this opinion is held by all, or most, or by the orthodox; it is simply held *by some*. And the ground on which they hold it is distinctly said to be its assertion in two apocryphal books, the Gospel of Peter, which (as we know from the portion which has been recently recovered) was tinged with the Docetic heresy, and the *Protevangelium*, of which

¹ X's comment on this passage is, "We would like to know whether in so speaking Origen was, as Bishop Lightfoot denied, merely giving sympathetic utterance to an apocryphal fancy, or whether from the basis of a well accredited fact he was tentatively eliciting, with characteristic suggestiveness, the spiritual significance of Blessed Mary's vocation."

more hereafter. Their motive for following these authorities is merely subjective: they wish to do honour to the Virgin; and Origen professes his agreement with them on even less substantial ground. In another passage, which has been preserved in the *Catena Corder.* (Lomm. vol. iii. p. 45, n. 3) Origen (or the Catenist) simply gives his conclusion without stating his reasons: "It has been much discussed," he says, "how we are to understand the phrase Brethren of the Lord, since Mary had no other child but Jesus. The explanation is that they were legally brothers, being sons of Joseph by a former wife."

Origen's teacher, Clement, is an exception to most of the Fathers in his feeling as to celibacy. He distinctly says (*Strom.* vii. p. 874) that marriage is superior to virginity; but apparently his delight in allegory led him to accept the story of the *Protevangelium*. Thus in his notes on the epistle of Jude he speaks of him as son of Joseph, and in *Strom.* vii. p. 890 he refers to Salome as evidence of the miraculous birth (cf. *Protev.* c. 20), though he allows that this was not the usual view. I quote the translation of *Strom.* l.c. given in the edition of Hort and Mayor: "But just as most people even now believe, as it seems, that Mary ceased to be a virgin through the birth of her child, though this was not really the case—for some say that she was found by the midwife to be a virgin after her delivery—so we find it to be with the Scriptures, which bring forth the truth and yet remain virgins, hiding within them the mysteries of the truth. 'She has brought forth and has not brought forth' says the Scripture (i.e. pseudo-Ezekiel), speaking as one who had conceived of herself and not from another. Wherefore the Scriptures are pregnant to the true gnostics, but the heresies, not having examined them, dismiss them as barren." See also *Paed.* i. p.123, and Zahn, l.c. p. 309 foll.

Epiphanius is the earliest patristic authority for the legendary story of the Holy Family. In the previous article I pointed out how he endeavoured to force the language of the Gospels to suit his own theory. Here I shall deal with his additions to Scripture and the grounds on which he asks our assent to them. In *Haer.* lxxix. c. 5, p. 1062, he refers to the History and Traditions of Mary as his authority for the story of her parents, Joachim and Anna, and in *Haer.* lxxviii. c. 7, p. 1038, he ascribes the recent attack on the Perpetual Virginity to ignorance of Scripture and a want of familiarity with histories (*ἱστορίας*). "What this history of Mary was," says Bishop Pearson, "or of what authority these traditions were, we cannot learn out of Epiphanius." But when we find the *Protevangelium*, which was probably written 200 years before Epiphanius, and which contains most of his additions to Scripture, such as those relating to the age and previous marriage of Joseph, beginning with the words ἐν ταῖς ἱστορίαις τῶν δώδεκα φυλῶν ἦν Ἰωακεὶμ πλούσιος σφόδρα, and when another apocryphal Gospel is entitled *Historia de Joachim et Anna et de nativitate Beatae Dei genetricis*, it is natural to suppose that these were among the sources referred to by Epiphanius.

X thinks he had a more trustworthy guide in Hegesippus, from whom he seems to have borrowed the account of the martyrdom of St. James (mentioned in my last article), though not without adding to it the ascription to him of the supreme merit of virginity. The testimony of Hegesippus is certainly important from the distinction he draws between the relationship of *brother* in the case of James, and *cousin* in the case of Symeon, the son of the Lord's uncle Clopas, which disposes of the Hieronymian theory; but the only support that Lightfoot (*Gal.* p. 277) could extract from Hegesippus for the Epiphanian theory is

found in the words quoted by Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 19 and 20 : "There still remained members of the Lord's family, grandsons of Jude, *who was called his brother according to the flesh*" (τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα λεγομένου αὐτοῦ ἀδελφοῦ). Lightfoot understands this to mean that "the brotherhood of these brethren, like the fatherhood of Joseph, was reputed, but not real." But why may we not understand the phrase κατὰ σάρκα in the sense in which it is used in Romans i. 3, περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυεὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης? Christ was, κατὰ σάρκα, son of David, κατὰ πνεῦμα (Luke i. 35) Son of God. So, if Jude were son of Joseph and Mary, he might be called κατὰ σάρκα, but not κατὰ πνεῦμα, brother of Jesus. Compare also Romans ix. 3, τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα; Galatians iv. 23, ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης κατὰ σάρκα γεγέννηται (in the common course of nature) ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρας διὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (by the promise overriding the common course of nature). See also verse 29, and Ignat. *Smyrn.* i. 1, τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν ἀληθῶς ὄντα ἐκ γένους Δαβίδ κατὰ σάρκα, υἱὸν Θεοῦ κατὰ θέλημα καὶ δυνάμιν Θεοῦ; also Epiph. *Haer.* lxxvii. p. 1007, τῇ μὲν φύσει καὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ λόγος ὢν τοῦ Θεοῦ, κατὰ δὲ σάρκα ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβίδ, *Haer.* lxxviii. p. 1043, εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν αὐτοῦ ἀληθῶς μητὴρ (ἡ Μαρία), κατὰ σάρκα κυήσασα αὐτὸν κ.τ.λ.¹

¹ In the account given by Hegesippus of the martyrdom of James, there is a passage which I think is wrongly understood by X. It is quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.*, iv. 22) μετὰ τὸ μαρτυρῆσαι Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον ὡς καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ, and is thus explained by X (p. 95), "St. James suffered on the same charge as the Lord," that is, he "had to endure the same process of false witness, of harassing questioning and stirring up of popular passions, as was pursued in the case of the Lord." And he calls this "a picture very analogous to that enacted in the Praetorium." But ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ could not mean this. Its real meaning is shown by a comparison of the words of James recorded by Hegesippus (*Eus. H.E.*, ii. 23), and those of Christ in Matt. xxvi. 64. In the former we read τί με ἐπερωτᾶτε περὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; καὶ αὐτὸς κἀθῆται ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐκ

X, following Lightfoot (*Gal.* p. 279), thinks we may interpret the ambiguous language of Hegesippus by the unhesitating assertions of Epiphanius and Eusebius, who derived their information mainly from him. But can we speak so certainly of Eusebius? The passages quoted by Lightfoot (p. 283), with the exception of that from the disputed treatise *On the Star*, do not seem to me decisive. It is said that, in i. 12 εἰς δὲ καὶ οὗτος τῶν φερομένων ἀδελφῶν ἦν, and iii. 7, τοῦ Κυρίου χρηματίζων ἀδελφός, James is called the "reputed brother of the Lord because Joseph was his reputed father," but would not this have been also true if James had been the son of Mary and Joseph? The remaining passage (*H.E.* ii. 1) seems to me equally inconclusive.

Supposing, however, that Epiphanius and Eusebius borrowed from Hegesippus the idea of an earlier marriage on the part of Joseph, how is it that Epiphanius never mentions the name of Hegesippus, while Eusebius gives us nothing more than these indefinite allusions? Zahn, in his excellent dissertation on the *Brüder und Vettern Jesu*, points to many passages in which it can be shown that Epiphanius borrows from Hegesippus without naming

δεξιῶν τῆς μεγάλης δυνάμεως, καὶ μέλλει ἐρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, words which were immediately followed by his martyrdom. So in Matthew our Lord answers Caiaphas in the words ἀπ' ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καθήμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, which were followed by the cry, ἐβλασφήμησεν. . . ἐνοχος θανάτου ἐστίν. I think, therefore, it is better to translate ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ either literally "for the same word," or more generally "on the same ground," though I formerly followed Lightfoot in rendering it "charge." The same phrase occurs in the story of the martyrdom of Symeon, who succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem (*Eus.* iii. 32), ὁ προειρημένος Συμεὼν ὡσαύτως κατηγορήθη καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ, where it must be explained by the reference to the grandsons of Jude in the preceding sentence, of whom we are told (in iii. 20) that they were accused before Domitian as descendants of David, and therefore aiming at the sovereignty of Judæa. With this may be compared an earlier sentence in c. 32, where a charge is said to have been laid against Symeon by certain heretics, ὡς ὄντος ἀπὸ Δαβὶδ καὶ Χριστιανοῦ.

him (pp. 258 foll.), the most striking example being that in which he repeats, as an experience of his own (*Haer.* xxvii. 6) what had happened to Hegesippus in the time of Anicetus, more than a hundred years before he was himself born. Sometimes Epiphanius betrays his secret by the use of some word recalling the title of the *ὑπομνήματα* of Hegesippus, much as he refers to the Apocryphal Gospels under the name *ἱστορίαι*. In *Haer.* xxix. 4 he names Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria as authorities for statements which all three writers had derived from Hegesippus, to whom he refers only in a vague *ἄλλοι* or *πολλοὶ πρὸ ἡμῶν*. Why this marked reticence? Zahn (pp. 262, 319) very reasonably suggests that it was because Epiphanius found no support in Hegesippus for the view, which he himself so vehemently advocates, of the relation in which the Brethren stand to Jesus. Perhaps we may consider that this suggestion is confirmed by what Eusebius tells us in *H.E.* iv. 22, viz., that Hegesippus spoke of some of the Apocryphal writings of his time as having been written by heretics. Compare what is said of these in *Constit. Apost.* vi. 16, where the "poisonous apocryphal books are ascribed to wicked heretics who set themselves against the providential ordinance for the procreation of children in marriage." On the other hand, Eusebius tells us in the same passage that Hegesippus quotes from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which was in use among the Ebionites and began, as some say, with the Baptism of John (Zahn, l.c. p. 274).

I proceed now to consider the evidence of Tertullian. We have seen that his contemporary, Clement of Alexandria, while himself holding the view afterwards maintained by Epiphanius, allowed that it was not generally accepted by the Church of his time. Tertullian seems never even to have heard of it. Helvidius had claimed the authority of

Tertullian and Victorinus for the opposite view, that the Brethren were sons of Mary and Joseph. Jerome, in his answer to Helvidius, denied that Victorinus held this view, and challenged the authority of Tertullian as being tainted with the errors of Montanus. Zahn is inclined to think that Jerome is mistaken as to Victorinus, and Lightfoot himself gives examples of the unscrupulous way in which Jerome "piles up his authorities." Happily we can judge for ourselves in the case of Tertullian. Marcion had defended his docetic views by explaining the question "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" as equivalent to a negative, proving that Christ was never born and was not really man. To which Tertullian replies, "*Nos contrario dicimus*," that the presence of His mother and His brethren could not have been announced unless He really had a mother and brothers. . . . The words give a just expression to His indignation at the fact that his nearest relations are standing outside, while strangers are intent on His words within (*Adv. Marc.*, iv. 19). Similarly where he treats of the same text in his answer to the Marcionite Apelles, he argues that the words are not inconsistent with the truth of the humanity of Christ. "No one would have told Him that His mother and His brethren stood without, who was not certain that He had a mother and brothers. . . . We are all born, and yet we have not all got either brothers or a mother. We may have a father rather than a mother, or uncles rather than brothers. . . . His brothers had not believed in Him, His mother had been less constant in attendance upon Him than Martha and the other Mary. . . . We may find a picture of the synagogue in His absent mother, of the Jews in His unbelieving brethren, a picture of the Church in the disciples who believed in Him and clung to Him" (*De Carne Christi*, 7). As Tertullian in these passages gives no hint that Christ's

relationship to His brothers was less real than that to His mother, so in other treatises he takes for granted that Mary ceased to be a virgin after the birth of Christ (*De Monogamia*, 8): *Duae nobis antistites Christianae sanctitatis occurrunt, monogamia et continentia. Et Christum quidam virgo enixa est, semel nuptura post partum* ("being about to marry first after her delivery") *ut uterque titulus sanctitatis in Christi sensu dispungeretur per matrem et virginem et univiram*; and in even plainer words (*De Virg. Vel.* 6), where he discusses the meaning of the salutation *benedicta tu inter mulieres*. "Was she called *mulier* and not *virgo* because she was espoused? We need not at any rate suppose a prophetic reference to her future state as a married woman": *non enim poterat posteriorem mulierem nominare, de qua Christus nasci non habebat, id est virum passam, sed illa (illam?) quae erat praesens, quae erat virgo* ("for the angel could not be referring to the wife that was to be; for Christ was not to be born of a wife, i.e. of one who had known a husband, but he referred to her who was in his company at the time, who was a virgin").

Pausing here at the end of the second century, what do we find to be the general belief with respect to that doctrine which Epiphanius regards as the teaching of the Church from the beginning, and the questioning of which he characterizes as the climax of impiety (*Haer.* lxxviii. 33), lately introduced by the insignificant sect of the Antidicomarianites (i.e. chap. 6)? It is apparently unknown in the Churches of Carthage and of Rome, and is only held by a minority in the Church of Alexandria, and, as far as we can judge, was discountenanced in Palestine as early as 160 A.D. by Hegesippus, in whose lifetime it had probably been promulgated for the first time by the author of the *Protevangeliium*. Moreover we have evidence of the prevalence of a very different view among the Ebionites, a view which was

sometimes combined with mischievous heresies, but which was not in itself condemned with any great severity by Origen and Justin Martyr. The former, in his *Comm. in Matt.*, tom xvi. (Lomm., vol. 4, pp. 37-9) compares the story of Bartimaeus persisting in his prayer to the Son of David, in spite of the opposition of the people of Jericho, to the prayer of the Ebionites (some of whom hold that Christ was son of Mary and Joseph, others that He was born of Mary and the Holy Ghost), in spite of Gentile scorn for the poverty of the Jews. And again, a little below, "You may still hear Gentile Christians, who have been brought up in the faith that Christ was born of a virgin, rebuking τῷ ἐβιοναίῳ καὶ πτωχεύοντι περὶ τὴν εἰς Ἰησοῦν πίστιν, τῷ οἰομένῳ αὐτὸν ἐκ σπέρματος ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς εἶναι. And yet such a Jew may be crying all the louder, with a true, though not an enlightened faith in Jesus (πιστεύων μὲν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἀνθρωπικώτερον δὲ πιστεύων), 'Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.'" Compare *c. Cels.* v. 61, where two kinds of Ebionites are distinguished, ἧτοι ἐκ παρθένου ὁμολογοῦντες ὁμοίως ἡμῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἣ οὐχ οὕτω γεγεννησθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους. So Justin in his Dialogue (chap. 48), after the Jew Trypho had spoken of the contradiction involved in the idea of a Messiah who was God for all eternity, and yet was born as man on this earth, calls upon him, whatever may be the metaphysical difficulties involved, not to reject the evidence of the birth of a human Messiah; since even among Christians there are some¹ who hold that Christ was ἀνθρωπος ἐξ ἀνθρώπων. Justin says that he could never accept such a view himself, even if it were accepted by the majority of Christians, because it is opposed to the preaching

¹ The MSS. read *εἰσι τινες ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους*, which is altered by Zahn and others to *ἡμετέρου*, much to the damage of the argument as I understand it.

of Christ and of the prophets ; but he seems to recommend it as an intermediate stage for Jews.

For the combination of this feature of Ebionitish error with more virulent forms of heresy I may refer to the accounts given of Cerinthus and Carpocrates in Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxvii. 2, xxviii. 1. If space permitted, I ought here to investigate the contents and the growth of the Apocryphal Gospels, but it may suffice to go back to the very beginning of the story of the Infancy and consider how it may have prepared the way for later developments. If what we read in the first two chapters of St. Luke is worthy of belief, it rests upon the authority of Mary herself. One marked feature of her character is shown in the words, "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." To her it was all too sacred, too awful, to be talked about. And it is only natural to suppose that those to whom the secret was necessarily confided, Joseph, Elizabeth, perhaps the beloved disciple in later years, would have felt the same awe. It could only be from a sense of duty that the secret of the Madonna was entrusted to the Church, perhaps at her own death, perhaps when St. John perceived that it was needed to guard against growing error. That there was such a long-continued reticence is proved by the commencement of St. Mark, where he speaks of John's baptism as "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ"; and by the qualification required of the Apostles, to be witnesses of the life of Christ from the baptism of John to the day when He was taken up (Acts i. 33). The same impression would be confirmed by the genealogies, which were eventually incorporated in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, both giving the descent, not of Mary, but of Joseph. We cannot suppose that the early Jewish converts had any knowledge of that portion of Christ's life which preceded the baptism of John, excepting the fact that He was of the family of

David. To them Joseph was the father, and James and Jude the brothers of Jesus, as they appear in the Gospel of St. Mark. To them the day of baptism was more important than the day of birth ; and this feeling would be increased by the addition of the words, from Psalm ii., "This day have I begotten thee" (as shown in some of the early MSS. and Fathers) to the voice from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son," an addition which might easily give rise to docetic views, such as those of Marcion. Compare also the words of the Jews in John vii. 27, "When the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is."

On the other hand, when once the story of the Infancy and Childhood had been added to the original Christian tradition contained in St. Mark's Gospel, there can be no doubt that it would possess a special attraction for many minds. The Essenes and Therapeutae are said to have encouraged celibacy and asceticism generally, and St. Paul gave his advice against marriage under certain circumstances, though at a later period he sternly condemns the heretics who, like some of the Gnostics afterwards, forbade marriage (1 Tim. iv. 3 ; compare Heb. xiii. 4). On the other hand, a special reward seems to be promised to virgins in Revelation xiv. 4. In my edition of St. James (p. xxxi.) it is stated that the ascetic view "spread rapidly both amongst heretics and orthodox Christians. Of the former, Saturninus, Marcion, the Encratites and the Montanists in the second century are named as depreciating, or actually forbidding marriage among their adherents. Of the latter, evidence may be found in Anaxagoras, *Apol.* 28, εὔροις δ' ἂν πολλοὺς τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας καταγγράσκοντας ἀγάμους ἐλπίδι τοῦ μᾶλλον συνέσεσθαι τῷ Θεῷ; in such language as that of Cyprian (*Hab. Virg.* 3), *flos est ille ecclesiastici germinis . . . illustrior portio gregis Christi*, ib. 22, *quod futuri sumus, vos jam esse caepistis*

. . . *cum castae perseveratis et virgines, angelis Dei estis aequales*; and in the rash act by which Origen believed himself to be carrying out the words of Christ (Matt. xix. 12). The same tendency is also noticeable in the neo-Pythagoreans and neo-Platonists. By the end of the third century it began to produce its natural consequence in the institution of celibate communities and the discouragement of marriage among the clergy.”

It is evident how this sentiment would be irritated by those who continued to use the old-fashioned language, especially when it was found that the assertors of a purely human birth were also not unfrequently the assertors of a purely human Messiah; still more when scandalous stories, such as are referred to by Celsus, were spread abroad by unbelieving Jews. It is evident, too, what scope this sentiment would find for its exercise in the marriage of Joseph and Mary; if it might be assumed, with Epiphanius, that the incorrect use of the word *παρθένος*¹ in rendering Isaiah vii. 14 was to be understood as declarative of perpetual virginity; if a woman were at liberty to marry without any idea of fulfilling the duties of a wife, nay, with a settled resolution not to fulfil them. It shows to what lengths this sentiment would go when we read, in pseudo-Matthew, *De Nativitate S. Mariae*, chap. 9, that the Angel Gabriel calmed Mary's fears by the words *Ne timeas quasi aliquid contrarium tuae castitati hac salutatione praetexam. Invenisti enim gratiam apud Dominum quia castitatem elegisti. Ideoque virgo sine peccato concipies et paries filium*; also the words put into the mouth of Mary in the Gospel of pseudo-Matthew, chap. 7, *Elias assumptus est quia carnem suam virginem custodivit*; Epiphanius, *Haer.* lxxviii. 23, “Some have dared to insult the ever-virgin, holy and blessed, by thinking it possible that, after the mystery of

¹ On which see Bishop Gore's *Virgin Birth*.

the Incarnation had been made known to her, she should have consented to cohabit with her husband, *καὶ ἔστι τοῦτο πάσης μοχθηρίας δυσσεβέστατον*,"; and again in Origen (*Hom. vii. in Luc.*, Lomm., vol. v. 109), *In tantam nescio quis prorupit insaniam ut assereret negatam fuisse Mariam a Salvatore, eo quod post nativitatem illius iuncta fuerit Joseph.*

I agree with Lord A. Hervey, that the various stories which we read in the Apocryphal Gospels about the Holy Family have no claim to be regarded as genuine historical traditions: they are simply attempts of different ages and parties in the early Church to reconcile the narrative of the New Testament with their own fancies and opinions, and to give support, as they imagined, to the miraculous conception. Sometimes they are due mainly to the working of the poetical imagination, brooding over the scanty outlines given in the New Testament, and attempting to picture to itself the early life of Mary, her relations with her husband, the childhood and youth of Jesus, and who and what His brethren were. These imaginations are sometimes touching and beautiful, as in the account of Anna's sadness, where she sits in her garden and bewails her own childless state, while all things round are full of young life; or the delight of the infant Mary dancing on the steps of the Temple and enjoying daily intercourse with the angels. At other times they can only be characterized as unnatural, useless, odious, utterly misrepresenting the character of Christ. Of the first we have an instance in the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, chap. i., where Jesus in His cradle is represented as saying to Mary, "I, whom you have brought forth, am the Son of God, the Logos; My Father hath sent Me for the salvation of the world." Of the second we have an instance in the resolution of the priests to remove Mary from the Temple, when she grew up to womanhood, and entrust her to the charge, not of her parents, or of some motherly

woman, but of a widower, to be selected by lot, though, as Joseph objected, he might have grown up sons living in the house with him. Of the third we have an example in the part played by Salome in the *Protevangelium*. Of the fourth in the malicious actions attributed to the child Jesus in the *Gospel of Thomas*.

The dedication of Samuel in the Temple would form a natural model for the dedication of Mary; and it is plain that, when it was once assumed that Mary had no child but Jesus, the easiest solution of the fact that her eldest son was brought up among brothers and sisters would be to suppose that these were children of Joseph by a former wife. Then, again, the easiest way of accounting for the perpetual virginity was to suppose that Mary herself was under a vow, and that Joseph was an old man who, at the urgent request of the Temple authorities, consented to receive her into his house and give her the protection of his name, as his nominal wife. Lastly, the Apocryphal Gospels are all marked by a childish love of the marvellous, the miracles belonging mainly to a time in which the canonical Gospels report no miracles, nay, positively assert that no miracle was wrought (John ii. 11).

Taking this as a general summary of what we may call the apocryphal tradition, on which Epiphanius built up his belief, it will be worth while to observe how he endeavours to strengthen its foundations, which he evidently feels to be somewhat insecure, and to elaborate its design by new additions of his own. Thus he defends the childish miracles as attesting the divinity of Christ from His birth (*Haer.* li. 20). The name "virgin" implies a permanent quality, like the name "Boanerges" (*Haer.* lxxviii. 6). "Let the romancers, who would make us believe that she had children after the birth of her Firstborn, tell us their names; they must have lived with her and her Son" (l.c. 9) [an extra-

ordinary inversion of the facts of the case]. Mary did not continue long with the beloved disciple. We hear nothing of her accompanying him to Asia. The Scripture tells us nothing about her ; whether she died, or was buried, or not. This strange silence hides a deep mystery, of which we find a hint in the Apocalypse, where we are told of the woman who brought forth the man-child, and to whom wings were given to bear her to her place in the wilderness (l.c. 11). Science also confirms our faith in the virginity of Mary. We learn from it that the lioness can only bring forth once, and Mary is the mother of the Lion of the tribe of Judah (l.c. 12). Again, Mary was a prophetess, as we learn from Isaiah viii. 3 ; and the gift of prophecy is incompatible with the state of marriage, as we see in the case of Moses, who never begot a child after he began to prophesy ; of the daughters of Philip ; also of Thecla, who broke off her engagement on her conversion (l.c. 16). [Epiphanius forgets Deborah, Huldah, Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel.] Mary corresponds to Eve, as the source of life and salvation to the source of death and ruin (l.c. 18). Joseph is still the patron of virgins, and Joseph's sons observed the rule of virginity and lived as Nazarites : how can we doubt, then, that Joseph himself lived as a virgin with Mary ? (l.c. 8 and 14). [Here, too, Epiphanius has forgotten that St. Paul speaks of the Brethren of the Lord as married men (1 Cor. ix. 5), and that Hegesippus speaks of the grandchildren of Jude.]

I cannot pretend to have any very high respect for the common sense or the reasoning powers of one who can use arguments like the above ; but yet he was not without good and amiable qualities ; and I am glad to be able to bid a friendly good-bye to my critic in words borrowed from the champion of his own side, with one slight but not unimportant alteration (l.c. 15 f.). "Why inquire minutely into these things ? Why not accept what is

written, and leave the rest to God? Surely you will not assert that our salvation depends on the belief that Joseph did [not] know his wife after the birth of her Firstborn. . . . Had the Scripture asserted this, we should have accepted it without scruple."

JOSEPH B. MAYOR.

PS.—My readers may be interested to see what Tillemont and St. Bernard say on the supposed vow of virginity in Luke i. 34: "Quelques uns ont dit que la Vierge préféroit sa virginité à la promesse de l'Ange, et estoit absolument resoluë à la conserver. Mais les actions les plus saintes, faites contre l'ordre et la volonté de Dieu, que nous devons aimer et chercher en toutes choses, sont des pechez, et non des vertus. Aussi S. Bernard dit qu'elle eust esté préste de renoncer à son vœu, *frangere votum*, si c'eust esté la volonté de Dieu, en luy soumettant, quoique non sans regret, la volonté qu'elle avoit de l'observer."—*L'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, i. 465.