

ESSAYS IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON • BOMBAY • CALCUTTA • MADRAS
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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO
DALLAS • SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1924

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THE title-page and table of contents of this book will show clearly that it does not profess to be a connected history of the Early Church. The choice of scattered topics is due to the fact that these especial themes happened to be of particular interest to the writer, and he thought that at least some of them needed other, or fuller and more critical, elucidation than they had apparently received elsewhere in print. In a number of cases he was dissatisfied with the assumptions or evaluation of evidence that he found almost universally accepted with little question by ecclesiastical historians. Therefore he has tried to write from what may be called the standpoint of a classicist rather than of an ecclesiastic, though he himself happens to be also an ecclesiastic, and may unconsciously lay himself open to some like criticism to that which he now and then directs against his fellows.

Three or four of the topics discussed in this volume have already been treated by the same writer in one or another technical journal. But such articles have now been so much revised and modified that their author would be glad to have the earlier publication forgotten—as it probably has been, and to no one's injury.

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Circumstances have made it necessary for the writer to read the proofs of these pages at a distance of more than two thousand miles from his study, and hence all citations and many statements have had to go without the proper final verification. But much care was taken with the preparation of the copy, and the printing has been so skilful and accurate that it is hoped few errors of importance in these matters have been left to worry the reader's patience and to cause the writer consequent mortification.

ELMER TRUESDELL MERRILL.

November 1, 1923.

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Rome, St. Peter had also handed on a divine commission conferred upon him by Christ himself to rule over the entire Christian Church. In other words, we have in the latter part of this fourth century the effective beginnings of the "Petrine claims" of the Church of Rome. They were not yet asserted in such a clear-cut and definitive formula as in later centuries, down to, for example, the Vatican Council of 1870. They were rather put in what we may call a sentimentally suggestive manner, as if the minds of the official proponents were themselves just awaking to the significance of the mighty fact. It may indeed be that such was honestly the case, that we have here a clear instance of the development of doctrine. Certain it is that in the previous centuries the Christian world was not aware that the Roman see claimed any authority over it as by divine right; equally certain that after the fourth century it could not well profess such ignorance. The fourth century was ecclesiastically, in this as in other respects, the beginning of the Middle Ages, and the chronological dividing-point between East and West, though they continued to be nominally in communion. Doubtless the fission then started between the two geographical divisions of the Church was helped on by the linguistic fact that Latin had supplanted Greek as the language of the Western Church.

CHAPTER XI

ST. PETER AND THE CHURCH IN ROME

IN this essay I trust I may be permitted, without justly incurring the charge or the suspicion of the slightest intentional discourtesy, to continue to use for the present widely extended and venerable Church the same simple terms ("the Roman Church," or "the Church of Rome") that in preceding essays I have naturally employed of it in its earlier and more local history. I am of course quite willing to concede that the present imposing body is a very different thing in many essential aspects from the Church that was established in the capital of the Roman Empire. And I am also well aware that in recent times its adherents and official spokesmen have frequently by example and precept indicated their desire that it should be called "the Catholic Church," without even the addition of any other qualifying adjective. But it would appear, I think, to an entirely unconcerned student that if the title "Catholic" is exclusively used of itself by one party for its own dialectic advantage (which is of course plainly the case at the present time), the party of the other part ought not to be censured for discourtesy, if it prefers to continue the use for the same thing of a more ancient and colourless appellation. The geographical term evidently describes with accuracy, for the modern as well as for the ancient period, the Church that during all the Christian centuries (if we except the "Babylonish

captivity" at Avignon and a few much briefer and less significant interruptions) has had its centre and its throne in the proud City of the Seven Hills, and to-day, as aforesaid, looks thither for the source of all authority. In point of fact the word "Catholic" itself has on the lips and in the hearts of a vast mass of "non-Catholics" even at the present day quite as invidious a connotation as "Roman," or "Romish," or "Romanist," or "papal," or "papist," all of which terms I believe "Catholics" since the Reformation have at times both heard without offence and used freely of themselves. And it may be added that the Council of Trent by no means disdained the epithet "Roman" for the Church of the Apostolic see, since in its Decrees and Canons it repeatedly speaks of "the Roman Church," or "the Holy Roman Church," without any other qualification. The same brief title, "the Roman Church," occurs even in the Acts of the Vatican Council of 1870, when, as in the case of the Tridentine formulas, a geographical designation rather than a doctrinal was convenient. Every one knows also that the official title of a cardinal is "Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalis." We may surely excuse ourselves for not being in the matter of mere nomenclature "more Catholic than the Pope."

It is a tremendous embarrassment to the progress of free historical study and criticism to be confronted by the inert mass of any great tradition many centuries old, and accordingly thoroughly settled and embedded into its place. The embarrassment is serious enough, even when the tradition is concerned with something of purely scholastic and impersonal interest. But when it is intimately bound up with beliefs and convictions never more active and vital than at the present day, and touching upon the deepest and most important interests of the human race—its relation to God through His Church—the serious aspects of any question concerning it may well give the critic pause.

In considering the topic of this chapter it is manifestly impossible to insist that the purely historical aspects of the question may easily be isolated from the theological. The Roman Church for the past fifteen hundred years has insisted that they are indissolubly welded together. It has erected into practically an article of its faith the belief that St. Peter was given by Jesus Christ the full "power of the keys"; that he was the first bishop of the Church in Rome; and that by divine authority he bequeathed to his successors in that see till the end of time the full right, power, and duty vested in him to govern the universal Church, and to act as its infallible guide and director in all matters pertaining to faith and morals.¹ The Pope reigning for the time is no less than the real and true Vicegerent of Christ on this earth, and that by reason of his ecclesiastical descent from St. Peter. This tremendous authority is not handed down, as is the episcopal commission, through the laying-on of hands by those who already possess it and are authorised to transmit it; it is inherent in the office of the Bishop of Rome, now commonly called the Pope, and it comes to him through his mere election to, or installation in, that office. Whoever, therefore, is out of communion with the Roman see is out of communion with the Church. He is in the best event left for his eternal salvation to the uncovenanted mercies of God.²

This imposing edifice of ecclesiastical—or call it,

¹ The definition on this latter point set forth in the Vatican Council of 1870 is: "Docemus et diuinitus reuelatum dogma esse definimus: Romanum Pontificem, cum ex cathedra loquitur, id est, cum omnium Christianorum Pastor et Doctoris munere fungens pro suprema sua Apostolica auctoritate doctrinam de fide uel moribus ab uniuersa Ecclesia tenendam definit, per assistentiam diuinam, ipsi in beato Petro promissam, ea infallibilitate pollere qua diuinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide uel moribus instructam esse uoluit: ideoque eiusmodi Romani Pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae, irreformabiles esse."

² It is interesting to note that the Churches of the great Eastern communion hold quite as distinctly that whoever is not of their fellowship is out of communion with the Church. They accordingly excommunicate Rome precisely as Rome does the rest of the Christian world. It is perhaps also interesting to note that the Eastern Churches reject as a mere fable the notion that St. Peter ever saw Rome.

if you will, doctrinal—principles the Church of Rome has chosen to base in the ultimate issue upon a purely historical question. Of course the Roman Church calls it an indubitable historical fact. On it the whole structure rests. But the choice of the historical foundation-stone was not made by the Roman Church of recent centuries. In this matter the Church of the present day is not in appearance a free moral agent. The choice was made for it by that Church of fifteen centuries ago. It was made at a time when there was no such thing in existence as historical criticism, in any proper sense of that term. No Christian had then any motive for questioning any agreeable historical statement in the story of the early days of Christianity anywhere, if it did not palpably conflict with an already accepted narrative, or with the words of the Books that were deemed more or less authoritative. The Church was intensely interested, and had been from the first, in matters of faith and order. It felt only a mild and mainly aesthetic curiosity about purely historical questions. It had not come to see that they might be of any vital importance. It accepted freely and amiably a vast mass of imaginative historical inventions, without caring to investigate their source, while yet it debated sometimes very unamiably and jealously whatever touched upon doctrine or order. Quite baseless historical suggestions or assertions quickly passed by repetition into tradition, and were enriched by accretions of a becoming character; and as the Church at large had a great reverence for tradition in what it thought important matters, it naturally came to extend a sort of protective regard over supposed historical traditions. Of course the stories told by the various Churches concerning their origins were true. There was no reason to doubt them, and no reason to examine the source and evolution of the beliefs.

The choice of a historical foundation-stone for the

Roman claim was not made all at once. It was the outcome of a gradual process. First came the notion, no earlier in origin than at least the middle of the second century, that Sts. Peter and Paul, the two great Apostles, had both laboured in Rome and suffered death there; then that the see of Rome, being the foundation of two Apostles, and they the greatest, and being established in the capital of the empire, ought to have the pre-eminence over other sees. This last item evidently passed beyond the purely historical into the borders of the theological field. It accordingly was not permitted to go without protest; but it gained influence among the Churches of the West, especially those which found their advantage in the support of the increasingly powerful Church of Rome. The proposition did not flourish in the East, except in so far as it was concerned with a purely honorary precedence, and was based upon merely the political position of the city of Rome, as the ancient capital of the empire. The case of the East, under its various patriarchs (Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem), over against the West, under the assertive authority of the Bishop of Rome, patriarch of the Western world, reminds one in its external aspect of the struggle between the two great leaders in the last days of the Roman republic, "one of whom could not brook a superior nor the other an equal."

If, then, the Roman Church was to establish its supremacy over all the patriarchates of the East, as well as over the West, evidently some other than a political basis must be found for its assertion of authority. There came accordingly to be a theological corollary added to the earlier historical proposition. This development of doctrine may be dated essentially from the reign of Damasus, Bishop of Rome (366-384). It reached its maturity in the century that followed. In it was embodied the theorem that the

successive bishops of Rome inherited from St. Peter the spiritual power and authority to govern and direct the universal Church. Of course the corollary was not susceptible of demonstration by historical evidence. Therein perhaps lay in great measure its safety. It could not be proved, but it could be persistently asserted, and that might finally come to have the same effect as proof.

Manifestly the theological corollary falls to the ground if the historical proposition on which it depends is false; though of course, on the other hand, the historical proposition might be true and yet the theological corollary be false. To subject the historical tradition of the connection of St. Peter with the Church in Rome to renewed examination is the purpose of this chapter. Its theological corollary must be left for discussion by theologians, with merely the remark by the historian in passing that a relation that is void *ab initio* acquires no moral authority by prescription, however long. We must discriminate between the moral and the purely legal spheres of action, between the *forum conscientiae* and the *forum legis*. The former deals with eternal things, and time to it is nothing; the latter has to set up for the uses of daily life in this world certain fictions without regard to ultimate moral foundations. The mischief is that the historical student in dealing with tradition often confuses the two spheres.

If the historical basis of the Roman claim to supremacy is false, the whole body of Roman teaching in this particular at once collapses. Under these circumstances it is evidently irrational to consider faithful adherents of the Roman Church who write on this topic as any other than partisan advocates of a belief that they are by their ecclesiastical allegiance bound to support or to pass over in silence. They cannot do otherwise. To say this is not in the least to express a doubt of their perfect sincerity of heart.

It is only to point out an obvious fact. On the other hand, it is equally evident that opponents of belief in the alleged historical fact thereby lay themselves open to a somewhat similar suspicion of morally obligatory partisanship, even though they are not confronted, in case of any other attitude on their part, with civil or ecclesiastical pains and penalties. But the situation is rendered somewhat easier for them, and the suspicion accordingly diminished, in that they might concede the purely historical "fact," but yet contest its theological corollary. That, indeed, has come to be the fashionable position among recent historical writers of the conveniently so-called Anglican Communion.

Cardinal Manning once declared (in his *Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*) that "the appeal to antiquity [that is, to history] is both a treason and a heresy." By this he meant to say that the present living belief and living voice of the Church is supreme and infallible: for even faithful Romanists to treat it as open to historical argument is to repudiate the validity of the Church's teaching as *per se* authoritative. That was certainly a bold thing to say. If it were an *ex-cathedra* utterance of the Pope, it would be an order condemning in advance all historical investigation that might directly or by implication be likely to affect inconveniently, or perhaps even that which might touch upon, the ordinary pronouncements of the Church of Rome. Whether the Cardinal's utterance voiced the true spirit of the present-day Church of Rome, living in a secular atmosphere of historical investigation, may be left to others for judgement. The English Church, on the other hand, in the centuries since the Reformation has clearly discerned that historical and theological questions are often intimately bound up together, and especially so in her own case. She has therefore, of course not by any synodical action, but by the evident *consensus fidelium*, encouraged the study

of Church history and honoured its representatives. Nor has she been disposed in any way to guide them with bit and bridle. At the present moment several recent books by Anglican writers on early Church history lie on the table before me. The authors are none of them popularly censured for or suspected of ultramontane tendencies. But they all to a man concede the truth of the Roman historical assertion now under discussion, some warmly protesting it to be so indubitable as to be removed from the arena of further argument, and others yielding a somewhat reluctant assent, while remarking upon the scantiness of the evidence by which it is supported. Of course none of them admit the truth of the doctrinal corollary.

The best students among the adherents of the Roman Church, when writing on this subject, naturally make the most possible of the meagre historical evidence (or what they call evidence) at their command, but frankly recognise its limitations, and lay their greatest stress upon the two facts that there was no challenge in antiquity of the truth of the purely historical statement concerning the Roman preaching, bishopric, and death of St. Peter, and that there has been an unbroken belief in it by their whole Church from the earliest ages till the present day. The former of these contentions is true enough, but under the known conditions of antiquity is of not the slightest evidential value: the latter is also true, but its promotion by genuine scholars into the place of an argument might well provoke a sigh or a smile, were it not indubitable that it is precisely this age-long patient reiteration of belief and claim by the Roman Church that has had the most far-reaching psychological influence in the smothering of dissent. It is precisely this which has hypnotised even Protestant historians into an ill-advised surrender of the outer bulwarks and bastions of their own stronghold. To the ecclesiastical questions involved the classicist may

properly profess himself indifferent, but not being a susceptible subject for hypnotism, he does not consider himself estopped by the insistence of either embattled host from the consideration of the historical issue between them.

The movements and whereabouts of St. Peter are but imperfectly chronicled in the books of the New Testament, at least for the period after his miraculous escape from Herod's prison (Acts xii.). At that time he "went to another place," apparently for the sake of concealment. But the "other place" may have been in Jerusalem itself: the house of "Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark" would certainly be too well-known a gathering-place of Christians to be a safe refuge from searching-parties. But Herod died within a few months, and St. Peter was back in Jerusalem at the time of the Council which determined the requirements of Jewish observance to be demanded from Gentile converts to the Christian faith (Acts xv.). It is not clear at what time the interview took place which is mentioned by St. Paul as the occasion of the agreement that he and St. Barnabas were henceforth to preach mainly to the Gentiles, while Sts. James, Peter (here called Cephas), and John were to undertake chiefly the mission to the Jews. In his letter to the Galatians St. Paul mentions his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion (cf. Gal. i. 18 ff. with Acts ix. 23 ff.), and then goes on to say that in the course of fourteen years he went up again (*πάλιν*) to Jerusalem, and at this time the compact was made regarding the respective spheres of activity. That would seem to connect the time of the agreement with that of the council about the Gentile Christians. This would be, indeed, the most natural date to which to assign it, a time when St. Paul had completed his missionary journey in the southern part of Asia Minor. But

many critics have insisted that the opening sentence of the second chapter of Galatians, with its word "again," joined to the lack of any reference to a journey thither between this and that mentioned in the passage just preceding, makes it clear that St. Paul means to speak of this as his second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. But the Acts represent him as having visited Jerusalem in the between-time to carry gifts from Antioch for famine relief (Acts xi. 29 f.). Therefore the occasion of the concordat must have been actually his third, and not his second, visit, and he misnumbered it by inadvertence. But Sir William M. Ramsay (in his *St. Paul the Traveller*) preferred to acquit St. Paul of even a momentary carelessness, and to assign the arrangement with St. Peter and the others to the visit at the time of the famine. But that occasion hardly seems to fit so well as the later, and, moreover, it does not appear necessary otherwise to suppose any actual slip of memory in St. Paul's statement. The Apostle mentions with some circumstantial details two visits of his to Jerusalem, because what took place there on these two occasions was of importance for his argument to the Galatians. A brief intermediate visit (that of the famine-relief mission) he leaves out, because it had no immediate bearing on his theme. The word "again" (*πάλιν*) is merely resumptive in the narrative in which it occurs; it does not necessarily point to a definite numerical position in a chronological series; in other words, it means "at another time," and not necessarily "for the second time." It does not exclude the possibility of non-pertinent intervening occasions left unmentioned.

The time of the rebuke of St. Peter by St. Paul at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11 ff.) was apparently later than the Jerusalem Council, and the inconsistency between St. Peter's bold stand at the former occasion and his "dissimulation" at the latter is readily explained by

his temperament, which other incidents show plainly enough was compounded of impulsive daring and equally impulsive timidity.

The Church of Antioch at a later time claimed St. Peter as its founder, but the mention of him by Origen (and by Eusebius, probably depending upon Origen) does not make it clear whether or not he was thought of by them as the first bishop of that see. Origen (*Hom. in Luc. 1*) says that Ignatius "was second bishop of Antioch after Peter"; Eusebius (*H.E. iii. 36 [130]*) says that Ignatius was "the second to inherit the episcopate at Antioch in succession to Peter." But elsewhere Eusebius (*iii. 22 [112]*) says more plainly that Euodius was first bishop of the Antiochenes, and Ignatius second. The equivocal expressions just quoted, which may be compared with similar expressions elsewhere, probably mean only that St. Peter organised the Church at Antioch, and appointed its first bishop. That is precisely all that the Roman Church in the second century thought of claiming about St. Peter (in union with St. Paul) with reference to herself. Yet Jerome thought St. Peter to have been bishop of Antioch (*De Vir. Ill. 1*), and so did John Chrysostom, who was himself an Antiochene (*Hom. in Inscr. Act. 2*). The same statement made its way into the *Liber Pontificalis*; and the Roman Church itself at the present time observes February the twenty-second as the day of St. Peter's Chair at Antioch, and one of the breviary lections for the day plainly says that the Apostle was first bishop at that place. Jerome's view may be based only on his interpretation of the ambiguous statements just mentioned, but is more likely ultimately due, as apparently was the declaration that St. Peter was the first bishop of Rome, to a Clementine source. The *Recognitions* plainly accord with it (*Recogn. x. 71*).

St. Paul in his first letter to the Church in Corinth (i. 12) is reproofing its members for factiousness, in

that "each one of [them] saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." From this it has been supposed that, like St. Paul and Apollos, St. Peter also must have preached in Corinth, and have left there converts who revered his memory and called themselves by his name. But it is by no means necessary to regard the existence there of these Petrine Christians as a sign that St. Peter must have converted them there rather than elsewhere. Some of the Corinthian Church members called themselves "of Christ," but that is no indication that Christ may or must have preached in Corinth. The Christians "of Christ" had probably been made so by his preaching in Palestine, and had returned thence to their home in Corinth, or, being Palestinians, had later emigrated to Corinth. So the Christians "of Peter" may well have been converted by his preaching elsewhere.¹ There is certainly in this reference by St. Paul no evidence whatever that St. Peter ever saw Corinth.

For such further information as the New Testament can give us concerning the movements of St. Peter, we are thrown back upon the deductions that may be drawn from his own First Epistle. The letter was generally accepted as genuine before the time of Eusebius, and is so accepted at the present day, though Harnack vigorously dissents. Yet much divergence still exists regarding the interpretation of it. The only elements that are pertinent here are those concerned with its address and the place from which it was written. The letter is addressed "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." That is, it is addressed primarily to Jewish and not to Gentile Christians. This would be in scrupulous accord with the terms of St. Peter's

¹ It appears less likely that these Christians who called themselves "of Peter" had merely adopted some variety of doctrine that some one had told them was that taught by St. Peter.

especial mission to the Jews. But though the letter contains a few phrases especially applicable to persons of Jewish birth, and others that better fit those of Gentile extraction, the exhortations would in general be adapted equally well to both classes; and it is not to be supposed that there were any Churches in which Christians were not intermingled in a single brotherhood, whatever their origin. Similarly St. Paul addressed the Christians in Rome as primarily Gentiles, though there are known to have been Jews among them, and that is recognised in the letter. Origen believed St. Peter to have himself preached in the districts he mentioned in the First Epistle (*ap. Eus. H.E. iii. 1 [88]*). Eusebius quoted and apparently approved the statement, and, as usual, Jerome and later writers followed Eusebius. But it is altogether probable that Origen was merely drawing the inference from the address of St. Peter's letter. There is not a word in the letter itself to indicate that the writer is addressing those among whom he has himself laboured; and if that were the case, it is hard to understand how some mention of the fact should fail to be set down. Nor is there any good reason why St. Peter should not address a letter to Churches not of his founding, which were now without immediate Apostolic supervision, and were within reach of his message. So also St. John and St. Jude wrote letters *urbi et orbi*, and St. James addressed the faithful among the whole twelve tribes of the Dispersion, without distinction as to the agency of their evangelisation. The First Epistle of St. Peter certainly gives us no proper reason for supposing that the Apostle had ever visited the regions where had been established the Churches that he addresses.

The more serious and difficult question about the epistle is concerned with its provenience. As is usual with the epistles of the New Testament, the letter is not formally dated with regard to either time or place.

But in the concluding salutations the writer says, "She in Babylon, jointly elect, saluteth you (ἀσπάζεται ἡμᾶς ἢ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή)."¹ The general ancient opinion was that the noun to be understood with the feminine definite article was *ἐκκλησία* or *ἀδελφή*, and the greeting was sent therefore from "the Church." The letter would appear at first blush to have been written from the most famous Babylon, that on the Euphrates.¹ There is nothing in the least suspicious about that conclusion. It is, on the contrary, perfectly plain and straightforward. With it agrees the order in which the provinces are mentioned in the address, the easternmost first. It is as if the person to whose care the letter was to be entrusted was travelling westward from Babylon by the northern trade route, and so would finally arrive by way of Pontus at the regions in the north-west of Asia Minor. But, of course, the writer at Babylon might have mentioned the provinces in the order of their nearness to him, without thought of the order in which the letter would reach them.² Nor is it in the slightest degree incredible that the missionary to the Jews should have travelled as far eastward from Palestine as Babylon. It was only about six hundred miles distant, and trade routes thither from the eastern Mediterranean ports were open and much frequented. Jews were notoriously a travelling and trading folk. And at Babylon and in its region there were very large settlements of Jews.³ There is also

¹ That it could have been from the fortress of Babylon in Egypt is quite impossible, though some have so understood it: on this other Babylon see Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ii. 2699, and the literature there cited.

² The suggestion has been made that the order in which the provinces are named is consonant with the belief that the letter was written and sent out from Rome, since the Christian who carried it (whether Silvanus or another) might be voyaging directly to Pontus, without stopping at intermediate ports, but intended to journey back westward by land to the Aegean. I know of no traces of such "Express Service to Pontus" in the shipping notices of antiquity.

³ See on this point Jean Juster, *Les Juifs*, etc., vol. i. p. 201, and note; Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ii. 2682; and the authorities there cited, especially Josephus and Philo.

no real difficulty introduced by the presence of both Silvanus (*alias* Silas) and St. Mark, who was St. Peter's "son in the Gospel," with the Apostle in Babylon after St. Paul's death. The service as amanuensis of Silvanus, who, as a Roman citizen and a sometime companion of St. Paul, had had opportunities for acquaintance with Roman affairs, would also explain satisfactorily the slight Latinisms that some critics have thought they detected in the Epistle.

But when the notion was invented and disseminated (not earlier than the latter half of the second century after Christ) that St. Peter had lived and preached in Rome, critics (following, I suspect, Hegesippus himself, who was the apparent sponsor for the legend) thought it necessary to reconcile with that acceptable story this witness from St. Peter's own pen, which apparently testified to the Apostle's residence late in life in the extreme East. This was easily done to their satisfaction, and though many dissentient voices have been raised, some of them even by Roman Catholic writers, the view which explained away the manifest difficulty appears to have established itself very thoroughly in recent days. According to it, as St. John in his Apocalypse is understood to refer to Rome under the figure of "Babylon the Great," so St. Peter, writing actually from Rome, called the capital of the empire by the mystical name of "Babylon." The first clear enunciation of this interpretation of Babylon in St. Peter's letter occurs in Eusebius (*H.E.* ii. 15 [64]), where he appears to ascribe it, along with the fact that St. Mark wrote his Gospel at Rome from the teaching of St. Peter, to Clement of Alexandria, supported generally on the Marcan question by Papias: but the word *φασί*, as used here by Eusebius, is somewhat ambiguous. St. Jerome, following Eusebius, does not, however, seem to attribute the interpretation to Clement and Papias, though he may have so understood the matter (*De Vir. Ill. 8*).

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It is, of course, quite conceivable that early writers, while believing that St. Peter ministered at Rome, may not have troubled themselves about the Babylon question any more than they did about chronological and topographical difficulties in general. There is no reason for asserting on the basis of the language in Eusebius that Papias interpreted Babylon to be Rome.

When a simple, straightforward, and otherwise unimpeachable interpretation is discarded in favour of one that lacks these qualities, and is propounded merely because it is necessary to the support of a historical statement that cannot otherwise be clearly demonstrated, evidently the probability is that something has gone wrong in the evaluation of evidence. The interpretation of St. Peter's Epistle as dated from an actual Babylon is perfectly natural, and in itself unobjectionable. It is safe to affirm that no doubt about it would ever have been raised, unless the later story of St. Peter's Roman ministry had been created, and sadly needed the clothing of substantiation. Moreover, the attribution of a mystical meaning to the place-name Babylon in the letter appears in itself plainly unreasonable. The Apostle has not been talking in apocalyptic language anywhere else:¹ why should he interpolate here a single enigmatic word? What possible purpose could it serve? And how could a simple-minded Cappadocian, let us say, be expected to understand it in any other than the literal sense? Must he have besides the letter the explanation of the messenger? Perhaps after the Book of Revelation had been widely circulated among the Churches, the better-instructed might know that Babylon, in apocalyptic writing, could stand for Rome; but the setting of the name in the letter of St. Peter is

¹ It is certainly unreasonable to allege that the apocalyptic meaning of Babylon is in consonance with the simple and unenigmatic metaphors in the earlier part of the letter.

not at all apocalyptic in style or suggestion, and that later Cappadocian, even though better read than his earlier brother, would have no evident prompting to the postulation of apocalypse here. But no reasonable chronology would assign to the Book of Revelation a date that was not long after that of this epistle, and there was nothing else than the mystical language of the Revelation that could make Christians generally familiar with apocalyptic tropes, whatever might be the case with scholars. It would seem that Babylon in St. Peter's letter has certainly suffered violence at the hands of critics,—and *cui bono*? Only to the myth-maker, for the mere bolstering up of a historical speculation that certainly must be in desperate case to need such aid. *Non tali auxilio.* . . . The ancients are not to be blamed for their process of manipulation of historical evidence. They knew, and could know, no better. But the moderns cannot have invincible ignorance pleaded in their behalf with equal plausibility. Yet one may even feel some degree of aesthetic sympathy with the ancient Romanisers of Babylon. It is very unsatisfactory to have the great Prince of the Apostles fade vaguely away from our ken into the misty East, send thence a single letter (or was it two?), and then—silence. How much more comfortable to fit the Prince of the Apostles into a Chair in the mighty city that was the proper seat of dominion, and have him meet there, instead of in obscurity, the death that his Master had foretold!

There is no evidence in the books of the New Testament that St. Peter ever saw Rome; and if he ever did visit and minister in that city, it is certainly a wonder that no mention of that fact, or allusion to it, found its way into such books as Acts and Romans. Indeed the terms of St. Paul's letter to the Romans fairly preclude any possibility that he thought his brother-Apostle had ever preached in Rome, still more, that he could have been there at the time of St. Paul's writing.

The same could be said also of some of the later letters of St. Paul.

Some capital has been made by certain pro-Petrine critics out of their interpretation of St. Paul's words in Rom. xv. 20. These critics say that the Apostle intimates plainly that the Roman Church is the foundation of "another man," and they suggest that this "other man" may well have been St. Peter. But the passage in the letter is not properly susceptible of such a specific application as is thus attributed to it. St. Paul mentions the principle on which he had acted in his life of preaching; he had selected for it preferably places where the Gospel had not yet been heard, and he would not be merely building upon another man's foundation; therefore he had even not included Rome in his mission-field, simply because he thought other regions needed him more; Christianity had already gained a foothold in Rome. There is no specific allusion to "another man" as the founder of the Roman Church. St. Paul lays the emphasis rather upon the first clause of his statement, "making it my aim so to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was already named." We do not need to postulate any particular man in this particular case of Rome. Jews were constantly passing back and forth between Rome and the East, and some of these who had been converted may well have formed the nucleus of the Christian community in Rome, and have evangelised others, both Jews and Gentiles. It will be remembered how the Gospel was first preached at Antioch by unnamed Christians who took refuge there when the persecution that arose about Stephen led many Christians to flee from Jerusalem. Perhaps these first evangelists at Rome were from the number of the Jews and proselytes from that distant city who are mentioned as being among the throng of listeners and observers on that great day of Pentecost after the Lord's Ascension. Perhaps they were the Andronicus

and Junias whom St. Paul calls esteemed apostles (of course in the broader sense of the word), and describes as having been converted before he was, possibly by the teaching of Jesus himself. But all these guesses are idle.

Starting, then, from the surely not altogether insignificant silence of the New Testament (though "Babylon" and St. Paul's letter come at least near to furnishing a bit of actual evidence), it will be convenient to trace in chronological sequence the rise and progress of the story that connected St. Peter with the Church in Rome.¹

If it were possible to credit *1 Clement* with any one of the early dates not infrequently assigned to it, that would be the first document to be discussed. But as the chronology stands in the judgement of the present writer, that place belongs to the *Letters of Ignatius*. Of the entire authenticity of even the seven letters now commonly received among us, I have already confessed to serious doubts; but as the seven *Letters* are so generally held to be genuine, they must not be passed over here.

The only remark of Ignatius that has any immediate bearing upon the question now under discussion is that in his letter to the Romans (iv. 3), where he says, "I do not give you orders, like Peter and Paul (ὡς Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος—no verb); they were Apostles, I am a convict." In the light of the later story that these two Apostles jointly presided over the establishment of the Church of Rome, the pertinent clause has been generally understood to mean "as Peter and Paul did," and thus to bear witness to the existence of that recognised tradition in Rome and elsewhere, even in the time of Ignatius. This would carry the recognition of the belief as far back, according to usual dating,

¹ It will perhaps be not out of place here to refer the reader to what has been said on method in the first chapter of this book, and especially to the remarks on the difference of aspect between a genuine tradition and a myth (pp. 20 ff.).

as the later years of Trajan, say A.D. 108-115. But Ignatius does not plainly say, "as Peter and Paul gave you orders," though he might readily have been as explicit as this, and I should suppose would naturally have been so, if he had imagined the historical condition assumed by the later interpreters—"Peter and Paul gave you orders, not I." If we can only free ourselves from prepossessions in the premises, quite as natural an understanding would be, "as a Peter and a Paul might." But even if Ignatius meant that Peter and Paul had specifically issued orders, he would not necessarily mean that these orders were given in person, and merely to the Church in Rome. The letters of the Apostles would naturally have acquired a validity throughout all the Churches, entirely irrespective of their original addresses. That would be quite enough to account for the bishop's words. And consider, also, how he speaks to other Churches. To the Ephesians (iii. 1) he says, "I do not give you orders, as if I were some great man": to the Trallians (iii. 3), "I did not think it becoming for me, being a convict, to give you orders like an Apostle." The verb indicating command is the same in all three cases, and the modesty evidently a habit of speech as well as of thought. But if there were nothing else in the way—if there were any other reason (except by begging the question and also ignoring the silence, or worse than silence, of the New Testament) for assuming that Ignatius must have known that St. Peter as well as St. Paul had taught at Rome—there would be no reason against taking the remark to the Roman Christians as corroborative evidence of the alleged fact. But the remark is altogether too easily explicable otherwise to make it of value as primary evidence. "Like Peter and Paul" may mean no more than "as an Apostle might," precisely as the parallel phrase stands in the letter to the Trallians; and these two Apostles would naturally enough be mentioned, if the writer wished to vary

from his expression elsewhere, since they were the two most prominent Apostles, standing forth above all the rest in the books of the New Testament from Acts onward.

It might almost seem that Ignatius knew nothing about the place or manner of St. Paul's death; otherwise it would have furnished him with a natural and effective parallel to his own case, when he wrote as he did in Eph. xii. 2. Also in the letter of Ignatius to the Romans there is no intimation that he thought of Rome, whither he was travelling to his death, as the place where Sts. Peter and Paul had suffered martyrdom. Yet such an allusion would have been most natural, if he had believed the history to be so. Probably the tradition to that effect had not yet arisen.

It is also curious that Ignatius, the protagonist of the monarchical episcopate, whose letters to the more eastern Churches recognise three orders in the ministry, and inculcate submission to the bishop as the first duty of the people's obedience, and speak of, or address, a number of the bishops themselves, in his letter to the Romans addresses the Church only, says nothing about episcopate, presbyterate, or diaconate, in abstract or concrete, and might be supposed ignorant that any office of the ministry existed, or ought to exist, in Rome. This omission is certainly a very surprising thing, especially so if Ignatius knew that St. Peter had been bishop of Rome, and had established the episcopate there!

The famous epistle of the Roman Church to that at Corinth, generally called *1 Clement*, has been dated by modern critics anywhere from the year of Nero's persecution to the end of Hadrian's reign, or possibly even a bit later. In the chapter of this book on "Clement of Rome," I have indicated my own agreement with those who would date it about A.D. 140. In the fourth chapter of the letter the writer is warning his Corinthian brethren about the dreadful effects of

jealousy and envy, drawing his illustrations from Old Testament history. He cites the cases of Cain and Abel, of Jacob and Esau, of Joseph and his brothers, of Aaron, Miriam, Dathan and Abiram, of David and Saul. But in the following chapter he drops down at once from such extreme antiquity to modern times :

“ But let us leave [he writes] the ancient examples, and come to those who have striven in recent times (*ἐγγύστα*); let us consider the noble examples of our own generation. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars have been harried and have striven unto death. Let us place before our eyes the good Apostles: Peter, who through unjust jealousy endured not one or two but more numerous labours, and having thus borne his witness (*μαρτυρήσας*) departed to the place of glory that was due him. Through jealousy and strife Paul pointed out the prize of patience: seven times he suffered bonds; he was driven into exile; he was stoned; serving as herald in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown of his faith. After teaching righteousness to all the world, and bearing witness (*μαρτυρήσας*) in the presence of governors, he was thus [viz: after these experiences] removed from the world and taken up into the holy place, being the greatest example of patience.

“ With these men of holy conversation have been assembled a great throng of the elect, who, suffering through jealousy many outrages and tortures, have set among us a most splendid example. Women, persecuted through jealousy as Danaes¹ and Dirces, suffering terrible and foul indignities, weak as they were in body, have pursued the steadfast course of the faith, and received a noble reward.”

The letter was written in the name of the Church of Rome, as the address at the beginning shows. It is almost universally held that the passage from it above translated furnishes clear and explicit testimony to the fact that Sts. Peter and Paul had both suffered martyrdom in Rome, and within the lifetime of the writer (we may for convenience be permitted to call him Clement, as Dionysius of Corinth did).

¹ See on this text and translation p. 117, n. 2.

But let us examine the account as far as possible without that prepossession. Clement mentions St. Peter before St. Paul. That is the natural order of Apostolic precedence: it is in no other way significant. The two Apostles are dead, but their lives belong in “our own generation (*γενεά*).” This, together with the reference to persecution, led writers even of the second century to believe that, since Clement was, as they understood him, a contemporary of the event, and wrote immediately thereafter, Sts. Peter and Paul had suffered under Nero. Later men have found certain difficulties in this interpretation, and have wished to transfer both Clement and the persecution, otherwise left intact, to the time of an alleged persecution thirty years later under Domitian. Others have assigned the letter to a period later yet. Clement’s use of the words “our own generation” would not justly appear to stand in the way of any of these shiftings; for though *γενεά* as an expression of time meant a “generation” at the rate of three to a century, it was also used freely of a more vague period of time. Clement is contrasting “our own generation” with times of (to him) immense antiquity. “Our own generation,” then, means nothing more precise than “our own era.”¹ The pronouns “we,” “our,” and “us” refer accordingly not to the members of the Roman Church specifically, but also to the persons addressed; and events that have occurred *ἐν ἡμῶν* are merely those *ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς*. They have not necessarily happened at Rome, nor in the writer’s lifetime; and no specific organised persecution (like those which, occurring within the first century, were ascribed by the early Christians to

¹ On the vagueness of such expressions for recent time in contrast to ancient, some one has noted that Cicero says *nuper, id est, paucis ante saeculis* in *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 126, and in *De Divin.* i. 86 speaks of philosophy as a thing *quae nuper inuenta est*. Irenaeus (v. 30) says that the Revelation of St. John was *σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Δομετιανοῦ ἀρχῆς*. To Irenaeus, accordingly, *γενεά* might mean nearly a century.

Nero and Domitian alone) appears to be postulated by Clement.

How much does Clement know about the Apostles? His multitude of Biblical quotations would in general lead one to surmise that he was at least familiar with the writings later assembled in the New Testament. He was certainly acquainted with the Epistles of St. Paul. In his characterisation of that Apostle's labours, he is of course drawing in considerable measure upon St. Paul's own words, but he appears also to have in mind the account in Acts (cf., for example, Clement's reference to exile with Acts ix. 29, 30). If he does, there is evident basis for his reference to "governors" (which may, however, mean only "magistrates"). "The limit of the West (τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως)" could mean to the ancients only Spain.¹ It is highly improper to take it otherwise. Rome itself has already been included in the preceding expression, "both in the East and in the West." It is evident, I think, that Clement has only the vaguest notion of the history of the last days of St. Paul. There could have been no tradition of them, either oral or written, lingering among the members of the Church in Rome. Of course Clement could not be expected to know the chronological sequence of the Epistles of St. Paul. But he found in one of them an indication that the writer hoped soon to be set at liberty from his imprisonment at Rome (Phil. ii. 24), and he had also probably read in the last chapter of Acts that the confinement of the Apostle was far from rigorous, which might indicate that there was little danger of his condemnation. There was also nothing in the Books that interfered with the inference that St. Paul was finally set free. This accordingly was the belief of Clement. Yet there was nothing available that shed any light on the later movements of the Apostle except an indication of his earlier inten-

¹ See the article cited on p. 237, n. 2.

tion to pass from Rome to Spain (Rom. xv. 23, 28). What more natural under these circumstances than to suppose that on regaining his freedom St. Paul did carry out his previous intention, and go to Spain, and (since nothing more was related of him) meet death there, having through all his Christian life endured much and borne good witness for the truth up to the very end? These bold inferences of Clement are no bolder than those of other Christian writers of the early centuries, who were entirely conscientious in piecing out the gaps of history with interpretations helped by imagination. Of course Clement could not have written in this vague manner, if (as some have supposed) he had been actually a contemporary of the two great Apostles, and knew them to have been—perhaps had seen them—put to death at Rome. And if we assume the latest possible date for Clement's letter, it is equally impossible to believe that the Church in Rome held any such vivid tradition in his time as later interpretation has postulated and ascribed to it.

Clement is still more vague about St. Peter's life and end than about St. Paul's. That is precisely what should be expected, if he were depending merely on information deduced from the books later included in the New Testament: more is told there about St. Paul than about his colleague. It is not at all what should be expected, if Rome in Clement's time had anything like the tradition later attributed to her. It will be observed that Clement is so far from recognising the loyal duty resting upon him as an understood incumbent of the Roman see in succession to St. Peter, that he distinctly exalts St. Paul above St. Peter, not only in dwelling with detailed fullness upon his services to the faith, but in calling him "the greatest example of patient endurance," while St. Peter is merely a man of many labours (or afflictions). Clement does not make it clear that he thought the

two Apostles suffered martyrdom, in the usual later sense of the word. To my mind Clement certainly speaks as a man who had no knowledge or tradition of the manner or place in which either of the two Apostles met his death, but thought it eminently proper for them to die as martyrs, and therefore ventured to intimate rather than confidently to affirm it. In the case of St. Peter he may of course have been influenced by the prophecies concerning him in the Gospel of St. John. The word μαρτυρήσας at this period of Christian writing need mean no more than "having borne witness [for the truth]," and this by labours and sufferings in life rather than merely by death; and it is indeed this repeated and persistent endurance of hardship as good soldiers, rather than their death, that Clement emphasises as giving the Apostles their title of transfer to "the place of glory." It is only under the sway of the later and arbitrary interpretation of Clement's words in favour of a particular speculation, that we can find in them even the possibility that the Church of Rome had in that day any record or oral tradition that connected it in any way with St. Peter, or any record or tradition concerning the death of either St. Peter or St. Paul. They are mentioned only because they are the two greatest in the Apostolic college, those of whom the Writings had the most to say. Clement—and that means the Roman Church—had no more definite belief about them in their last days than he here set down. Hence his necessary vagueness of expression.

But these times of ignorance were suddenly enlightened, and a document that was ultimately drawn upon to support this new revelation is the one next in chronological order for our discussion.

But we must first retrace our steps a little. When the disciples were driven from Jerusalem by the fierce persecution that arose after the martyrdom of

Stephen, Philip, one of his colleagues in the diaconate, went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ (Acts viii. 4-24). Among the converts that he made was one Simon, a Samaritan, who had practised witchcraft among the people. In consideration of his former profession he was especially interested in the miraculous works done by Philip, and was still more impressed when the Apostles, Sts. Peter and John, came down from Jerusalem to confirm the newly baptized, and he saw the Holy Ghost given by the laying-on of their hands. Could the Holy Ghost have been communicated to Simon also? That is to be presumed, since Simon had already been baptized, and was therefore a candidate for confirmation. But the enlightenment could not have found a very complete lodgement in his soul, for he evidently soon afterward thought the thing a magical trick that it would be well worth his while to learn. He therefore offered the Apostles money, if they would teach him how to perform it. St. Peter rebuked him very sternly, and urged his repentance. The English version represents the Apostle as warning Simon that he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," and this is also the meaning conveyed by the Latin Vulgate, and by some at least of the early Fathers. But it seems quite likely that the Greek words (*εις γὰρ . . . ὁρῶ σε ὄντα*) indicate rather (as the margin of the Revised Version indeed suggests) a warning about the future: if Simon does not fully repent, and give up "the thought of his heart" (that is, to continue his old career with a new repertory), he is destined to become thus-and-so. This other interpretation would be of considerable significance, if the later traditions about Simon Magus (as he is therein called) have any basis in fact—a thing which is at best doubtful. The narrator of the incident represents Simon as sufficiently impressed by St. Peter's reproof to fear possible consequences, but

perhaps of purpose does not clearly report him as sincerely penitent.

Simon thus disappears from Holy Writ; but Christian "tradition," beginning, so far as we can see, somewhat more than a century later than the event, was not content thus to let him rest. It made him the first of the great heresiarchs, the "Father of All Heresies." Into the discussion of the immense congeries of fact and fable that gathered about his name, we shall not need to go very deeply. But the starting-point of the whole thing, so far as our knowledge is concerned, is the document which is to come next before us in the chronological order for our consideration.

The Christian writer whom we know as Justin (later called, from the reputed manner of his death, Justin Martyr) was a Samaritan by birth, but became a wandering philosopher. It was apparently at Ephesus that he was converted to Christianity. Not far from A.D. 150 (earlier critics were disposed to put the date years ahead of this time) he addressed to the Roman emperor a defence of Christianity, which has been preserved. It has been mentioned in a preceding chapter of this book. The place where it was composed is not given; but the author, by statements, allusions, and the actual use of translations of Latin phrases, shows a familiarity with Rome and Roman affairs, and in that city he is reputed to have been finally martyred. It cannot reasonably be doubted that he therefore had the opportunity to see there with his own eyes (however imperfectly) the somewhat surprising thing that he mentions in the twenty-sixth chapter of his *Apology*.

In that passage he remarks that after the Ascension of Christ the devils put forward certain men who called themselves gods, and the Romans have been so far from persecuting such fakirs, that they have even shown them honour. There was one of them named Simon, a native of the village of Gittha (or Gitthae, or

Gittho) in Samaria, who through diabolic assistance performed great works of magic in the city of Rome, in the days of Claudius Caesar, and was honoured by the Romans with a statue as a god. This was set up on the river Tiber between the two bridges, and bore the inscription in Latin, SIMONI DEO SANCTO. Almost all the Samaritans, and a few also of other nationalities, worship and adore him as the first god; and a former prostitute named Helen, who then used to go about with him, they call his first "conception."

From beginning to end Justin says not one word (except for calling this Simon a Samaritan and a wonder-worker) that could even intimate that he thought the Simon of whom he speaks, and whose statue stood on the Island, was one with the Simon Magus of the episode in Acts, which he nowhere mentions. The only reason for supposing that Justin held this belief is that some later Christians did so. They apparently, in the new passion for identifications, could not believe that two men who were magicians, and were born in Samaria, could possibly both have had that very common name Simon. Their belief is of course no evidence as to Justin's mind in the matter. If he had himself thought the Simon of Samaria, who (as he supposed) had played the wizard and taught a false religion in Rome, was the Simon of Acts, it seems most likely that he would have mentioned it. Since we have, briefly put by Justin, and in fuller detail by Irenaeus and Hippolytus, the system of false doctrine taught by a Simon, and still held by men in their day, it appears necessary to suppose that there was such a heretic; that he did found a sect called after his name, Simonians; but that he had nothing to do with Simon Magus, though they were both Samaritans, since Justin did not connect them one with the other. It will be observed that Justin does not intimate that there were any Simonians in Rome in his day,

and we may safely infer not merely that there were none, but that the only ground Justin had for believing that Simon ever taught in Rome was the existence there of the century-old statue. In c. 56 Justin recurs again to the Roman career of Simon, and to the statue, which he asks to have removed.

Justin's account of the statue set up to Simon at Rome is circumstantial. It even has a decided local flavour, such as it ought to have if written by a man familiar with the city. For Justin says the statue was erected on (or in, ἐν) the Tiber *μεταξὺ τῶν δύο γεφυρῶν*; and *inter duos pontes* is the colloquial ancient designation of the Island of the Tiber. But the mystery of the statue was long ago explained. Semo Sancus was a primitive Umbrian, or Umbro-Sabellian, deity worshipped also at Rome. A number of inscriptions to the god have been found in various parts of the city, at least one (*CIL. vi. 567, = Dessau ILS. 3474*) on the Island itself. This is addressed *SEMONI · SANCO · DEO · FIDIO*; others have similar titles, some with *SANCTO · DEO*; and from some inscription of this character, possibly more or less worn or mutilated, Justin must have got his absurd notion that Simon was thus honoured. The definite assignment that he makes of it to the reign of Claudius may have been due to a mere guess on his part, based on the reference in Acts to the expulsion of Jews (and Christians) from Rome by that emperor. Yet the inscription may actually have contained the emperor's name in one connection or another.¹ Justin nowhere connects St. Peter with Simon or with Rome, and he does not deserve the imputation of having confused Simon the

¹ Justin's especial appeal in c. 56 to the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* may possibly indicate that the inscription itself specified that the statue was erected by them; and if so, the emperor's name would very probably appear in the context. Claudius was an antiquarian, fond of obscure traditions. The inscription mentioned above as actually found on the Island is cut on an altar, not on the pedestal of a statue; and this would seem to indicate that it cannot have been the one misread by Justin. But if the place were sacred to Semo Sancus, there would probably have been other memorials to him in its immediate neighbourhood.

heresiarch with Simon Magus. He clearly is not guilty on that score.

But though Justin apparently did not think Simon Magus taught in Rome, Christian writers that followed him at no long interval found (or made) reason so to believe, and to elaborate the concept yet further. We may briefly run down the list of them, and of their successive additions to the original nucleus of the story.

The extant fragments of *Hegesippus* contain a single brief mention of a Simon as the second in what is apparently a chronological list of chief heretics among Hebrew Christians. He is said to have founded a sect called after his name, Simonians (*ap. Eus. H.E. iv. 22 [183]*). This was probably the real heresiarch whom Justin had mentioned. There is nothing to indicate that *Hegesippus* thought him identical with Simon Magus, and, indeed, he hardly could have held that belief. For he speaks of the martyrdom of James the Just, and of his succession in the episcopate at Jerusalem by Symeon, the son of Clopas, Symeon being a cousin of the Lord himself. Up to this time, *Hegesippus* says, the Church (evidently at Jerusalem) was called "virgin," because it had never been corrupted by heretical doctrine. But a certain Thebuthis was the first to initiate false teaching, being prompted thereto by his failure to be made bishop. Starting from this point, *Hegesippus* mentions various heretical leaders, beginning the list after Thebuthis with Simon. *Hegesippus*, therefore, certainly supposed Simon to have come on the scene later than Thebuthis, and Thebuthis to have begun his heretical career no earlier than the accession of Symeon to the see of Jerusalem. But *Hegesippus* assigned the martyrdom of James the Just (whom Symeon succeeded) to a time only shortly before the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian (*ap. Eus. H.E. ii. 23 [80]*). Therefore, since *Hegesippus* was at any rate somewhat of a student of chronology, it seems very unlikely that he would have

thought this Simon to have been the Simon Magus of Acts.

But Hegesippus says that the elevation of Symeon to the episcopate in succession to James was by unanimous nomination. It might seem, accordingly, that he meant to attribute the disappointed hopes of Thebuthis to an electoral contest held after the death of Symeon, which he places in the reign of Trajan, when the martyr was one hundred and twenty years old (*ap. Eus. H.E.* iii. 32 [125]). This being so, there would be added reason for supposing that Hegesippus could not think the Simon who was later than Thebuthis to be Simon Magus. But Hegesippus says the charges brought against Symeon before the proconsul Atticus were due to the enmity of certain heretics. Therefore, if Thebuthis was the first heretical teacher connected with the Church of Jerusalem, his activity in that direction had already begun, within the episcopate of Symeon instead of after it. Thebuthis had hoped to win the episcopate in succession to James. Yet if we are thus forced to assume this earlier date for the birth of heresy in the Church of Jerusalem, it was still so late that Hegesippus could hardly have identified a Simon later than Thebuthis with Simon Magus. Hegesippus, therefore, apparently did not make Simon Magus the first heresiarch, nor (so far as we can tell) did he connect St. Peter with any heretic Simon operating at Rome.

It is not certain just what the belief of Irenaeus was concerning the identity of the two Simons. There appear to be clearly two divisions in the chapter which Irenaeus devotes to Simon (i. 23 [99]). The first begins, "For Simon, a Samaritan, that Magus about whom Luke, the disciple and companion of the Apostles, says . . ."; and from this point Irenaeus goes on with the story in Acts, adding that Simon continued "to strive against the Apostles," and subjoining the tale of the statue (apparently from Justin, though with

simply a *dicitur*), but stating that the statue was actually set up by Claudius Caesar. But Irenaeus gives a brief statement about the divine pretensions of this Simon that he could not have derived from the extant text of Justin, and he omits here the tale of Helen. The second division in the account of Irenaeus begins: "However, Simon, a Samaritan [or, perhaps, "the Samaritan"], from whom all heresies have taken their rise, has the following as the substance of his false doctrine." Then follows the story of Helen, and a sketch of the Simonian system in considerable detail. This latter could not have come from the extant work of Justin.¹ In the first division Simon (Magus) is *Samarites*; in the second, the Simon is *Samaritanus*. This is probably not significant. But if Irenaeus meant that this "father of heresies" is the Simon Magus just mentioned, he could readily have said so: if, on the other hand, he meant that the great heresiarch was another Simon than Magus, he could readily have said that. Perhaps he did, and the ancient Latin version, which alone we have to depend on here, is at fault—though the version is in general even painfully literal: it stands out in marked contrast in this respect with the versions made by Rufinus. But taking the text as it stands, the impression given by it is that Irenaeus was not sure whether he was dealing with one Simon or two, and preferred to leave the matter in an ambiguous condition. He does not represent Magus as "contending against the Apostles" in Rome. He does not say where the conflict took place. But he assigns it to a time after St. Peter's rebuke, so that it is clear that in Irenaeus we have the first extant writer to represent Simon of the Acts as

¹ But Justin told the emperor (*Apol.* 26) that he had composed and finished a work against the heresies that had sprung up, and this book he would be glad to give the emperor, if he cared to have it. It is probable that the emperor indicated no passionate desire to investigate such matters. If Justin later published the book (about which we know nothing), it might have served as a source for Irenaeus, and perhaps for writers after him.

having lapsed completely and finally from the fellowship of the Apostles. Irenaeus is also the first to suggest by his treatment the identification of Simon, the great heresiarch, with Simon Magus.

Simon Magus was several times a target for Tertullian's fiery rhetoric. The orator represents Simon as having consoled himself by the purchase of Helen after he had been solemnly excommunicated by the Apostles; he then taught the heretical doctrine still held by Simonians, and was honoured in Rome by a statue inscribed SANCTO DEO. In Tertullian's *De Anima* (34) is an account of the Simonian doctrine in practically the terms of Irenaeus in the second division of his chapter. Tertullian, then, plainly identifies the two Simons, and is the first extant writer to do this; but he does not mention any conflict of St. Peter with Simon at Rome.

Clement of Alexandria barely mentions the heresy-teacher, Simon, and his followers, the Simonians, and says nothing to indicate any opinion about the history or identity of the founder of the sect.

Hippolytus, whom Bishop Lightfoot¹ would identify with Gaius (less correctly, Caius), the Roman presbyter, carries us farther with a bound. In his *Refutation of all Heresies* he devotes much attention to Simon. Of course the only Simon to him is Simon Magus. That identification, once made, was certain to be continued. It suited the minds of men who were not troubled by critical doubts, and who apparently interpreted even Justin in accordance with their own ideas of innate fitness. Irenaeus and Tertullian, as will be remarked later, believed St. Peter to have laboured at Rome, but were not tempted, even by the story of the statue, to bring St. Peter and his old enemy face to face in the capital, as they had been placed in the East. The

¹ In his *S. Clement of Rome*, ii. 377 ff. The author also believed the *Refutation* to have been an early instead of a late work of Hippolytus, and to have antedated the books of Tertullian. But Bishop Lightfoot did not live to complete his argument on this point.

dramatic Hippolytus (he shows his taste for lively narrative elsewhere) was quick to seize this previously neglected opportunity (*Ref.* vi. 15). Simon Magus did come to Rome and contend there often with the Apostles, especially with St. Peter. (Here a part of the narrative is unfortunately missing.) The story concludes with telling how the heretic was in danger of conviction of fraud, and staved off the evil moment by professing his ability to rise again from the grave the third day after being buried alive.¹ Under his direction his disciples dug a grave and buried him therein—but he never rose again! This dénouement is more orthodox than aesthetically gratifying.

Of the detailed account by Hippolytus of Simon's philosophy we need not speak. It agrees in substance with that by Irenaeus, and in such a manner as to suggest to experts a common source. But one could not reasonably believe the picturesque historical details to have been invented as early as the time of Irenaeus. They smack too decidedly of the later day, when the pseudo-Clementines were deploying their forces, and teaching men to give history a thicker sugar-coating of imagination, especially in matters pertaining to Simon and St. Peter.

In the form given the Simon-myth by Hippolytus we have it practically full-blown; for not only are all its essential features assembled, but they begin to be decorated with wonder-stories. With this beginning of the painting-up process we may stop our examination. The florid expansion of the legend may be studied in the pseudo-Clementines and allied literature.² All the main details of the fable were accepted from the beginning of the third century. A simple and

¹ This suggests some possible knowledge among magicians at that day of the trick of suspension of vital processes alleged to be practised (but for longer periods and with better success) in India at the present time.

² A propos of one of these stories, a crotchety old praiser of the past growls that it is at least a comfort in these times to be assured on quasi-canonical authority that the first airship was contrived by devils, operated by one of their imps, and wrecked by divine interposition.

dignified putting of them may be read in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius. The poetic embellishments must be looked for elsewhere. Those to whom such things are not yet stale and outworn will find more surprising ideas than those of the *Clementines* and the apocryphal Acts themselves in the elucidations of them by Baur and his followers, who detected in them (and apparently justly) an Ebionite attempt to forward their own doctrines, including the making out of Simon Magus a portrait of St. Paul himself, as the great enemy of St. Peter.

It should be remembered that Eusebius (*H.E.* ii. 14 [63]) appears to think that St. Peter was divinely inspired to go to Rome that he might confront Simon Magus there, as he had before done in Palestine. The date of the Apostle's arrival in Rome Eusebius (who mentions the statue of Simon) assigns to the reign of Claudius. Evidently this, whatever its primary source, is in Eusebius an inference based on Justin, and nothing more. But on this dating by Eusebius was founded the later belief that St. Peter's episcopate in Rome began under Claudius. It was supposed to have lasted twenty-five years. The chronological difficulties in the matter need not be dwelt upon here. Of course Eusebius was no better authority for the date of St. Peter's advent in Rome than he was for the fact.

The gradual development of the myth is to be noted. There are no signs of it till the middle of the second century. Then the innocent mention by Justin of a Samaritan heresiarch, together with an interesting misreading and misinterpretation of an inscription under a statue at Rome, starts the avalanche. Hegesippus is silent. But Irenaeus seems to suggest the welding of Justin's story to that of Acts, and helps a little toward it. Tertullian cheerfully and clamorously carries out the smithy-work. And finally the Roman Hippolytus transfers the scene to Rome

(perhaps following therein a Clementine romancer), and ties the myth up with the already invented fable of St. Peter's residence there. And the whole thing is believed and repeated, sometimes with much embellishment, by every one thereafter. It becomes "a universally held tradition from antiquity," and is used in that alleged aspect to contribute verisimilitude to the equally artificial Petrine myth. Because we can see it shaping itself, and because it is so used, it has seemed worth while to spend these minutes upon it. We may now turn back to the main line of our review, and take up the writer of importance who came next after Justin.

Hegesippus was a Palestinian Jew who had been converted to Christianity (*Eus. H.E.* iv. 22 [184]). His five books of *Commentaries* (or *Memoirs*) were used by Eusebius, who has preserved for us a number of valuable excerpts from them. In *H.E.* iv. 8 [150], Eusebius appears to have misinterpreted a reference to Hadrian by Hegesippus as indicating that he flourished in Hadrian's time. He is also mentioned by Eusebius, both here and in iv. 11 [157], in the same breath with, but before, Justin; and Jerome accordingly definitely puts Justin after him (*De Vir. Ill.* 23). But, farther on, Eusebius clearly assigns Hegesippus to the reign of Antoninus Pius (iv. 21, 22 [181]). His *floruit* may be reasonably placed as about A.D. 150-180. Jerome says that Hegesippus set down in his *Commentaries* a full chronicle of ecclesiastical events from the Crucifixion to his own times. But Jerome may be reasonably suspected of elaborating the statement, after his not infrequent manner, entirely from the remark of Eusebius (*H.E.* iv. 8 [150]) that Hegesippus put together in simple style in his five books the plain tradition of the Apostolic doctrine. There is nothing in Jerome's writing to show that he had any knowledge of Hegesippus and his work other than what he found in Eusebius. And

there is nothing in the extant fragments of Hegesippus (all but one of them from Eusebius), or in references to him, to indicate that his *Commentaries* were anything like an ecclesiastical history. He was primarily interested (as might be expected at his time) in the confutation of heresies, and he investigated and recorded only a certain very limited class of historical events, and these only because he conceived them to have a very direct and practical bearing on his main theme. He was, indeed, the first of Christian writers after the Apostolic age to attempt to support theology by the appeal to history. So far forth he certainly deserves great credit, though it is perhaps not fair to rob Eusebius of his title as "the Father of Church History" in order to confer it upon Hegesippus. Hegesippus conceived the idea that orthodoxy could be defined as the doctrine universally and continuously held among all the Churches. He thus anticipated in some degree the Vincentian Rule. Perhaps he was partly inspired by Ignatius. Therefore, to determine what the Churches actually did hold, he was moved to make a long journey from his native Palestine as far as Rome, visiting the Churches all along the way, and questioning them straitly about the Faith as they held and taught it. He reports that "in each succession and in each city the doctrine is as the Law and the Prophets and the Lord proclaim it" (*ap. Eus. H.E. iv. 22 [182]*).

Hegesippus mentions the "succession," meaning by this the succession of bishops in each place. For holding, as we must suppose he did, the fully developed Eastern ideal of the episcopate, he believed the bishops were directly descended from the Apostles. Since the true doctrine was the Apostolic doctrine, and the bishops were the lineal successors of the Apostles, they must be the trustworthy guardians of the Christian deposit. Therefore the authority of the doctrine as taught in any Church was assured, if it could be

certified by a list of the Church's bishops in due order of succession from the Apostles themselves. Hence Hegesippus was especially careful to inquire from each Church that he visited about the list of its past bishops. He apparently found no difficulty in acquiring his desired information, until he arrived at Rome. He does not say that he found any difficulty there, but his language suggests that the members of the Roman Church were unable to show him at once a list of their bishops, because they had no such thing at command that covered the earlier days. After speaking of his visit to the Church of Corinth, which he found had remained fast in the true doctrine from the beginning down to the present time, that of Primus, then bishop in that city, Hegesippus writes:

"Finding myself in Rome, I compiled a list of the bishops as far as Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. Anicetus was succeeded by Soter, and after him came Eleutherus."¹

It would appear from this that Anicetus was the bishop in Rome when Hegesippus arrived there. The addition to the list of Soter and Eleutherus may indicate that Hegesippus remained in Rome till into the latter's reign;² but the manner in which he speaks in the very next sentence (quoted above) of the total result of his survey of the Churches, might rather indicate that before very long he returned to the East, and there

¹ *Ap. Eus. H.E. iv. 22 (182)* γενόμενος δὲ ἐν Ῥώμῃ, διαδοχὴν ἐποιήσαμην μέχρις Ἀνικητοῦ, οὗ διάκονος ἦν Ἐλευθέρος. καὶ παρὰ Ἀνικητοῦ διαδέχεται Σωτὴρ μεθ' οὗ Ἐλευθέρος. This is certainly the correct text and translation. But Rufinus arbitrarily shaped his translation (*cum autem uenisset Romam, permansi inibi donec Aniceto Soter et Soteri successisset Eleutherus*) after the interpretation of Eusebius rather than after the actual text of Hegesippus. Διαδοχὴν for διαδοχὴν is a modern emendation in the text as given by Eusebius, to fit the version of Rufinus. The strongest modern opponent of this view, one who would read διαδοχὴν for διαδοχὴν, is Harnack (*Gesch. d. altchr. Lit.* ii. 1, pp. 180 ff.).

² So Eusebius actually understood the matter, for in *H.E. iv. 11 (157)* he writes, καθ' οὗ [Ἀνικητοῦ] Ἡγησιππος ἰστορεῖ εἰσθῆναι ἐπιδημησάσαι τῇ Ῥώμῃ, παραμείναι τε αὐτῷ μέχρι τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς Ἐλευθέρου, and Jerome followed him (*De Vir. Ill. 22*), as of course did also Rufinus. But it is quite unnecessary to suppose that the text of Hegesippus that Eusebius had before him differed in any respect from that quoted above, which reads διαδοχὴν. Eusebius merely drew an inference from that concerning the length of residence of Hegesippus in Rome, which was unwarranted.

completed and published his *Commentaries*; and that the mention of the immediate successors of Anicetus, Soter and Eleutherus, was interpolated by him, or by some one else (perhaps only following Irenaeus), in after years into a copy of his work from which that used by Eusebius was derived. This surmise may find support in the fact that Epiphanius, who has clearly been copying from Hegesippus, yet carries the list of the Roman succession no further than Anicetus. Epiphanius apparently had before him a copy of the first edition of the *Commentaries* of Hegesippus, and not of the second, in which Soter and Eleutherus had been added to the list. If Hegesippus did not mention the later successors of Primus at Corinth, it was because he did not know who they were, or thought only the Church of Rome so important as to need the additional note.

Eusebius quoted the passage from Hegesippus because of its testimony to the continuity everywhere of the Apostolic doctrine. It is of especial interest to us for another reason. Hegesippus says that at Rome he compiled a list of the bishops of that city. He does not say that the Roman Church furnished him with its list. The fair implication is that they had no list to furnish, and Hegesippus made one up for them. This corresponds precisely to what the documents that have been previously examined would lead us to expect—if we approach the subject without the prepossessions that are due to later statements, and by the reiterations of the Roman Church have now become wellnigh universal. It was the list of the Roman episcopate as compiled by the interested visitor from the East that formed ultimately the "historical" foundation for the later pretensions of the Roman see. Hegesippus was from the East, where the monarchical episcopate probably came into being soon after the death of the Apostles. He could not readily conceive that any Church, even so far away

as Rome, could possibly have had any other system than that which he supposed to be primitive, and which had prevailed in the Churches with which he had been previously acquainted. Especially would he find any other history difficult to imagine, when once he had convinced himself that continuity of the episcopate and continuity of orthodox doctrine were essentially connected one with the other. The Roman Church was found by him to hold and teach the Apostolic doctrine; it had also at the present time a bishop like any other Church (we, of course, cannot determine just what his functions were in full detail, or whether they differed in kind or degree from those of the episcopate elsewhere); it must, therefore, have had bishops ever since its foundation, or at least since the death of the Apostle who in the earliest days had directed its infant steps. If the Roman Christians had no list of their bishops from the beginning, that was merely a defect of record and tradition which it was not too late to mend. Hegesippus would compile it for them, and thus bring them into line with their sister Churches in the East. That in the entire lack of documentary evidence, and of any oral tradition stretching far back beyond the memories of living men, he would have recourse to the interpretation of such Books as were generally accepted is of course inevitable. That he interpreted the Books with the help of a lively imagination is both certain and natural. Every Christian writer of those early centuries did precisely that same thing, and no one need now be shocked by it—unless possibly some expositor of the Puritan school, who believes not merely in the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture, but also in the plenary inspiration of his own favourite interpretations of Scripture, and perhaps also of all the other early Church writings that contain or intimate historical statements.

But how did the list run that Hegesippus compiled for his own use and that of his brethren? It has not

been preserved to our time, but it may be securely restored from the list given by Irenaeus.

In consideration of the important position held by Irenaeus among the early Church Fathers, it is somewhat remarkable that we know so little about his life. This little we get chiefly from Eusebius, who derived most of his scanty information from the works of Irenaeus himself. Irenaeus wrote and spoke Greek. He was a Christian from youth, if not from childhood, and his early residence was in or near Smyrna; for he tells us (*ap. Eus. H.E. v. 20* [238]) that as a young man he was an eager and devoted disciple of Polycarp. Irenaeus was accordingly born somewhere about A.D. 140, perhaps rather before than after that date. Gregory of Tours (538-595) says that he was martyred under Septimius Severus, but no earlier writer mentions his death. He appears first in history as a presbyter of the Church in Lyons, sent thence on a mission to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome (*Eus. H.E. v. 4* [214]). This must have been about A.D. 178, if the persecution of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne is correctly assigned to the year A.D. 177. To the martyred Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus himself afterward succeeded (*Eus. H.E. v. 5* [216]).

Irenaeus apparently profited by his visit to Rome. He thoroughly imbibed the spirit and teaching of the Church in the capital of the empire. It was to him (*Iren. Her. iii. 3. 2*) the Church to which, on account of its pre-eminent position (he perhaps has in mind not entirely its situation in the capital, but also its founding by the two great Apostles, on which he lays stress elsewhere), "every Church (that is, the faithful of every quarter) must turn," since here has surely been preserved the Apostolic doctrine in its purity.¹

¹ On this much-disputed passage see conveniently F. W. Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 19 ff., and the literature there referred to. If this passage in Irenaeus should be translated to the entire taste of Roman controversialists, it would still have the weight at best of the mere opinion of only one grateful provincial visitor, who had been impressed by what he had seen and heard in Rome; and

If Hegesippus did actually remain in Rome till into the episcopate of Eleutherus, he may have been there when Irenaeus arrived. But if he had departed for the East before that time, he had evidently left the result of his teaching behind him. The Roman Church had gladly accepted the list of its hierarchy that Hegesippus had compiled for it, and was proud to exhibit it to new-comers like Irenaeus. With the list the Church had apparently also accepted from the compiler his reasons why such a knowledge of the succession was of great importance for the confutation of heretics. With both list and reasons, as taught them by Hegesippus, the Roman Church equipped the receptive mind of Irenaeus: for in his great treatise against heresies (*Contra Haereses libri quinque* the Latin version calls it for brevity) he lays down in precisely the substance of Hegesippus the argument from the episcopal succession, and then proceeds to give the list of the Roman bishops from the Apostles, Sts. Peter and Paul, who "founded and built" the Church, down to Eleutherus, who, as Eusebius says (*H.E. v. 5 fin.*), was bishop at the time when Irenaeus was writing his treatise. We may therefore borrow the list from Irenaeus, and turn back with it to Hegesippus again.¹

Hegesippus had apparently been teaching as well as learning even on his way to Rome. Some result

even to him the necessity of "agreement with" the Roman Church (if we could possibly so understand the awkward ancient Latin version that alone represents for us the now lost but probably equally awkward Greek original of this passage) rests altogether on his conviction that thus far, because of the good fortune of its founding and history, it had doubtless learned truly and kept securely the orthodox faith. But even the enthusiastic Irenaeus could not certify to the perpetual infallibility of that Church or of its bishop, even as a witness to the truth; and he does not regard the Roman Church as the sole essential witness to, still less as the sole arbiter of, the faith, for he goes on to cite also in that same aspect the chief Churches of his native region, Smyrna and Ephesus.

¹ The list runs (*Iren. Her. iii. 3. 3*; cf. *Eus. H.E. v. 6* [217]): 1. Linus, 2. Anencletus, 3. Clemens, 4. Euaristus, 5. Alexander, 6. Xystus, 7. Telesphorus, 8. Hyginus, 9. Pius, 10. Anicetus, 11. Soter, 12. Eleutherus. Irenaeus does not attempt to specify dates in connection with the names. Whether Hegesippus did so or not is a disputed question. On general considerations I should think it unlikely that he cared to go so far as this.

of his visit to the Church of Corinth is apparent not very long after that occasion. The Church of Corinth showed its interested visitor from the East a noteworthy letter that had been sent it at some earlier time by the Church of Rome. This was indubitably the document we know as *1 Clement*. Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 16; iv. 22) merely reports the mention of the letter by Hegesippus, but does not quote his actual words. It is unsafe to infer from the ascription of the letter by Eusebius to Clement that he must have found this attribution in the *Commentaries* of Hegesippus, though he probably did so. - But Dionysius, bishop of Corinth not very long after the visit there of Hegesippus, in writing to the Church of Rome (perhaps about A.D. 170) definitely mentions the letter as read for instruction in the public services of his Church, and names Clement as its scribe (*ap. Eus. H.E.* iv. 23 [187]). It is not a rash guess that the Corinthians owed this suggestion of authorship to Hegesippus. He, of course, would get it by mere inference from the reference in the *Shepherd* of Hermas (*Vis.* ii. 4. 3) to Clement as the foreign secretary of the Roman Church. But a second reference of this same Dionysius is of more importance for our immediate purpose. In writing to the Church of Rome he reminds them that both their Church and his own owed their planting to the Apostles Peter and Paul, both of whom taught in Corinth and founded the Church there, and later proceeded to Italy and taught, and were martyred there at the same time (*ap. Eus. H.E.* ii. 25 *fin.*). This is the earliest circumstantial statement extant that St. Peter preached in Corinth and later in Rome, and was put to death there together with St. Paul. Dionysius probably owed much of this also to the conjectural restoration of history which Hegesippus was practising. For the belief that St. Peter had actually laboured in Corinth, Hegesippus doubtless rested on his faulty interpretation of the words of St. Paul in his letter to

the Corinthians, which have already been mentioned. The Corinthian Church may have so interpreted St. Paul's letter even before the visit of Hegesippus. But it is, for reasons laid down elsewhere, quite without proper basis to infer that the Corinthian Church had preserved from the time concerned any actual tradition of St. Peter's preaching in their city. At most they would have had only a traditional interpretation of St. Paul's words, and this would date back for its origin only to a time long after the letter had been received, when all knowledge of the circumstances of it had vanished. If, when we are plunged in the morass of second-century conjectural restorations of first-century Church history, we are to rescue ourselves by postulating (whenever it happens to suit our book) the existence of oral tradition or of Church "archives," we are simply in our desperation disregarding such rational canons of criticism as no writer of any authority whatever on other subjects than Church history would dream of rejecting.

But even if the Church of Corinth had adopted a traditional interpretation that led them to believe in St. Peter as one of their founders, it is very unlikely that they had any "traditions" concerning his later career. It is much more likely that they owed such conjectures to Hegesippus than that he adopted them from the Corinthians or from any one else. St. Peter had gone to Rome, laboured there like (if not with) St. Paul in establishing the Church, and died there as a martyr with his illustrious colleague. There is no previous declaration in extant literature of such events, but rather, a notable silence, where explicit reference might have been expected, if the facts were as claimed. On what could Hegesippus have based his conclusions of this sort? First and foremost, we may safely guess, on the interpretation of "Babylon" in St. Peter's First Epistle as meaning Rome. That apocalyptic interpretation would have been unnatural

Church
of
Corinth

(to my thinking, impossible) at the time the letter was written: a century later, when the Church was familiar with the Book of Revelation, it was most natural, especially when the investigator was eager to piece together such scattered intimations of history as he could find, and had ascertained from Acts and Romans that the Roman Church was already in existence long before St. Paul came to the city, and furthermore had convinced himself that St. Peter had preached as far to the West as Corinth, which was on the most frequented route between the East and Rome. I suspect that Hegesippus thought St. Peter's preaching in Corinth preceded that of St. Paul, and that the Apostle of the Circumcision thence proceeded to Rome and founded the Church there, before Claudius expelled the Jews from the city. Thus the mystery of the early beginnings of the Church in Rome would be satisfactorily cleared away, according to the investigator's mind, and the story agreeably linked up with that of Aquila and Priscilla, and thus also with St. Paul's letter to the Romans. The difficulties that we discover are altogether too refined to have appealed to a Hegesippus, or to any other Christian writer of that early date. Of course he would think it certain that the Church in the great capital of the Empire must have had an Apostolic founder, and thus fall no whit behind the Churches in far less important cities.

And if Babylon means Rome, then the utterances of 1 Clement and of Ignatius (for in this chronological order Hegesippus would indubitably place them) at once fall into line, and furnish sure evidence that St. Peter as well as St. Paul preached at Rome, and both Apostles suffered martyrdom there at substantially the same time. The earlier enigmas were thus happily solved, and the Roman Church gladly adopted the history thus made up for it; whereas up to this time it is very evident that there had been no tradition or record afloat that cast any light upon the beginnings

of the Church in Rome except what was set down in Acts and Romans, and none at all that connected St. Peter with Rome.

It is quite manifest from the statements in Irenaeus that Hegesippus (and Irenaeus, and therefore the Church in Rome at this time) had no thought of St. Peter any more than of St. Paul as actually the first bishop of Rome. They are supposed to be the founders of the Church and the appointers of its first bishop. That was precisely the state of things that generally attended the foundation of Apostolic Churches elsewhere.¹ The Apostles certainly exercised over the Churches a very high degree of authority. This power of ruling, along with that of ordaining and of instruction, was later inherited, according to accepted belief, by the bishops of the respective Churches. But the bishops of Apostolic times were officers appointed by the Apostles, and distinctly subordinate to them. Apostles exercised, to be sure, what was later called episcopal authority, and *episcopi* (or *presbyteri*, at first as a college in the local Church) exercised in the absence of the Apostles delegated Apostolic authority; but the absurd notion that one of the Twelve might actually have appointed himself to the lower office, and become properly and technically the bishop of a local Church, had evidently not been conceived in the times of Hegesippus and Irenaeus.² And throughout all con-

¹ But on the belief, doubtless of no early origin, that St. Peter was actually the first bishop of the Church of Antioch, see p. 277.

² In *Haer.* iii. 4. 3 the Latin version calls Hyginus the eighth bishop of Rome, though Eusebius (*H.E.* iv. 11), who alone preserves the Greek text here, makes Irenaeus call Hyginus the ninth. But the Latin version only a step farther on calls Anicetus the tenth bishop, and is thus consistent with itself, and with the original numbering as given in *Iren. Haer.* iii. 3. 3. The text in Eusebius had doubtless had "eighth" emended to "ninth," possibly to fit in with the fable unknown to Hegesippus and Irenaeus, that St. Peter was himself the first bishop. The same explanation applies to *Iren. Haer.* i. 27. 1, where the Greek text, preserved only in Eusebius (*loc. cit.*), calls Hyginus again the ninth bishop, but the Latin version (in the best tradition), the eighth. The two passages in Eusebius are close together, and this fact would suggest that some one having the list of the bishops indeed in mind, but from Irenaeus only the two adjacent excerpts in Eusebius before his eyes, had changed "eighth" to "ninth" in the manuscript of Eusebius (possibly only because the corrector was used to counting, after the Roman method, both end-terms in an ordinal

sideration of the list of early Roman bishops, we should not forget the primary argument against any possible authenticity of any such catalogue, that up to a time probably well into the second century (cf. specifically the negative evidence from Ignatius, Clement, and Hermas) there could not have been in Rome any such pre-eminence of a single cleric above his presbyterial brethren as the title of bishop implies in the only sense in which Hegesippus would understand it. The ability of Hegesippus to compile such a list where none had existed before is no proof at all that diocesan bishops had functioned in Rome from Apostolic times; it is merely an indication that Hegesippus had no better an understanding of earlier Church history, or of the critical functions properly appertaining to a historian, than had other zealous Christians of his day.

fable
To Hegesippus, then, and to Hegesippus only, is due the inception of the fable that made St. Peter a founder of the Church in Rome. Once introduced, the story won acceptance on all sides. There was no evident reason to doubt it. It had to displace no other tale. It neatly harmonised and united several otherwise disconnected if not conflicting statements. It assigned to the Church in the imperial capital a dignity of origin consonant with its political and social importance. It offended the sensibilities of no one, in Rome or elsewhere; for it was not for a very long time that it was made the basis of any claim for the Roman Church of a pre-eminence of authority over other Churches. Writers of the Roman obedience at the present time are wont to lay great stress upon

series), and from his text all our manuscripts of Eusebius are derived. But against this is the stubborn fact that Cyprian (*Ep.* 74) also called Hyginus the ninth bishop; so that either Cyprian made independently the same error as the corrector of Eusebius, or it had been introduced into the text of Irenaeus himself before Cyprian's time, and had even contaminated some of the manuscripts of the Latin version. The later copied instance in Epiphanius may be disregarded. It is probably due to mere chance that only Hyginus, and he only in these places, has suffered from this numerical emendation.

the fact of the universal acceptance of the belief in ancient times. Why should it not have been accepted then? There was nothing to be alleged against it, and in the not at all strange lack of historical traditions or records of local Church events in the early days, it was only one of fifty conjectural restorations that the Church in general had not the slightest objection to welcome and adopt on the authority of practically any writer. I suppose there never was an age when the mere written word had more and swifter influence in the Christian communities in historical matters, where no test could be applied or thought of, but where, so far as it touched upon faith and order, there could be no suspicion of its orthodox tendencies. Even the work of the Clementine romancers, heterodox in intent and purpose though some at least of it may now seem to us, was widely accepted among orthodox Christians, and the "historical" inventions in it left their trace in Catholic writings from the late second century onward, and apparently have their hold still on writers of the present day, even on some who are not in the communion of the Roman Church. On this very point of the life of St. Peter in Rome, I find a recent Anglican writer asserting warmly that it is not a tradition but a fact vouched for by competent historical evidence; and among other witnesses he goes on to cite Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hegesippus, Dionysius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and declares that the earlier of these writers must have been well acquainted with the traditions and archives of the Church in Rome. "Traditions and archives" again, and these exercising so little influence on the fortunate writers! But it is truly an imposing list of great names; yet what is the evidential value of it, when we find no plain indication of the "fact" in either Clement or Ignatius, and from Hegesippus onward we are able clearly to discern each man copying from his predecessor, and often adding a

bit of detail of his own to the story as he received it? It is at most seldom that modern writers of repute on other subjects than Church history deal with authorities in this antiquated manner. It was innocent and pardonable once; it is certainly reprehensible now. Statements that are affirmed on the basis of such postulates as these mythical oral traditions and written archives, which no ancient writer cites or intimates as in existence from the times concerned, might better be called not historical facts but historical artifacts.

Hegesippus, then, settled once for all throughout antiquity the belief that St. Peter preached in Rome, and shared with St. Paul in the final organisation of the Church there. The Church of Rome gratefully adopted his doctrine on this point. Dionysius and Irenaeus echoed it. But when we pass on to Tertullian, who, of course, accepted as a fact the residence and death of St. Peter in Rome, we find an addition to the story. Tertullian says plainly (*Praescr. Her.* 36; *Scorp.* 15) that Sts. Peter and Paul suffered death in Rome under Nero, the former by crucifixion, the latter by the sword. Here we have for the first time the general period and the specific manner of the death of the two Apostles affirmed. One might think that Tertullian was reclining here upon the belief in his own time extant in the Church of Rome. But in consideration of the way in which he treats historical items elsewhere, and in particular of his appeal here to the Lives of the Caesars (other references make it certain that he means the work of Suetonius), as witness that Nero was the first persecutor of the Church, I am inclined to think that at least in considerable measure he is constructing inferences. The two Apostles had already been understood to have suffered death in Rome at about the same time, and, as the natural, though unwarranted, interpretation of Clement indicated, in the course of a formidable persecution. His reading of Suetonius led Tertullian to assign the

event confidently to the reign of Nero. As to the precise manner of death, Tertullian was a Roman lawyer; he knew that St. Peter, as an alien, would naturally be crucified; he perhaps also had in mind an interpretation of the prophecies concerning St. Peter in St. John's Gospel (xiii. 36; xxi. 18 ff.); St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, would naturally be beheaded. If Tertullian had only read not merely the brief mention in Suetonius, but also the vivid description of the Christian sufferers at Rome under Nero as given in the *Annals* of Tacitus, I imagine our "tradition" of the mode of St. Peter's death would not have referred to simple crucifixion. Tertullian's account, as might be expected, was universally received. It became "a unanimous and uncontested ancient tradition."

Origen, some half a century later, of course accepts everything that has gone before, but adds another picturesque detail concerning the crucifixion of St. Peter (*ap. Eus. H.E.* iii. 1 [88]): his cross was, at his own request, planted head downward. Jerome (*De Vir. Ill.* 1) takes the statement from Eusebius, and adds the interpretation (possibly from the same source as that followed by Origen) that the Apostle said he was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. Whence Origen derived his detail, whether from his own imagination or from some other report, is unknown. The latter alternative seems more probable, since Origen must have been acquainted with much apocryphal literature of the cycle of Petrine myths. Even such a manner of crucifixion appears not to be mentioned by pagan writers.¹ But Eusebius (*H.E.* viii. 8 [385]) speaks of Egyptian martyrs (date not specified) as suffering thus, though from his state-

¹ The passage in Seneca (*Cons. ad Marc.* 20. 3), not infrequently cited as evidence that criminals were on occasion crucified head downward, is not properly susceptible of such interpretation. Seneca, like other writers, uses *crucis* as the generic term for punishments akin to crucifixion. The three varieties which he mentions in this sentence are, hanging by the feet (*capite conuersos in terram suspendere*), impalement (*alii per obscoena stipitem egerunt*), and crucifixion proper (*alii brachia patibulo explicuerunt*).

ment that they, apparently in contrast to those mentioned by him as crucified in the ordinary manner, died from ultimate starvation, it is possible that they were hung up by the feet and left to die, in place of being actually nailed to a cross. Also a late tract on the work and death of the Twelve Apostles falsely ascribed to Hippolytus mentions not merely St. Peter but also Sts. Philip and Bartholomew as suffering in this manner. But in the matter of St. Peter the later writer was clearly copying Origen. Of course, the account in Origen speedily won universal credence, and became "a unanimous ancient tradition."

But, meanwhile, another witness to the reality of St. Peter's residence and death in Rome appeared in the person of Gaius (or Caius), a "Roman presbyter," who is quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* ii. 25 [84]). Bishop Lightfoot would identify him with Hippolytus, later called bishop of Porto. But whether Gaius or, more truly, Hippolytus, modern Roman controversialists are wont to appeal to him triumphantly as giving sure testimony (somewhere about A.D. 210 or later) in support of what they call the fact that both St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred in Rome, and fortifying it by ocular evidence. Gaius was engaged in the popular occupation of arguing against a heretic. In one of the most delightful of Mr. Belloc's tales, the Devil cites on his side in a certain contention "all the historians, and all the scientists, all the universities, all the . . .," and St. Charles Borromeo calmly counters by citing against them all—the Pope. Similarly Gaius dealt with his poor heretic, who had apparently put forward in support of his doctrine (quite after the manner of Hegesippus) the fact that the graves of Philip and his four daughters could even then be seen in Hierapolis in Asia. Gaius replies by hospitably inviting his opponent to come from the East to Rome and be convinced. "I can show," he writes, "the trophies [*τρόπαια* in the Greek of Eusebius] of the

Apostles. If you will go to the Vatican, or to the Ostian road, you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church." It is not certain what Gaius meant by "trophies." The Roman controversialists (and many others) naturally take it to mean "tombs," partly no doubt because Proclus, the heretic aforesaid, had spoken of the burial-places of Philip and his four daughters, but even more because that understanding fits in with the present exhibition of structures believed to cover the tombs of the respective Apostles in the places indicated. But to the Roman a *tropaeum* commonly meant a memorial, primarily of armour hung on a sort of cross, erected on the site of a victory.¹ There is nothing but the later assignment of the tombs of the Apostles to interfere with the more natural understanding that the trophies of Gaius denoted the places where the Apostles were martyred rather than their tombs. But whether we take the trophies to be marks of the places of execution or of burial makes little difference for the purposes of our present discussion.

It would appear to the classicist no proof at all of the alleged fact in that, a century and a half thereafter, when the late statement that the Apostles had been martyred in Rome had been widely disseminated and received, pious Romans should be found attaching the story to some particular localities. That is a commonplace in the perpetuation of historical myths everywhere and in all ages, even down to our own more critical days. The pagan city of Rome was full of such things.² Similar identifications occur by the

¹ Among Christian writers, cf. for this definition Tertullian, *Apol.* 16; *Ad Nat.* 12.

² For a single example, the story that the gods Castor and Pollux rode into Rome after the battle of Lake Regillus and announced the victory, is of hoary antiquity. In proof of it the Romans pointed to the Fountain of Juturna as the place where they bathed and watered their weary horses. The spring still flows, as it did in ancient times. It may be seen to-day. But the assignment of the place and the marking of it by memorials that yet remain, though in ruin, is no witness to the truth of the circumstantial narrative. That it was "a unanimous and uncontested ancient tradition" is nothing to the point.

score in early Christian literature and history. The only difference between them and this particular one is that the others are not concerned with any tale that in modern days is regarded as of any importance whatever. Therefore they are cheerfully relegated by all critics to the limbo of pure myths. But this one narrative concerns the two greatest of all the Apostles, and came to be of the utmost importance as used to support the claim of the Roman Church to pre-eminence over all others. Therefore the great attention paid to it. But that does not necessarily differentiate it in point of truth from the other examples of its class that are now regarded as fabrications.

But it is reasonable to require of a doubter his explanation of the cause why these particular localities were pitched upon as the sites of the death (or burial, or both) of the two Apostles. The answer is easy to give. Before Gaius wrote, the belief had already been promulgated and established that Sts. Peter and Paul had suffered the death of martyrs in Rome, and in the reign of Nero. Naturally enough the occasion of Nero's persecution of Christians after the Great Fire was taken to be the time of these martyrdoms also. The Vatican gardens of Nero were known to be the place of his crucifixion of Christians. To that locality was accordingly assigned the crucifixion of St. Peter. But the newly formed "tradition" stated that St. Paul, a Roman citizen and in military ward, was beheaded. A place outside the walls of Rome on the Ostian road was taken to be the site of his death, probably because it was known to be the ordinary place for such executions at the time when the story gained this local colour.

It is not impossible that in the time of Nero friends or relatives of executed criminals might be granted permission to retrieve their bodies and bury them. To be sure, earlier Roman procedure had regarded the deprivation of the right of burial as part of the capital

penalty; but the growth of humane feeling was now leading to a relaxation of this severity, though instances of the stricter primitive usage can be cited from the first century after Christ. Ulpian (*Dig.* xlviii. 24) remarks that in his day the burial of such bodies, or, in case of executions by burning, of collected bones and ashes, was not permitted unless by consent asked and granted, and this consent was sometimes refused, especially in the case of persons executed for treason. But he says that Augustus declared in the tenth book of his autobiography that he had never denied burial under such circumstances; and Ulpian gives his own judgement that in no such cases is burial to be refused. Paulus (*ibid.*) says simply that bodies of executed criminals are to be handed over to any one who asks them for burial. There is no serious trouble on this score with the belief that the bodies of the Apostles were recovered by their Christian brethren and duly entombed. But that theoretical possibility, of course, contributes no evidence at all for the truth of the series of alleged facts.

From the time of Gaius onward, the belief that the actual locality in Rome of the graves of the two great Apostles was known and identified in each case beyond a doubt, was universally accepted. What reason was there for raising any question about it? The bodies were said to have been disinterred in the second century and conveyed for greater security to the catacombs, where they remained for a number of years, though it was also believed that they were later returned to their original resting-places. But the history of these matters, which is somewhat involved, need not be considered here. It is enough to point out that from the early part of the third century the ill-founded belief that the Church of Rome knew and guarded the burial-places of its Apostolic founders was accepted, and became "a unanimous ancient tradition." Yet the assertion of Gaius after a dead silence of a

century and a half from the alleged events (so far as extant literature is concerned), made at a time when the possession of Apostolic tombs had come to be regarded as evidence of the possession of Apostolic doctrine, is testimony of no value whatsoever for the identity of the localities or the reality of the events alleged to be thus commemorated.

It will be convenient to mention here two other documents that have been supposed to bear witness to the early existence of the story of St. Peter's residence and death in Rome, and so to its truth.

The *Ascension of Isaiah* is a Jewish apocalypsis to which Christian additions have been made. In one of these later portions (iv. 2, 3) it is prophesied that in the last days a certain great spirit of evil, Beliar, "the king of this world," will descend to earth as Antichrist. He is to come,

"in the likeness of a lawless king, slayer of his mother: who himself, this king, will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the Beloved shall plant, and one of the Twelve will be given over into his hands."

In the phrase τῶν δώδεκα εἰς, the last word is indeed a conjectural addition of Professor Charles in a space in the Greek text of three missing letters, but the emendation is very probably right; the verb in the singular certainly appears to preclude δῶα, and it is doubtful in any case whether St. Paul would be reckoned among The Twelve. The phrasing in the other ancient versions of the *Ascension* (the Greek is doubtless the original), though not precisely the same as this, is not in disaccord with it.

The lawless king who slew his mother and shall persecute the Church is certainly Nero, the reference being to the popular belief that Nero was not really dead, but would return, resume his throne, and take vengeance on his enemies. The figure of Nero as Antichrist is familiar in other apocalypses (Sibyllines) as well as perhaps in the Book of Revelation. The one

of the Twelve who is to be delivered into his hands is generally understood to mean St. Peter, and this is probably the true interpretation, in spite of the incongruous fact that Beliar-Nero is to return to earth in "the last days" before the second coming of Christ, and this new incarnation of Nero presumes that the real Nero finished his reign at some time in the past. We must at least assume that the seer confuses the actual reign of Nero with the prophesied reign of Beliar in the form of Nero: for what one of the Twelve could survive till this future reign of Antichrist, unless we are to imagine embodied here an allusion to some fantastic form of the legend that St. John was not to die before the second coming of his Master? But, assumed that the reference is to the past execution of St. Peter, the only question of importance at the present moment is concerned with the date of composition of this part of the Christian insertion into the *Ascension*.¹ If the date is, as Dr. Charles would have it, between A.D. 88 and 100, there would be in this passage of the *Ascension* a quasi-certification that the belief about St. Peter's death was held within a short period after the alleged event, and therefore very much earlier than the tracing of the development of the story through other documents would lead us to believe. But the arguments advanced for assigning this part of the *Ascension* to so early a time appear to rest mainly on the idea that the passage must have been written while the popular belief that Nero would return was yet active, and that this must have died away before the end of the first century.² But when the idea had once been taken

¹ See, among other writings, R. H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (critical edition of the text, translation, and commentary); Zeller, "Der Märtyrertod des Petrus in der Ascension Jesaiaes," in *Zeits. f. wiss. Theol.* xxxix. (1896), pp. 558 ff.; Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchr. Litt.* ii. 1, pp. 573 ff. The Greek text of a considerable fragment of the *Ascension* was discovered on a papyrus manuscript in Egypt, and first published by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt in 1900 (*The Amherst Papyri*, Part I.).

² Professor Carl Clemen (in *Zeits. f. wiss. Theol.* xxxviii. (1896), pp. 388 ff.) would even ascribe this passage of the *Ascension* to A.D. 64-68. Professor Harnack,

into apocalyptic literature, first Jewish and then Christian, it is certainly not necessary or reasonable to suppose that any dateless document in which it is embodied must be no later in composition than the period of those writings that first contained it. We may assign to the wandering treatise such a date as other circumstances appear to recommend, and these certainly point to a time no earlier than the very end of the second or the early part of the third century.¹ At that time the story that St. Peter suffered death under Nero had been accepted. The date of the *Ascension*, therefore, as thus assigned, does not interfere at all with the otherwise evident second-century origin and development of the belief in St. Peter's residence and death in Rome.²

The other document referred to above is the sometime popular treatise known generally as the *Preaching of Peter* (*κήρυγμα Πέτρου*). With regard to this book one may read in the work of a recent Anglican writer as follows:

"One of these apocryphal documents we have in a very early form—the Ebionite 'Preaching of Peter'—which was produced in the first decade of the second century; as a proof of its early date it may be mentioned that it was used by Heracleon in Hadrian's time. The work bears on the face of

on the other hand (*loc. cit.*), holds that though the Christian addition of the *Ascension of Isaiah* to the earlier Jewish *Martyrdom of Isaiah* may with some probability be assigned to the second century, the apocalyptic vision (in which belongs the passage with which we are here concerned) contains no indications that justify the attribution of it to so early a date, though it must have been inserted in the compound document by the middle of the third century, since it was used in the Vercelli *Actus Petri cum Simone*, which was written at the latest about this time.

¹ Note such things as the Gnostic symptoms; the probable exclusion of St. Paul from the number of the Apostles (the belief that he suffered martyrdom under Nero is precisely as early as the same belief about St. Peter: why are not two mentioned instead of one? unless we have here an Ebionite trace); the extreme prevalence of heresies; the existence of those who claim to be God (cf. the Simon-Magus myth); the apparently recognised differentiation between presbyter and bishop (iii. 27, 29); and the general resemblance in tone to the pseudo-Clementines.

² If it were necessary otherwise to attribute a much earlier date to this passage of the *Ascension*, it might yet be possible that in the revamping to which the document in its present form has apparently been subjected, this reference to "one of The Twelve" was added in accordance with that later belief.

it testimony to the fact that Peter did labour and preach in Rome, for it was written at a time when some of those who actually saw and heard him may have been still alive."¹

I was at first utterly at a loss to divine on what the author could have founded these surprising statements. Then I remembered that he frequently cites Comm. Rodolfo Lanciani as an inerrant authority, not merely on facts of archaeological discovery, but also on the deductions from and amplifications of such facts. I therefore turned to Lanciani's *Pagan and Christian Rome*, and found there (p. 124), sentence for sentence and fact for fact, if not precisely word for word, what Mr. Edmundson had later set down. Comm. Lanciani was manifestly Mr. Edmundson's chosen source for these critical judgements of early Christian literature. It appears likely that Comm. Lanciani (and therefore also Mr. Edmundson) never could have examined the extant fragments on which he based his declarations and inferences.

The treatise itself is not in existence as a whole. We have from it probably only ten short fragments, preserved almost solely in the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria.² They are of theological (apparently apologetic) content. They do not appear to have anything Ebionite about them, but quite the contrary. One of them is strongly anti-Jewish. So far are they from assuming, or being based on, the existence of a belief in the labours of St. Peter at Rome, that there is no intimation in them that looks in the direction of any local origin, or suggests anything about the circumstances of the preacher. They are as barren in that respect as the definitions in a dictionary. Heracleon may have used the *κήρυγμα*; Origen says he did (*Comm. in Ioh.* xiii. 17); but probably no competent scholar would now assign Heracleon to

¹ George Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century*, pp. 54 f.

² For text and discussion see Ernst von Dobschütz, *Das Kerygma Petri*, in the Gebhardt-Harnack *Texte und Untersuchungen*, xi. 1 (1894), pp. 1-162.

the age of Hadrian, an error that may have had its starting-point in a fantastic story by Prædestinatus (*Haer.* xvi.) that connected Heracleon with the time when Alexander was bishop of Rome, and therefore with the early second century. Whence Lanciani got his strange notions, I cannot tell; but probably ultimately through some one's confusion of the *Preaching of Peter* with some other pseudo-Petrine book that properly belonged in the general family of the false *Clementines*, and was accordingly of a much later date than the *Preaching*. At all events, we may drop the *Preaching of Peter* from our further consideration, as offering no contribution toward the settlement of the question whether there is anywhere in existence any valid historical evidence that St. Peter ever visited Rome.

As regards the *Clementines* themselves, it may be of interest to note that neither *Homilies* nor *Recognitions* (the scene of both is laid entirely in the East) contains more than the scantiest and most incidental intimation of any supposed connection between St. Peter and Rome. There is one reference only in each treatise: *Hom.* i. 16 μεταλαμβάνων τῶν τῆς ἀληθείας λόγων ὧν κατὰ πόλιν ποιείσθαι μέλλω, μέχρι Ῥώμης αὐτῆς; *Recogn.* i. 74 quæ uero supersunt audies, usquequaque Deo fauente perueniatur ad ipsam, quo iter nostrum dirigendum credimus, urbem Romam. Even these have the aspect of later sewed-on patches. But in the *Letter of Clement to St. James* of Jerusalem, St. Peter shortly before his death appoints Clement as his successor, definitely makes him bishop, installs him in his own "chair of discourse," and gives him expressly his own power of binding and loosing. In this tract St. Peter cannot have been regarded as anything other, one would think, than the actual bishop of Rome. And here, or in some similar narrative, we probably have the starting-point of the later developed belief that St. Peter was not merely the first and actual bishop of Rome, but

passed on to his successors in that see the divine authority vested in him to rule and instruct the universal Church. It is not, one would think, a historical source to which the modern adherents of the belief concerned could point with entirely complacent satisfaction.

Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* took for his main source in the matter of the Roman episcopal succession Irenæus. Accordingly for Eusebius Sts. Peter and Paul were the founders of the Church of Rome, and Linus was the first bishop after their martyrdom (*H.E.* iii. 2), or, as Eusebius says a bit later, the first after Peter (iii. 4). Twelve years thereafter Linus passed on the episcopate to Anencletus (iii. 13), and he, twelve years later yet, to Clemens (iii. 15). And so, from passage to passage, each in its appropriate place, the catalogue of Roman bishops goes on, according to the list in Irenæus, which Eusebius later transcribes substantially in full (v. 6). In one place (iii. 4) Clement is called plainly the third bishop of Rome, without any express reference to the starting-point of the series. It is evident that Eusebius, like Irenæus, did not regard St. Peter as the first bishop of Rome. But he says that in the days of Claudius, Simon Magus (whom Eusebius supposes he is following Irenæus in identifying with the Simon treated of by Justin) came to Rome, and in the same reign divine Providence directed Peter thither to combat the heresiarch (*H.E.* ii. 14); and in Rome both Peter and Paul suffered death under Nero, the former being crucified, the latter beheaded (ii. 25).

But the Eusebian *Chronicles* relate a story differing from this in one important detail. Syncellus, whose close dependence on Eusebius is well known, says merely (and perhaps may be understood to be giving therein all that he found in the *Chronicles*) that "Peter, the chief [of the Apostles], founded the first Church in Antioch, and then departed to Rome to preach the

Gospel; and he, after the Church in Antioch, first presided over (πρῶτος πρόεστη) the Church in Rome until his death" (627. 7). But the Latin version made by Jerome says, "The Apostle Peter, when he had first founded the Church of Antioch, is sent to Rome, where, preaching the Gospel, he continues as bishop of that city (*eiusdem urbis episcopus perseuerat*) twenty-five years." The Armenian version (I must trust herein a Latin translation of it) differs from the Hieronymian in the number of years, giving twenty instead of twenty-five, but otherwise agrees (*com-moratur illic antistes ecclesiae*).¹ In his *De Viris Illustribus* (c. 1), Jerome says essentially the same thing as in the *Chronicles*: Simon Peter, after his episcopate in Antioch (*post episcopatum Antiochensis ecclesiae*), and his preaching to the Dispersion in the provinces mentioned in the address of his First Epistle, "proceeds to Rome in the second year of Claudius to combat Simon Magus, and there for twenty-five years filled the sacerdotal chair (*cathedram sacerdotalem tenuit*) up to Nero's last year, that is, his fourteenth": by Nero he was crucified head downward.

This is the first clear enunciation in extant Catholic literature (I exclude, though the ancients did not, the Clementine stories as Ebionite) that St. Peter had been the first bishop of Rome.

The *Chronicles* of Eusebius are judged to have been written only a year or so before his *Ecclesiastical History*, the former in A.D. 324, the latter in 325. It is very difficult to believe that he would make such a definite statement about a Roman episcopate of St. Peter in one year, and in the very next go calmly back, without another word, to the following of Irenaeus and the forms of statement that not merely ignore but implicitly deny the existence of such an episcopate.

¹ The discrepancy between the two versions regarding the year of Claudius to which the arrival of St. Peter in Rome is assigned is of no importance for our present discussion; and all the other chronological questions concerning the life and death of the two Apostles in Rome may also be disregarded here.

Nor would it be much easier to explain the contradiction, if we could believe the *Chronicles* to have been composed after the *History* instead of before it. A year would appear to be too short a time in which to effect the conversion in some unaccountable manner of the experienced historian from a denial of to a belief in the episcopate of St. Peter at Rome. One might rather be inclined to think that Syncellus did not omit from his report of Eusebius, or modify, the statement that St. Peter was actual bishop of Rome, but simply did not find it in the *Chronicles*; and that the insertion was made by Jerome in his version on his own responsibility, and this modification affected the Armenian version, or perhaps rather the vanished Syriac translation, which is supposed to have been the immediate source of the Armenian.

A reason why Jerome should thus alter the statement of Eusebius is readily found. Eusebius was of the East; Jerome, though born in Dalmatia, was baptized at Rome, and became an ardent member of the Church of that city. The warmth of his devotion to its bishop, Damasus, and the flaming vigour of his conviction that whoever is out of communion with Rome is out of the Ark of Safety, off the Petrine Rock on which Christ founded His Church, may be seen in a letter that he wrote to Damasus from the East, apparently in A.D. 375 (*Ep. 15 ad Damasum*, in Migne *Patrol. Lat.* xxii. 356). Jerome then and thereafter was a convinced and zealous Romanist, and it was precisely this Damasus, made Patriarch of the West by a purely political appointment, who was the leader in the new forward movement in behalf of the aggrandisement of authority of the see of Rome, which reached its culmination and perfection of claim in the fifth-century pontificate of Leo.

As remarked in the preceding chapter, the Papacy (if we may use that later name for it) was planning a great and far-reaching campaign in behalf of universal

sovereignty. It had numbers and influence as the see in the old capital of the empire. It was believed to have been founded by the two greatest of the Apostles. It was the only Apostolic see of the West. Its bishop, left alone in his glory by the removal of the imperial residence, was pre-eminently the most important social, if not also political, personage of the western world. His authority had been greatly increased by the favour of Valentinian and Gratian. But in the eye of other Churches all this gave him ecclesiastically at most only a precedence of honour. Pretension to any other sort of pre-eminence in the case of his predecessors had been more than once met by plain snubs. Over against the sole Patriarch of the West stood the united Patriarchs of the East, constituted such by canonical and not purely political authority.

Moreover, Rome was declining, Constantinople growing: Italy, left practically defenceless, was threatened with irruptions of destructive barbarians: the prestige of the old capital might be seriously compromised by these new political conditions, and the size and influence of the Roman Church correspondingly reduced thereby. No one could tell what the future might bring forth in the way of untoward circumstances. If the Roman bishop would establish permanently his desired dominion over East and West alike, it must be managed by transferring his claim to authority from a political and material to a purely spiritual basis. The former was already endangered, and might pass away; the latter would be enduring. As the canonical successor to the episcopate of St. Peter, on whom Christ declared that he would build his Church (for this interpretation was essential to the claim), and to whom he had committed the power of the Keys, the Roman bishop might hope in time, by patience and persistent effort, to win the victory for his see, and to establish securely a dominance hitherto unknown to the Church. The devolution from

bishop to succeeding bishop of the ordinary episcopal powers of teaching and ruling, after the analogy of the devolution of property rights from decedent to heir, had been recognised in the Church from Apostolic times. But this ordinary episcopate was held *in solidum*. It would be a better foundation for the claim of the devolution upon the occupants of the Roman see of unique powers vested in St. Peter as universal bishop, if he could be regarded as actually himself the first bishop of Rome, and conveying this extraordinary authority *extra urbem* to his lineal successors in that see, precisely as they inherited, each from his predecessor, the ordinary episcopal jurisdiction *intra urbem*.

In some such guise as this, we may not unreasonably imagine, the plans for the future shaped themselves in the minds of Damasus and his successors. The see of Rome was accordingly very glad to accept and officially adopt the pseudo-historical statements already noted as existing in the alleged letter of Clement, bishop of Rome, to James the Just, bishop of Jerusalem. They were probably found also in other apocryphal documents. No aspersions should be cast on the sincerity of the Roman ecclesiastics in their espousal of this view of the early history of their Church. An action may be politic without being insincere; and in general the early Church, after its interest in matters of its own history was once aroused, gladly accepted "historical" items from almost any source, though it continued to scan new doctrinal statements with a jealous and discriminating eye.

In an atmosphere of this sort Jerome found himself at Rome. He was a communicant in that Church, a friend and eager partisan of its bishop. The statement that St. Peter had been actually the first bishop of Rome would naturally appeal to him as being of so great importance that it should be added to the meagre and vague item in the *Chronicles* that he was translating

ino Latin to make the treatise more available for the use of the Western Church, which had now forgotten its Greek.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the manner in which this newly espoused, if not newly invented, belief was disseminated, or the consequences that flowed from it. It is enough to say that from the latter half of the fourth century it was the official belief of the Roman Church, and has so continued to the present day. The Eastern Churches ended with rejecting and condemning not merely it and all the doctrine founded upon it, but even the earlier and comparatively innocuous, though equally unsubstantiated, claim that St. Peter preached in Rome, and was a co-founder with St. Paul of the Roman Church.

The end of the present task has thus been reached. The late (and perfectly ingenuous) origin of the belief that connected St. Peter with Rome has been pointed out, along with the gradual accretion thereto of additional details, more of them the longer the time that had elapsed since the alleged events concerned. The story bears every mark of a myth. It is entirely lacking in support by historical evidence. The only reason why it has not been universally rejected by all competent scholars except those who are bound on their allegiance to accept and support it, is merely that it has come to be a doctrine so tremendously imposing by the age-long repetition of millions of voices, and by the grandeur of the structure that has been erected upon it. On it the Church of Rome regards herself as founded. Yet the historical base is not rock, but incoherent sand.

But while he is bound by the evidence to reject absolutely the historicity of St. Peter's mission in Rome, the classicist may yet, if he be also a Catholic Christian, pray with all his heart:

Deus Misericors, qui per Iesum Christum, filium tuum,

beato Petro, apostolo tuo, multa gratiae concessisti insignia, et ei diligentissime praecepisti ut oves tuas pasceret: Dignare, quaesumus, nobis indignissimis Spiritus Sancti illuminationem dare, ut in apostolicae confessionis petra stabiliti, nos cum illo coronam gloriae sempiternam accipiamus: Per Iesum Christum, Dominum nostrum. Amen.

