

## BOOK II.

### THE TENETS OF MONTANISM.

#### § 1. Materials.

THE historical student who has pledged himself to carry no preconceived ideas with him into his investigations, contends with one especial difficulty which, in the case of Montanism, can hardly be exaggerated. Recognising very soon that the accounts of the heresiologists afford but little help, owing to their fragmentary and often contradictory character, and that therefore it is from Tertullian's writings almost alone that his conclusions must be drawn, he finds himself in danger of entering a vicious circle. For he has first to decide which books of Tertullian's are Montanistic, and then to examine the charges of the adversaries by this self-made criterion. The dangers which may attend the course are only too obvious; accordingly the very strictest care is necessary in establishing this preliminary criterion. Now, by confining ourselves to the employment of the following Canon, the work seems susceptible of due performance: "Those opinions shall alone be deemed Montanistic which are asserted to be such by one or more of the ecclesiastical writers, and expressly admitted by Tertullian." It need hardly be said that our investigations will need to extend considerably beyond this tether afterwards, but not until a sufficient foundation has been laid in the ground of undoubted facts.

One of the soberest of German critics pointed out,

56

many years ago, the danger of confounding individual opinions of Tertullian with the general creed of Montanism<sup>1</sup>. But his caution, if carried out literally in practice, would prevent us absolutely from using our materials. On the contrary, a candid comparison of the passages where Tertullian makes especial reference to the inspiration from the Paraclete, with the statements in other writers, leads us to the conclusion, as Schwegler observed, "that Tertullian made no radical alteration whatsoever in the principles he accepted." That his strong individuality colours the outlines, and that his fiery African temperament grasps certain forms of reasoning differently from the dreamy and ecstatic Phrygians; this is inevitable. But the writer who has always in his mind the double ideal - the ancient as opposed to the innovations of heresy, and the spiritual as hostile to the carnal and external - would be under special restraints, both as regards the matter and the form of his utterances<sup>2</sup>. And once admitting him as witness, and, if any prefer it, counsel in the cause, no one can think that Montanism runs

---

<sup>1</sup> "Sahr gewöhnlich hat man Meinungen des Tertullian dem Montanismus zugeachrieben, und damit sowohl die Beurthailung von diesem, als von Tertullians Schriften erschwert. Es durfte diess selbst de nicht geschehen, wenn Tertullian in montanistischen Formeln redet." Baumgarten-Crusius, *Dogmengesch.* I. 179. [And see Schweglar, p. 7 ff.]

<sup>2</sup> Most students of Tertullian's writings will, I think, have been struck by the fact that he is never less fiery and *exalé* than when speaking of Montanistic tenets and revelations. Take, for instance, the strongest of the anti-Psychic writings, as the *De Monogamia*, *De Pudicitia*, on *De Jejuniis*, and note how much less violent is the tone than when he is 'defending common Catholic truths against Praxaas or the Valentinians. It might be said that in the latter case he spoke from deeper-rooted convictions: I should draw a totally opposite conclusion.

danger of condemnation because there are so many voices on the other side<sup>3</sup>. Such a champion is indeed a host in himself:

“Si Pergama dextra  
Defandi possent, etiam hac defense fuissent!”

57

Now without prejudice to the coming investigation, we may separate at once the writings of Tertullian into two divisions: (a) those in which topics within the Montanistic orbit are dealt with; and (b) those referring (as the *Ad I' Nationes*, *Apologeticus*, *De Oratione*, &c.) to subjects on which no difference arose between Catholic and Montanist. By comparing the bills of indictment in Eusebius, Epiphanius, Philaster &c. we can limit the former topics as follows:

- I. The doctrine of the Trinity (for while Epiphanius and Philaster declare that the Montanists were orthodox, many other writers accuse them of Sabellianism).
- II. The work of the Spirit (especially as to prophecy and inspiration).
- III. The theory of the Church (and the character of the sacerdotal office).
- IV. The Sacraments (both as regards the charge of using unauthorised elements, e.g. Artotyritism, and of the horrible accusations already mentioned).
- V. Discipline, and the application of religion to life (fasting, penance, marriage).
- VI. Eschatology.

Upon these subjects we find that the following works of Tertullian treat, with more or less of fulness:

- On I. Chiefly the treatise *Adversas Praxeam*, but references in the *Præscriptio Hæreticorum*.
- II. Almost every treatise, especialy *De Fuga in Persecutione*, *De Pudicitia*, *De Monogamia*, *Adv. Praxeam*, *De Virg. velandis*, *De Res. Carnis*, *De Jejuniis*, *Adv Marcionem*, *De Anima*, *De Idololatria*, *De Spectaculis*, *De Cor. Militis*.
- III. Chiefly *De Monogamia*, *De Pudicitia*, *De Virg. velandis*, *De Exh. Castitatis*
- IV. Only the treatise *Do Baptismo* (which all authorities, as we shall find, consider præ-Montanistic).

58

- V. *De Momogamia*, *De Jejuniis*, *De Virg. velandis*, *De Exh. Castitatis*, *De Pudicitia*; *Ad Uxorem*, *De Fuga in Persecutione*, *De Cultu Ferniuarum*.

---

<sup>3</sup> Nothing is a more curious study then to watch the solicitude with which a R. C. editon, such as Rigaltius, strives to manufacture a com pletely orthodox witness out of Tertullian. [See the note on *Adv. Prax.* 1.]

VI, *De Oratione, Apologeticus, De Spectaculis, De Res. Carnis, Monogamia*, and in the “regula fidei” contained in the *Præscriptio* (c. 13).

We proceed, then, in the first place, to ascertain the general form and character of the opinions in question, upon the plan proposed. Subsequently we shall take each of the sections in turn, attempting to work out more fully not only the substance of each particular tenet, but its connection with the whole system; concluding with the endeavour to fix the historical position of Montanism in relation not only to the Catholic Church, but to the contemporary phenomena of Gnosticism, and the possible derivation in part from forms of Phrygian worship<sup>4</sup>

**§ 2. The New Revelation.**

Montanus and his followers claimed to have received a revelation of God, of a nature supplementary to that communicated by Christ and His apostles, Its foundation is to be found in a literal and exclusive acceptance of the promise of the Paraclete, “who will guide you into all truth,” and “shew you things to come” (John xvi. 13). The belief in the superiority of this new revelation is put very clearly by Tertullian. “If ‘Christ abrogated what Moses commanded, because from the beginning it was not so... why should not the Paraclete alter what Paul permitted<sup>5</sup>?’” The same order of development is defined in

59

another of Tertullian’s treatises, as (1) the prophetic voice of the Old Testament; (2) the “disciplina Domini;” and (3) the Holy Spirit by (the mouth of) the holy prophetess Prisca<sup>6</sup>. This is also the view reprobated by the opponents of Montanism, who strove to aggravate what they declared heresy by asserting that the prophets claimed to be not merely the mouth-piece, but the very incarnation of the Paraclete. This point will be specially discussed afterwards; at present it will be sufficient to quote three witnesses in support of the former position.

HIPPOLYTUS	PHILASTER	AUGUSTIN
“They are beguiled by two females whom they consider prophetesses .... They pretend that these see certain things by means of the Paraclete in them. They implicitly believe what	“They hold that the full gift (plenitudinem) of the Holy Spirit was not granted by Christ to His Apostles, but to their false prophets, and thus separate themselves from the Catholic	“They declare that the promised advent of the Holy Spirit took place in themselves, nether than in the case of the Apostles.” <i>Hæres XXVI.</i>

<sup>4</sup> An able German critic [Hauber, in the *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1845, pp. 607-662] attempted to prove that Tertullian ought not to be admitted as a high authority, or rather, not as a representative of Montanistic teaching, seeing that he appears unable “sich mit den neuen Prophetenstimmen zu beruhigen, sondern es ist ihm beständiges Bedürfniss, in die frühere Zeit zurückzugehen, und .... bald aus dem Paradiese, bald aus den Patriarchen, Priestern u.s.w. Bestätigung, und bei Jesus und den Aposteln theils Bestätigung theils Entschuldigung zu suchen” (p. 608). This argument is affectively met by Ritschl. [*Ent. stellung*, pp. 511, 512.]

<sup>5</sup> “Si enim Christus abstulit quod Moyses præcepit, quia ab initio non fuit sic, nec ideo ab alia venissa virtute reputabitur Christus, cur non at Paracletus abstularit quod Paulus indulsit.” (*De Monogamia*, cap. 14.) Although, strictly speaking, Tertullian is only treating of one special point, viz, the permission of second marriages by St Paul, all writers (Mosheim, Wernsdorf, Neander, Kaye, Schwegler, Ritschl) agree that this may be taken as a general axiom, put in the form of a question.

<sup>6</sup> “Prophetica vox veteris Testamanti, ... disciplina Domini, ... Spiritus Sanctus per sanctam prophetidem Priseum.” *De Exhort, Castit.* c.10.

these utter, and give out that they learnt more from their revelations than from the law, the prophets, and the gospels.” <i>Adv. omn. Hær.</i> VIII. 19.	Church.” <i>Liber de Hæres.</i> XLIX. Migne, XII. 1165.)	( <i>Opp.</i> VI. 17.)
--	--	------------------------

Tertullian never loses an opportunity of asserting in unqualified terms the superior insight enjoyed by those who hearkened to the Paraclete through the mouth of the prophets or prophetesses. He understands the mysterious

60

οἰκονομία of the Trinity, as better instructed by the Paraclete<sup>7</sup>. He declares himself the pupil of no man, but only of the same divine instructor<sup>8</sup>. He accepts the visible coming of the New Jerusalem on the same authority<sup>9</sup>. The Paraclete counsels martyrdom<sup>10</sup>; finally, the Paraclete teaches those things which the apostles even were not able to understand<sup>11</sup>. And yet there is no revolution organized against the institutions which, in their first form, undoubtedly furnished the fittest media for the agency of the Holy Spirit. The prophetic office, commended so highly by St Paul, and witnessed to by Justin and Irenæus, this was no innovation. Nor does Tertullian shrink from a criterion of true or false prophetic claim, which he states thus. He had imagined an opponent to moot the very pertinent objection: “It follows that, by this line of argument, anything you please which is novel and burthensome may be ascribed to the Paraclete, even if it have come from the adversary spirit.” “No (replies the Montanist), for the adversary spirit would be apparent from the diversity of his preaching, beginning by adulterating the rule of faith, and so (going on to) adulterating the order of discipline<sup>12</sup>.” Accordingly it is to the practical effects in life of the new teachings that he appeals, just as he and

61

his fellow apologists had appealed to the heathen world in the same way. Thus the spirits might be proved, whether they were of God or not. Nor even does Tertullian admit, as valid against himself, the stern legal rule of Præscription, which he had wielded with such inexorable rigour against heretics. Or rather, he claims its benefit once more! “Paracletus solus antecessor, quia solus post Christum<sup>13</sup>!” Accordingly the last stage is merely a revival of what was truly first, and unites the strength of youth with the dignity of age. Tertullian states the problem of revelation by stages by aid of a splendid image, which will best complete this sketch: “Nothing is without stages of growth; all things await their season... Look how

<sup>7</sup> “Nos et semper, et nuno magis, ut instructiores per Paracletum, deductorem scilicet omnis veritatis, unicum quidem Deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione, quam œconomiam dicimus, ut sermo ex ipso processerit, qui deinde miserit a Patre Spiritum Sanctum Paracletum.” [*Adv. Prax.* cap. 2.]

<sup>8</sup> “Nos, qui at tempora et causas scripturarum per Del gratiam inspicimus, maxime Paracleti non hominum discipuli.” [*Ibid.* cap. 13.]

<sup>9</sup> “Hierosolymam de cœlo delatam, qui apud fidem nostram est, novæ prophetia sermo testatur.” [*Adv. Marc.* III. 24.]

<sup>10</sup> “Si pro Deo occumbas, ut Paracletus monet, in martyriis, &c” [*De Anima*, cap. 55.]

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the 2nd chapter (passim) of the *De Monogamia*.

<sup>12</sup> “Ergo hac argumentatione quidvis novum Paracletu adscribi poterit; etsi ab adversario spiritu fuerit. Non utique; adversarius enim spiritus ex diversitate prædicationis appareret, primo regulam adulterans fidei, et ita ordinem adulterans disciplinæ.” [*De Monog.* cap. 2.]

<sup>13</sup> *De Virg. velandis*, cap. 1.

creation itself advances little by little to fructification! First comes the grain, and from the grain arises the shoot, and from the shoot struggles out the shrub; thereafter boughs and leaves gather strength, and the whole that we call a tree expands; then follows the swelling of the bud, and from the bud bursts the flower, and from the flower the fruit opens; that fruit itself, rude for a while, and unshapely, little by little, keeping the straight course of its development, is trained to the mellowness of its flavour, so too righteousness (for the God of righteousness and of creation is the same) was first, in a rudimentary state, having a natural fear of God; from that stage it advanced, through the Law and the Prophets, to infancy; from that stage it passed, through the Gospel, to the fervour of youth; now, through the Paraclete, it is settling into maturity. He will be, after Christ, the only one to be called and revered as Master; for He speaks not from Himself, but what is commanded by Christ.... They who have received him set truth before custom<sup>14</sup>.” Such was

62

the faith, such the claims, of the New Prophets<sup>15</sup>. The next point in the investigation is the “Form” of these alleged revelations. In pursuance of our plan, let us first cite the following witnesses:-

<p>ANONYMUS (ap. Euseb.).          “So then he [sc. Montanus] was carried away in spirit, and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking, and uttering strange things, and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the Church.... He excited two others, females, and filled them with the spirit of delusion, so that they also spoke like the former, in a kind of ecstasy, out of all season, and in a manner strange and novel.”  <i>H. E. lib. V. cap. 16.</i></p>	<p>EPIPHANIUS          “Behold, [- this is the Paraclete speaking through Montanus,] man is as a lyre, and I hover round him as the plectrum; the man sleeps and I watch; behold, it is the Lord who transports the hearts of men, and gives hearts to men<sup>16</sup>.”  <i>Hæres. XLVIII. § 4.</i>          [Maximilla says: “ἀπέστειλέ με κύριος ἠναγκασμένον, θέλοντα καὶ μὴ θέλοντα.”]  <i>Ibid. § 13.</i></p>	<p>MILTIADE5 (ap. Euseb.).          [After mentioning the work of Miltiades on the subject “περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν προφήτην ἐκστάσει λαλεῖν,” Eusebius quotes him as saying:- ] “But the false prophet is carried away by a vehement ecstasy, accompanied by want of all shame and fear. Beginning, indeed, with a designed ignorance, and terminating, as before said, in involuntary madness. They will never be able to shew that any of the Old or New Testament were thus agitated and carried away.”  <i>H. E. lib. V. cap. 17<sup>17</sup>.</i></p>
---	--	--

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Twice in this chapter Tertullian repeats the noble thought, the great truth, that *Christ is Truth rather than Tradition*. [“Sed Dominus noster Christus veritatem se, non consuetudinem cognominavit.”] Möhler made no error when he saw in the combat between Montanism and the Church the first (and perhaps the most logical) expression of the eternal opposition between the Protestant Idea in its highest sense, and what he called the “Catholic” principle.

<sup>15</sup> See Baronius, II. 287; Mosheim, *De Rebus*, &c. p. 416; Walch, I, 620; Wernsdorf, p. 11 ff.; Ritschl, p. 462 ff.; Schwegler, 15 ff.

<sup>16</sup> I am not sure whether my translation of the last clause is correct. The original passage is as follows: “Ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος ὡσεὶ λύρα, καὶ γὰρ ἵπταμαι ὡσεὶ πλήκτρον· ὁ ἄνθρωπος κοιμάται, καὶ γὰρ γρηγορῶ, ἰδοὺ κύριός ἐστιν ὁ ἐκστάνων καρδίας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ διδοὺς καρδίας ἀνθρώποις.” [In another place we have: “ἐφίσταμαι καὶ πλήσσω, καὶ γρηγορῶ, καὶ ἐξίστῃ κύριος καρδίας.”] Is the sense, “the Lord who created man’s hearts, also can excite or transport them”?

<sup>17</sup> Many writers consider the speaker thus quoted to have not Miltiades, [in any case “*Alcibiades*” is wrong,] but the Anonymus of the former chapter. I confess that I cannot agree with them.

Our next step is to consult Tertullian, in order to see

63

whether he admits or traverses these statements. The first passage quoted shall be the narrative which he gives us in his treatise *De Anima*, concerning a prophetic vision. This is specially important as furnishing us, at first hand, with a complete notion of the manner in which these alleged revelations were received, both by the “medium,” and by the congregation or those to whom it was revealed. “We have now,” Tertullian relates<sup>18</sup>, “amongst us a sister whose lot it has been to be favoured with certain gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision [“per ecstasin in spiritu,”] amidst the sacred rites of the Lord’s day in the Church: she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications [sacramenta]; some men’s hearts she understands, and to them who are in need she distributes remedies. Whether it be in the reading of the Scriptures, or in the chanting of Psalms, or in the preaching of sermons, or in the offering up of prayers, in all these religious services matter and opportunity are afforded to her of seeing visions. It may possibly have happened to us, whilst this sister of ours was rapt in the Spirit, that we had discoursed about the soul. After the people are dismissed at the conclusion of the services, she is in the habit of relating to us whatever things she may have seen in vision; for all her communications are most carefully examined, in order that they may be proved<sup>19</sup>.”

64

Tertullian expressly admits here the complete passivity of the prophetess: the only element other than the operation of the Spirit being the subject of the prayer or discourse. We can compare other of his statements on the same subject: “The soul receives motion from some other thing when it is swayed (from the outside, of course, by something else) by prophetic influence or by madness<sup>20</sup>.” Even Adam is supposed to have experienced the same influence and ecstasy, as well as all the prophets<sup>21</sup> in fact, nothing is more clear than Tertullian’s confidence not only in the genuineness of the condition, but also of its agreement with God’s will and dispensation, It must be added that Tertullian places the Divine origin of all visions and dreams upon an equally lofty foundation:- “But from God, who has promised to pour out the grace of His Holy Spirit upon all flesh, and has ordained that His servants and His handmaids should see visions as well as utter prophecies [Joel iii. 1], must all these visions be regarded as emanating, which may be compared to the actual grace of God, as being honest, holy, prophetic, inspired, instructive, inviting to virtue, the bountiful nature of which causes them to overflow even to the profane<sup>22</sup>, &c.” There was no monopoly claimed for Priscilla or

---

<sup>18</sup> *De Anima*, cap. 9. The special value of this evidence is that Tertullian gives it, as it were parenthetically, and does not indulge in any rhetoric. His object is to explain his curious theory about the nature of the soul.

<sup>19</sup> “Est hodie soror apud nos revelationum charismata sortita, quas in ecclesia inter dominica solomnia per ecstasin in spiritu patitur; conversatur cum anghis, aliquando etiam cum Domino, et videt et audit sacramenta, at quoruadam corda dignoseit, et medicinas desiderantibus submittit. Jam vero prout scripturæ loguntur, aut Psalmi canuntur, aut adlocutiones proferuntur, aut petitiones delegantur, ita inde materiæ visionibus subministrantur. Forte nescio quid de anima disseruimus, cum en soror in spiritu erat. Post transacta solennia, dimissa plebe, quo usu solet nobis renuntiare quæ viderit, nam et diligentissime digeruntur, ut etiam probentur.” After relating the vision itself, to which we shall recur later, Tertullian concludes with the emphatic asseveration: “visio et Deus testis et Apostolus charismatum in ecclesia futurorum idoneus sponsor.”

<sup>20</sup> “Ostendimus... moveri animam ab alio, cum vaticinatur, cum furit, utique extrinsecus.” (*De Anim.* C. 6.)

<sup>21</sup> “Accidentiam spiritus passus est; occidit enim ecstasis super ilium, sancti spiritus vis, operatrix prophetiæ.” (Cap. 11.) And, “In illum Deus amentiam immisit, spiritualem vim, qua constat prophetia.” (Cap. 21.)

<sup>22</sup> *De Anima*, cap. 47.

Maximilla. Tertullian mentions in no place having received any such Divine intimations himself<sup>23</sup>, but he frequently records

65

the experiences of others. He relates how “a brother was chastised in a vision, because on the announcement of public rejoicings his servants had decorated his gates<sup>24</sup>.” This is mentioned as “a witness on the authority of God.” The Acts of Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas relate many other instances of the same nature<sup>25</sup>, and they must have been considered of common occurrence.

Seeing then that the facts are undisputed, the only question remaining is the theological one, or rather two questions of this nature arise:-

- I. Did, or did not, the Primitive Church, up to the time of Montanus, admit the gift of prophecy and vision to all its members?
- II. Was the character of this prophetic inspiration. recognised as passive, or were the individual faculties active?

The former of these questions hardly needs discussion. It is indisputable that Clement, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, unanimously affirm their belief in, or even their experience of, the continued distribution of these *charismata*<sup>26</sup>. In fact the earlier opponents of Montanism were too prudent to take issue on the point at all, or else denounced, not the claim of prophetic gift, but its discontinuance. The writer quoted by Eusebius demands:- “If after Quadratus and Ammia in Philadelphia, the women that followed Montanus succeeded in the gift of prophecy, let their shew us what women among them succeeded Montanus and his women.

66

For the apostle shows that the gift of prophecy should be in all the church until the coming of the Lord, but they can by no means shew any one at this time, the 14th year from the death of Maximilla<sup>27</sup>.” In a later section we may notice the remarkable change of opinion in the Church on this point; we now turn to the other. What was the theory of Inspiration recognised by writers of the Second Century? Did they reject as impious the claims of “ecstatic vision,” of complete passivity under spiritual influence?

Athenagoras presented his Apology to the emperors Aurelius and Commodus about AD. 176, when the manifestations of Montanism were fully known. He describes the inspiration of the Prophets in an often-quoted passage:- “...Moses, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, and the other prophets who, lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of

---

<sup>23</sup> It is impossible not to think of Edward Irving as a parallel instance, never laying claim himself to the gifts, but gladly welcoming them in others. Another case is that of Petersen (cf. Appendix C.), who received the higher light through the Fräulein von Asseburg.

<sup>24</sup> “Scio fratrem per visionem castigatum graviter, quod januam ejus, subito annunciatis gaudiis publicis, servi coronassent.” (*De Idolol.* cap. 15.) See also *De Spectac.* 26.

<sup>25</sup> There are many collected in Noesselt’s treatise on the Writings of Tertullian. (*De vera Ætate*, &c. p. 184 ff.)]

<sup>26</sup> See the old authorities collected and discussed in John Smith’s famous *Select Discourses*, No. 6, and also Hagenbach’s *Dogmengeschichte*, and other collections.

<sup>27</sup> Miltiades (?) ap. Eusebius, *H. E.* lib. V. cap. 17.

the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute-player breathes into a flute<sup>28</sup>.”

Justin Martyr expresses the same view with equal clearness. He did not consider that inspiration was a mere increase in the productivity of human intelligence, nor did he allow to human faculties any share other than simple reproduction of the truth received<sup>29</sup>. He asserted that the prophets never delivered their own thoughts, but only what they had received by Divine revelation<sup>30</sup>. Like Athenagoras, he compared their state during the

67

period of inspiration by the image of the lyre struck by the plectrum; he denied in fact that they retained any natural consciousness during inspiration: in other words, it was a state of ecstasy<sup>31</sup>. It is clear, then, that Justin and Athenagoras held no other doctrine of inspiration than that which the Montanists asserted, and for asserting have been condemned as heretics by the Church since the Fourth Century<sup>32</sup>. The defenders of the “Quod semper, quod ubique,” are reduced to lamentable straits in the matter; but, what is more surprising, not a few Protestant theologians have failed or refused to see this change of front. The writer of a modern text-book thus deals with the difficulty:- “It is true that Athenagoras considers the Prophets of the Old Testament to have uttered their predictions while in a state of ecstasy, thus adopting the sentiments of Philo; but that he held, on any point, the extravagant opinions of Montanus, cannot, I apprehend, be alleged with any justice<sup>33</sup>.” Now assertions of this sort

---

<sup>28</sup> “οἱ προφῆται κατ’ ἔκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοὺς τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος, ἃ ἐνηργοῦντο, ἐξεφώνησαν συγχερισσάμενοι τοῦ πνεύματος, ὡσεὶ καὶ αὐλητῆς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεύσει.” (*Legat.* Cap 9.) The same image occurs in the 7th chapter, “...θεοῦ πνεύματι ὡς ὄργανα κεκινήκοι τά τῶν προφητῶν στόματα.”

<sup>29</sup> I am indebted for my references in Justin to Semisch’s able monograph. (Vol. I. pp. 263 ff.)

<sup>30</sup> “Μηδ’ ἂν ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδίας αὐτῶν φαντασίας διδάξαντες ἡμᾶς .... ἀλλ’ ἀφιλονείκως καὶ ἀστασιάζτως τὴν παρὰ θεοῦ δεξαμένου γνῶσιν καὶ ταύτην διδάσκοντες ἡμᾶς.” *Coh. ad Græc.* cap. 8. [And see *Dial. c. Tr.* cap. 7.]

<sup>31</sup> “Τοὺς ἁγίους ἄνδρας ..... οἷς λόγον ἐδέησε τέχνης .... ἀλλ’ κιθαροὺς ἑαυτοὺς τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος παρασχεῖν ἐνεργεία, ἵν’ αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατιὸν πλήκτρον, ὡσπερ ὄργανῳ κιθάρας τινὸς ἢ λύρας τοῖς δικαίοις ἀνδράσι χρώμενον, τὴν τῶν θεῶν ἡμῖν καὶ οὐρανίων ἀποκαλύφῃ γνῶσιν.” [*Coh. ad Gr.* c. 8.] The same view is expressed with even greater plainness in the Dialogue; where the revelation to Zeohariah is declared to have “not been when unexcited, but when in ecstasy.” [τὸν διάβολον καὶ τὸν τοῦ κυρίου ἄγγελον οὐκ αὐτοφία, ἐν καταστάσει ὧν, ἐωράκει, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἔκστασει, ἀποκαλύψεως αὐτῷ γεγεννημένης. *Dial. c. Tr.* cap. 115.]

<sup>32</sup> In addition to Justin and Athenagoras, (not to mention Tertullian,) we find that Theophilus [cf. *Ad Autol.* II. 9, 10], Clement Alex. [*Strom.* VI. 18], and Macanus [*Homil.* XLVII. 14], adopt the same view of inspiration. The last-named writer employs the identical image:- “Πλήκτρον τῆς θείας χάριτος, .... ὡς γὰρ διὰ τοῦ αὐλοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα διερχόμενον λαλεῖ, οὕτω διὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ πνευματοφόρων ἀνθρώπων τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν ἐστιν ὕμνοδν.”

<sup>33</sup> Lee, *On the Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, (4th edition,) p. 78 ff. Anything so astounding as the “argument” adopted by Dr Lee I have never met. He ignores the perfect agreement of Justin Martyr with the Montanistic view, and he actually appeals to Hippolytus as a witness to the Church’s antagonism to the “ecstatic” view. Now Hippolytus does not touch the question at all: his only words on the subject of the inspiration claimed for the prophetesses are: “They pretend that these see certain things by means of the Paraclete in them.” [*Adv. omn. Hæres.* VIII. 19.] Dr Lee’s theory is that the ecstatic view is derived from the heathen idea of the μάντις, and that the Christian church opposed it uncompromisingly from the very first! “With reasoning similar to that adopted when rejecting the heathen divination, the Church rose in opposition to this fanaticism, (so. that of the Montanists,) and here also it was argued that the exercise of a state of unconsciousness proved that Montanism was, in no sort, allied to the true prophetic spirit.” (*Ibid.*) Dr Westcott admits freely that “the language of Athenagoras has been regarded, with good reason, as expressing the doctrine of Montanism.” [Quoted by Lee, *Ibid.*]



may be safely left to battle with inexorable facts which we have already adduced, and really deserve no refutation. We have seen that the work of Miltiades, itself a mere private treatise, and carrying with it no character of authority, was the very first declaration against the previous universal and orthodox sentiment. Later, in the Third Century (although even here the catenas are dubious) and in the Fourth, it is quite, true that a vast change had taken place. The once orthodox doctrine of Justin and Athenagoras and Montanus was now branded as a heresy; and that which had been undoubtedly the private αἵρεσις of Miltiades was now the doctrine of the Catholic Church. From this time it is easy to collect a most unanimous list. Epiphanius is perhaps the first to lay down, as a canon and criterion of true prophecy, that it must be conscious and intelligent. [“Ὅσα οἱ προφήται εἰρήκασι, μετὰ συνέσεως παρακολουθοῦντος,” or “μετὰ καταστάσεως λογισμοῦ καὶ παρακολουθήσεως ... ἐφθέγγοντο.” Epiph. *Hæres.* XLVIII. § 2, 3.] This was adopted universally, and no doubt is, theologically, more correct than the opinion which it opposed. But we are concerned here only with the truth of history; and it would involve the grossest departure from that truth were we to slur over, or attempt to explain away, the remarkable facts which have been the subject of this chapter.

### § 3. Montanism and the Trinity.

Epiphanius commences his account of the Montanists with the following admission:- “They receive the whole of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, and

believe the resurrection of the dead: also concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they agree with the holy Catholic Church<sup>34</sup>.” Firmilian, at an earlier date, had certified that, “although they receive new prophets, yet they appear to accept the same Father and Son with us<sup>35</sup>.” Hippolytus had declared that “they acknowledge God to be the Father and Creator of all things, as the Church does, and what the Gospel testifies respecting Christ<sup>36</sup>.” He adds, it is true, somewhat later:- “Some of them belong to the sect of the Noetians, saying that the Father himself is the Son, and that the former has been subjected to suffering and death.” This contradictory statement naturally deprives the evidence of Hippolytus of the weight to which its date, and the probable impartiality of the writer, would entitle it. Philaster testifies that the Montanists “acknowledge the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the resurrection, as also the Catholic Church<sup>37</sup>.” In Theodoret as well as the author of the Appendix to Tertullian’s Prescription, we have a distinct intimation that some of the Montanists had adopted Sabellian views; finally Prædestinatus appears to leave the question open, admitting that charges of dogmatic heresy were alleged, but mentioning the indignant denial by Tertullian<sup>38</sup>. The

<sup>34</sup> Epiph. *Hæres.* XLVIII. § 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ep. ad Cyprian.* (inter opp. *Cypr. Ep.* LXXV.)

<sup>36</sup> *Adv. omn. Hæres.* VIII. 19.

<sup>37</sup> “Isti prophetas et legem accipiunt, Patrem et Filium, et Spiritum conflentur, carnis resurrectionem exspectant, quæ et Catholics Ecclesia prædicat.” *Liber de Hæresibus*, § XLIX.

<sup>38</sup> *Fabul. Hær.* III. 2. The passage of the Pseudo-Tertullian (cap. 52) in which it is asserted that the Montanists were divided at last into two subsections; the followers of Proculus holding the orthodox belief on the Trinity; the “Aeschinists” believing that “Christum ipsum esse Filium et Patrem.” Prædestinatus appears to doubt (of. *Hær.* XXVI.) the Montanist orthodoxy; saying of Tertullian’s defence “in hoc so reprehensibilem fecit.”

difficulty of reconciling these different statements is greatly enhanced by the confusion so frequently made between the opinions on prophetic inspiration, and those concerning

70

the nature of the Holy Spirit. Some of the later fathers, it is true, accused the Montanists of identifying their founder with the very person of the Paraclete, if not of God the Father; but this tremendous accusation can hardly be compatible with Epiphanius's unqualified statement<sup>39</sup>.

Our resource, as before, is to turn to Tertullian; and fortunately we find among his works an important treatise, the *Adversus Praxeas*, which not only deals with the very topic under discussion, but was undoubtedly composed after his acceptance of the New Prophecies. In the beginning of the second chapter, Tertullian enunciates the creed which (as he says) "we indeed always have believed, and more especially since we have been better instructed by the Paraclete, who leads men into all truth." "We believe," he continues, "that there is one only God, but under the following dispensation, or οἰκονομία, as it is called; that this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made. Him (we believe) to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin,

71

and to have been born of her, being both man and God, and to have been called by the name of Jesus Christ; (we believe) Him to have suffered, died, and been buried, according to the Scriptures, and, after He had been raised again by the Father and taken back into Heaven, to be sitting at the right hand of the Father, (and) that He will come to judge the quick and the dead; who sent also from Heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost<sup>40</sup>." Later in the same chapter, there is an amplification of considerable importance with regard to the relation ascribed by Tertullian to the Divine Persons. After describing the heresy of Praxeas, "which supposes itself to possess the pure truth, in thinking that one cannot believe in one only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame person," he declares, "that all are of

---

<sup>39</sup> For instance Cyril, in his Catechetical Lectures (Migne, XXXIII. 928), says that "Μοντανὸς ἐτόλμησεν ἑαυτὸν λέγειν εἶναι τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα." Basil declares "εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐβλασφήμησαν, Μοντανῶ καὶ Πρισκίλλῃ τὴν τοῦ Παρακλήτου προσηγορίαν ἀναισχύντως ἐπιφημίσαντες," (*Ep. ad Amphiloich.*) Jerome, on the other hand, who never misses an opportunity of attacking the Montanistic theory of the form of inspiration, (cf. "neque ut Montanus cum insanis feminis somniat, prophetæ in ecstasi sunt locuti, etc." *Præf. in Isai.*), even he has the fairness to admit that "Paracletum in Montanuns venisse contendunt," (*contr. Vigil.*), which is in fact the only view of the Montanistic claim compatible with the evidence. A whole volume might be filled with the contradictions of the Fathers about the Montanists, and certainly no other verdict but that of "Not Proven" could be returned upon their evidence. For instance, Basil, in the epistle cited above, declares that they baptized εἰς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καὶ Μοντανὸν καὶ Πρισκίλλαν!! Schwegler, who quotes this, (*Montanismus*, p. 174, note,) contrasts with it the following from another treatise by the same writer: "Μοντανὸς τοσοῦτον ἐμάνη κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ ὀνόμασιν αὐτὸ ταπεινῶς καθύβρισε καὶ τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ τοσοῦτον ἐξευτέλισεν, ὥστε ἀδοξίαν εἰπεῖν τῷ πεποικηκῷ προστριβεσθαί." (*Adv. Eunom.* II.)

<sup>40</sup> *Adv. Prax.* c. 2. Comparing this creed with the unquestionably pre-Montanistic one in the *Præscriptio*, the only difference traceable is that the language in the later form is more precise and more clear. Neander even goes so far as to assert: "Tertullian war der erste, der in dem Streite mit den Monarchianern auch die Lehre vom heiligen Geist hervorhob. Praxeas scheint sich darauf gar nicht eingelassen zu haben." (*Antignost.* 2nd ad. p. 454.) See also Kaye's *Tertullian*, p. 494 ff., and Hesselberg (*Tertullian's Lehre, &c.*) p. 217.

one, by unity of substance; while the mystery of the οἰκονομία is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three (Persons) - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three however not in condition (*statu*), but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect (*specie*); yet of one substance and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is One God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost<sup>41</sup>." It is impossible here to enter

72

upon the question of how far this "hypostatic" doctrine agrees with the developments of later times, whatever date he assumed for the Athanasian Creed. What I shall attempt to prove will be simply:-

- I. That, in the beginning of the third century, no official or (in any sense) universal choice had been made between Monarchianism and the doctrine supported by Tertullian.
- II. That, although the influence of Montanism in the development of the Trinitarian doctrine was slight, it was in favour of that side which is now acknowledged to have been orthodox and scriptural.

Tertullian admits freely that the arguments he was bringing forward were by no means universally received. "The simple (whom I will not call unwise and unlearned) are startled at the οἰκονομία on the ground that their very creed withdraws them from the world's plurality of gods to the one only true God, &c."<sup>42</sup> This was a very natural difficulty. The attempt at a strict separation of Persons in the Divine Trias led to a system of subordination (as we have seen in our review of Justin)<sup>43</sup>, according to which the Son was placed under the Father, and the Holy Spirit beneath the Father and the Son, and this, to the popular mind, carried with it an appearance of Tritheism. To guard against the objection, some inclined to soften the language employed; while others, like Origen in a later period, exaggerated the ideas of separation and subordina-

73

tion, so as to lay the foundation for the Arian controversies of a later day<sup>44</sup>. Now Tertullian's doctrine was a necessary corollary to the Montanistic theory of the three stages, already

---

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> "Simplices quique, ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ, quæ major semper credentiuna pars est, quoniam et ipsa regula fidei a pluribus diis seculi ad unicum et verum Deum transfert, non intelligentes, unicum quidem sed cum sua œconomia esse credendum, expavescunt ad œconomiam. Numerum et dispositionem trinitatis divisionem præsumunt unitatis..... Itaque duos et tres jam jactitant a nobis prædicari, se vero unius dei cultores præsumunt: monarchiam, inquirunt, tenemus." (*Ibid.* c. 3.)

<sup>43</sup> Justin expressly laid down: ... "Υἰὸν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὄντως Θεοῦ μαθόντες (sc. τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν) καὶ ἐν δευτέρᾳ χώρᾳ ἔχοντες, πνεῦμά τε προφητικὸν ἐν τρίτῃ ράξει." (*Apol.* I. 13.) Once more Montanism stands or falls with Justin!

<sup>44</sup> For instance, the Son is δεῦτερος θεός, (*Contr. Cels.* V. 608,) and "ἄξιος τῆς δευτερευούσης μετὰ τὸν θεὸν τῶν ὅλων τιμῆς." And cf. *De Oratione*, "Ἐτερος κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ ὑποκείμενός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς." According to Hagenbach, Origen's view amounted to this: "Der Bereich des Vaters erstreckt sich auf das ganze Weltall, der des Sohnes auf die vernünftigen Geschöpfe, der des heiligen Geistes auf die Heiligen." (*Dogmengeschichte*, p. 103.) He refers to *De Princ.* I. 3. 5.

described, and its effect was to neutralize any tendency to subordinate the Third Person either in respect of condition (status) or work. The Paraclete was now instructing the τέλειοι, as it had not been permitted even to the Apostles after Pentecost to instruct<sup>45</sup>, and this single aspect, constantly pressed upon their hearers by the new prophets, would alone contribute greatly to strengthen the cause of Trinitarianism against Monarchian attacks. It is, as we have before attempted to shew, an impossible task to prove that the “Church” had declared itself on one side or another. In the third century it is now well known that, under Kallistus, Monarchianism became predominant for a time, even if that bishop did not favour the grossest excesses of Patripassianism<sup>46</sup>. There was still free play for investigation and conjecture as to the mode of οἰκονομία; all that was fixed was the simple assertion of the Three in One, which not even Praxeas attempted to deny. We must now touch, as it were parenthetically, upon a historical point for which, intimately connected as it is with matters of doctrine, no fitting place could be found in the former book. It has been asserted by a recent and very able

74

writer that the Asiatic Montanists were themselves Monarchians, since they are described as attributing their inspiration now to God the Father, at another time to Christ, and elsewhere to the Spirit<sup>47</sup>. It is impossible to deny that, by accepting literally the assertions of Epiphanius, and those of the Pseudo-Tertullian and others concerning a later body of Aeschinists who adopted Noetian or Sabellian opinions, a very symmetrical account can be constructed. But it has one flaw: the person and writings of Tertullian must be practically ignored. Can we suppose that he would have passed over such a fact with a mere gentle reproof (“*imprudentes et idiotæ &c.*”), and could he have entered upon the campaign against Praxeas with such confidence? Even the conduct of Praxeas would be inexplicable then. Coming (as we know) from Asia, knowing that - according to this hypothesis, the Montanists there sympathised with him in his views - what motive could he have had to act in hostility to their interests at Rome? History proves that few religious parties can long avoid division: but if Montanism could subsist under conditions such as these, we must seek in vain for a parallel case in all the annals of Christianity<sup>48</sup>.

75

---

<sup>45</sup> That the Montanists asserted that the Apostles *themselves* had not received full revelation from the Paraclete, though asserted by some of the Fathers, seems to have been totally unfounded. Tertullian expressly says: “Proprie enim apostoli Spiritum sanctum habent in operibus prophetiæ et efficacia virtutum atque documentis linguarum, non ex parte, quod ceteri.” (*De exhort. Cast.* c. 4.)

<sup>46</sup> Hippolytus is very clear on the point: and all Döllinger’s ingenuity to save the orthodoxy as well as the moral character of this “Pope” avails little. (Cf. *Hippolytus und Kallistus*, Regensburg, 1853.)

<sup>47</sup> Ritschl, *Entstehung der altk. Kirche*, p. 488. “Diese Ansicht ist nicht, wie Schwegler annimmt, als ein Rückfall von der Hypostasenlehre zu betrachten, sondern als die theologische Theorie des ursprünglichen kleinasiatischen Montanismus. Denn eben die Identität des Vaters, Sohns, und Geistes liegt allen prophetischen Aussprüchen des Montanus und seiner beiden Begleiterinnen zu Grunde.” It is quite true that Epiphanius makes Maximilla say: Ἀκούσατε ὦ παῖδες Χριστοῦ τί λέγει, ἐμοῦ μὴ ἀκούσατε ἀλλὰ Χριστοῦ. (*Heres.* XLVIII. § 12.) And in the former section (§ 11) Montanus is supposed to declare himself inspired by God the Father, “ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς παντοκράτωρ καταγενόμενος ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ οὔτε ἄγγελος οὔτε πρέσβυς, ἀλλὰ ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ἦλθον,” but that these vague utterances, reported on the strength of doubtful tradition, two centuries later, and by a hostile critic, should be regarded as conclusive, is more than I feel at liberty to admit. Tertullian must be regarded as the safer informant, and it is perfectly gratuitous to suppose that the “*imprudentes et idiotæ*” were necessarily a section of Montanists.

<sup>48</sup> Schwegler’s account (cf. *Montanismus*, 152 ff.) seems, in this instance, far more probable.

How, then do we account for the statements that the Montanists, in later times, held erroneous opinions on the subject of the Trinity? In the first place let us regard this evidence a little more closely. The earliest writers are Hippolytus and Eusebius's Anonymus. The former of these, as we have seen, declares generally that the Montanists were orthodox (in his sense, most certainly anti-Monarchian), but he qualifies this statement by the remark that some belonged to the sect of the Noetians<sup>49</sup>. The Anonymus is silent on the subject; nor does Eusebius quote any corroborative statement from either Miltiades or Serapion or Apollonius. Epiphanius, we have seen, knows nothing of such heresies, and would be the last man to have concealed or palliated them: in fact we must pass to Theodoret in order to find the next witness. It is most significant, and to me conclusive, that neither Philaster nor Augustin accuses the Montanists of formal heresy on this subject. Theodoret, it is true, confirms the statement of Hippolytus<sup>50</sup>, and his account was usually copied by later writers<sup>51</sup>. All that seems proved, therefore, is the existence of a popular suspicion against the Montanists as a body, justified possibly by the fact that a small minority did fall away from the original faith. This suspicion gained strength only when Montanism was virtually extinct: for instance, in the fourth century, Socrates declares that some

76

refused the Ὁμοούσιον as “partaking somewhat of Montanism and Sabellianism<sup>52</sup>,” which is alone a proof of the second of my two propositions, viz, that the influence of Montanism worked in the direction which (on this point alone) the Church subsequently adopted.

Returning finally to Tertullian for the only statement of Montanistic belief free from obscurity<sup>53</sup>, we may derive the following articles from his writings:-

- I. The Son (*Sermo*) and the Spirit (*Sophia*) were substantially existent before the worlds, in the Godhead; [*Adv. Prax.* passim, *Adv. Hermog.*, *Adv. Valentin.* &c.]
- II. But there was no personal and titular separation until the universe was planned, and subsequently when that plan was effected. [*Hæc est nativitas perfecta Sermonis, dum*

<sup>49</sup> “Τινος δὲ αὐτῶν τῆ τῶν Νοητιανῶν αἰρέσει συντιθέμενοι τὸν πατέρα αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν λέγουσι.” (*Refut.* VIII. 19.)

<sup>50</sup> “Τινος τῶν Μοντανιστῶν τὰς τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις τῆς θεότητος Σαβελλίῳ παραπλησίως ἠρνήσαντο, τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι λέγοντες καὶ πατέρα καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, παραπλησίως τῷ Ἀσιανῷ Νοητῷ.” (*Theodor. Hær. Fabul.* III. 2.)

<sup>51</sup> Jerome appears at times to imply something of the sort, (cf. *Ep. ad Marcellam.*) but it is not easy to distinguish whether he speaks of the Inspiration-theory, or of the independent doctrine of the Trinity. Marius Mercator, about the middle of the fifth century, is said by Wernsdorfe *De Montanistis*, p. 33,) to support the charge; and also that very incoherent Father, Isidor of Pelusium. (*Epist.* I. 67, and cf. I. 242 ff.) - Harnack believes that the Pseudo-Tertullian's Monarchian Montanists were in reality the Alogi of Epiphanius and Philaster. See this theory ably discussed, and (to my mind) satisfactorily answered by Lipsius. (*Quellen*, p. 93ff.)

<sup>52</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* I. 23. “Οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ ὁμοουσίου τὴν λέξιν ἐκκλίνοντες τὴν Σαβελλίου καὶ Μοντανοῦ δόξαν εἰσηνεῖσθαι αὐτὴν τοὺς πποσδεχομένους ἐνόμιζον.” Valesius (in loc. cit.) wonders hugely at the juxtaposition. It may be noted that the 7th Canon of the Constantinopolitan Council specially grouped the Montanists and Sabellians:- “καὶ Μοντανιστὰς τοὺς ἐνταῦθα λεγομένους Φρύγας, καὶ Σαβελλιανούς τοὺς υἰοπατορίαν διδάσκοντας.” But this could hardly be adduced as an argument.

<sup>53</sup> That there are ambiguous expressions in Tertullian cannot be denied. Take, for instance, that passage in the *De Oratione* (cap. 3):- “Jam enim filius novum patris nomen est.” Neander, in his first edition of the *Antignostikus*, proposed to read “notum” for “novum.” Even this was better than his translation: “denn mit dem Sohne ist auch der neue Name des Vaters gegeben.” (*Antignost.* 2nd ad. p. 158.)

ex Deo procedit: conditus ab eo primum ad cogitatum in nomine Sophiae...dehinc generatus ad effectum<sup>54</sup>.”]

- III. The occasional ambiguity in his language concerning the Holy Spirit may be ascribed to the variety of senses in which the word “spiritus” is used, often for the Divine Nature in Christ (see quotations in Bull, *D.F.N.* sect. 1, chap. 2). That he considered It a separate, independent Person, and the source of spiritual knowledge to the faithful, has been sufficiently shewn.

77

- IV. That there was a principle of Subordination: but that this was no introduction of Montanism, since it is to be found in Justin as well as others, and remained a popular doctrine until the last and final development of opinions in the fifth century.

#### § 4. Eschatology.

Among the opinions denounced as heretical by Epiphanius must be included the earnest and precisely-formed expectations of a speedy coming of the Lord. He condemns them in the first place for reverencing the town of Pepuza, as the very place where the Παρουσία should happen<sup>55</sup>, and for declaring (as he makes the prophetess Maximilla) that after them there should be the end of things<sup>56</sup>. But in addition to these particular notions, it is impossible not to recognise his distaste for the Millenarianism which the Montanists as a body undoubtedly embraced. Tertullian appears to have held these views as strongly before becoming a Montanist as after. His treatise *De Oratione*, which all critics regard as pre-Montanistic, includes a passionate invocation of the Great Change - “the prayer of Christians, the confusion of the nations, the exultation of angels” (cap. 5). In the later, and unquestionably Montanistic work “against Marcion,” he narrates (with full belief in its truth) the story of a miraculous apparition which was alleged to have appeared in Judea. This was a city suspended in the air, according to his account the New Jerusalem, destined the reception of the Saints during their reign of a thousand years on earth, in the course of which period their resurrection would be effected according to their different degrees of merit,

78

and which was to be followed by the conflagration of the world and the general judgment<sup>57</sup>. Although in one place Tertullian declares that he had attempted in his [lost] work, *De Spe*

---

<sup>54</sup> Kaye quotes the remarkable passage, “Fuit autem tempus quum et delictum at *Filius non fuit*, quod judioem at qui Deum Patrem faceret.” (P. 522, and sac *Antignostikus*, p. 444 ff.)

<sup>55</sup> “Τιμῶσι γὰρ καὶ τόπον τινὰ ἔρημον ἐν τῇ Φρυγίᾳ, Πεπουζάν ποτε καλουμένην πόλιν, νῦν δὲ ἠδαφισμένην. Καὶ φασιν ἐκεῖσε κατιέναι τὴν ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ.” (*Hæres.* XLIX. 1.) This notion is also expressed in the narration of Quintilla (or Priscilla?) that Christ appeared to her, and had revealed “τουτοῦ τὸν τόπον εἶναι ἅγιον καὶ ᾧδε τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατιέναι.” (Apollonius *ap. Euseb.* V. 18.) Cyril of Jerusalem describes Pepuza as “κωμίδιον ἐν τῇ Φρυγίᾳ καταλαβὼν καὶ ψευδῶς Ἱερουσαλήμ ὀνομάσας.” (*Catech.* XVI. 8.)

<sup>56</sup> “Μετ’ ἐμῆ προφήτις οὐκέτι ἔσται ἀλλὰ συντέλεια.” (Epiph. *Hær.* XLVIII. 2.)

<sup>57</sup> Kaye, p. 345 ff. The passage referred to is in the third Book (*Adv. Marcionem*) and is as follows:- “Constat enim, Ethnicis quoque testibus, in Judea per dies quadraginta matutinis momentis civitatem de cœlo pependisse, omni mœniorum habitu, evanescentem de profectu diei at alias de proximo nullam, Hanc dicimus excipiendis resurrectione Sanctis at refovendis omnium bonorum utique spiritalium copia, in compensationem eorum quæ in

*Fidelibus*, to spiritualize the utterances of the Prophets with respect to the Millennium, the passage just cited is hardly treated in such a manner, and fully justifies us in including Tertullian as holding the ordinary Montanistic tenet, although he never alludes to Pepuza by name. After the investigations of so many able critics, we need not quote once more the catena of passages which, prove that this opinion, although condemned as heretical by the Church from the fourth century onwards, was held by writers whose orthodoxy is unimpugned. When Bishop Kaye gravely declared that “the more judicious and sober-minded Christians would naturally take alarm at the open avowal of tenets, the necessary effect of which must be to render their religion obnoxious to the ruling powers &c.<sup>58</sup>,” he was of course well aware that he was placing Justin Martyr, Papias, and Irenæus in the category of those who were not “judicious” nor “sober-minded<sup>59</sup>.” If, indeed, I

79

am right in accepting the first-named of these writers as a fair representative of the church’s views in the second century, the Montanists are indeed the victims of the irony of history. “Cette proposition serait Catholique dans une autre bouche,” said one of Pascal’s Jesuits, “Ce n’est quo dans M. Arnauld que la Sorbonne l’a condamnée.” (3<sup>me</sup> L. *Prov.*) As one ponders on this crying injustice, one is tempted almost to conclude with the same writer: “Laissons là leurs différends. Ce sont des disputes de théologiens, et non pas de théologie!”

## § 5. Asceticism.

If, as we have seen, Hippolytus expressed himself doubtfully on the question of formal heresy, he is precise in his statement and condemnation of the changes (or reformations) which the Montanists attempted to introduce into the external life; and his censures were almost unanimously followed by later writers. We shall find in this case no difficulty about facts: never did culprit plead guilty with more triumphant confidence than does Tertullian when he accepts the charges of his opponents on the subject of fasting, of marriage, and of penance. Here the Paraclete had ordained new rules, and had authoritatively abrogated the old: in fact his principal title is *Novae Disciplinae institutor*<sup>60</sup>.

Now the injunctions of the Gospel and of the Apostles, and especially those of St Paul in his epistles, were intended for the mass of general believers, and. included many concessions to the weakness of the flesh. To take one instance, the Apostle admitted the unconscious partaking of sacrificed meat as harmless, only recommending that, should the character of the food be declared, the Christian in that case should abstain [1 Cor. X. 27-29]. The Montanists, adopting a reasoning totally opposed to that of St Paul, affixed an objective impurity to the

80

---

seculo vel despeximus vel amisimus, a Deo prospectam. Siquidem at justum et Deo dignum illic quoque exsultare famulos ejus, ubi sunt et afflicti in nomine ipsius. Hæc ratio regni tarreni: post cujus mille annos, intra quam ætatem concluditur Sanctorum resurrectio pro mantis maturius vel tardius resurgentium, tune at mundi destructione at judicii conflagratione commissa, demutati in atomo in angelicam substantiam, scilicet per illud incorrupteiae superindumentum transferemur in cœleste regnum.” (Adv. *Marc.* lib. III. cap. 24.) I confess that I cannot follow Bishop Kaye in understanding Tertullian’s meaning as “wholly spiritual.”

<sup>58</sup> P. 20. It is true that he is speaking more particularly of the predictions of the ruins of the Roman Empire.

<sup>59</sup> The special passages are: Justin, *Dial. c. Tryph.* cap. 80, (the famous passage); Irenæus, *c. Hær.* V.32, 33; and Papias (ap. Euseb. *H. E.* III. 39). (Cf. Schwegler, p. 71 ff.; Ritschl, p. 485 ff.; Semisch, I. 364.)

<sup>60</sup> So in *De Monogam.* c. 11. In the *De Pudic.* c. 11 it is “Spiritus sanctus ipsius disciplinae determinator.”

various heathen symbols, and built upon this idea ‘a series of stringent regulations’<sup>61</sup>.

Although, as we have mentioned, there is no difficulty in ascertaining the actual rules and restrictions imposed upon themselves by the Montanists, still for the purpose of afterwards analysing the influence of this asceticism upon the Church itself, we will proceed as before to quote the witnesses in chronological order, before proceeding to examine Tertullian’s own account.

APOLLONIUS. ( <i>op. Euseb.</i> )	HIPPOLYTUS.	JEROME.
“But who ‘is this new teacher? His works and his doctrines sufficiently show it. This is he that taught the dissolutions of marriages, he that imposed laws of fasting.” ( <i>H. E. lib.v. cap. 18.</i> )	“But they introduce new fasts and festivals, and the practice of eating dry things and radishes, pretending that these females (sc. M <sup>lla</sup> . & Pr <sup>lla</sup> .) enjoined them.” ( <i>Refut. lib. VIII. cap. 19.</i> )	“The Montanists keep three Lents in the year.” ( <i>Ep. ad Marcell. 41.</i> ) “Even after Pentecost they keep Lent, on the ground have that the bridegroom is taken away.” ( <i>Comm. in Matth. IX. 15.</i> )

These testimonies will be sufficient for our purpose: and we can now turn to Tertullian<sup>62</sup>. He states the question and answers it clearly: “It is on this account that the New Prophecies are rejected: not that Montanus and Maximilla and Priscilla preach another God, nor that they

81

overturn any particular rule of faith or hope, but that they plainly teach more frequent fasting than marrying<sup>63</sup>.” And in a later chapter he exclaims:- “How small is the extent of our restrictions! Two weeks of *xerophagiae* in the year (and not the whole of these, for the Sabbaths and the Lord’s days are excepted) - these we offer to God, abstaining from things which we do not reject, but defer<sup>64</sup>.”

Without furnishing a complete abstract of this remarkable treatise, we may summarize its contents as follows. The Christian Church regarded the institution of fasting as Scriptural and binding, but left a large measure of liberty to the individual. Montanist and Catholic started from the same general scheme<sup>65</sup>, but the former (acting on the dictates of the Paraclete,) desired to restrain this liberty, or perhaps rather to mark out rules by which it might be

<sup>61</sup> This is well worked out by Ritschl (*Entstehung*, p. 493 ff.): “Ein solches Streben kann nun erstens keine Adiaphona dulden, das heisst, solche Labensäussenungan, daran sittlicher Werth nicht in ihnen selbst, sondern nur in ihrer Bazeihung sum Subjekte liagt, welchas sie ausübt. Vialmehr werden alle einzelne Punkte nur entweder als *gabetone* oder als *verbotene*, bazeichnet worden.” Tertullian condemns those who acted on the rule, “Quod non prohibatur, ultro permissum est,” and lays down ‘inexorably: “Imo prohibetur quod non ultro est permissum.”” (*De Cor. Mil. c. 2.*) Neandar (*Antignost. p. 280 ff.*) also expatiates upon the strange inconsistency which caused the Montanists to outbid the Church in Judaistic formalism.

<sup>62</sup> Other references may be found in Epiphanius (*Hær. XLVIII. 8*), he accuses them of disdainful food sent by God; and in Theodoret. (*Fabul. haer. III. 2.*) It is somewhat singular that Philaster and Augustin do not mention the topic.

<sup>63</sup> *De Jejuniis*, cap. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* cap. 15.

<sup>65</sup> “Pascha celebramus annuo circulo (including the preliminary Quadragesima) stationibus quartam et sextam sabbati dicamus et jejuniis parasceven.” (Cap. 14.) He adds that the Catholics sometimes extended the fast to the Sabbath. [It is curious that Bp Cosin, in his *Religion of the Realm of England*, declares that “the Fridays and Saturdays of each week are fast-days of the Anglican Church.” Meyrick’s edition, p. 53.]



profitably utilized. But the real purpose of the treatise is not so much to defend the rules themselves, which were in reality but little more stringent than the simple “custom” of the Church: it was the underlying principle that he ardently advocates. This principle is chiefly utilitarian in its character: temperance, even want, is the bodily state most conducive to holiness. In the fifth chapter, Tertullian reviews the history of Israel, and shews that (as in Adam’s case) sensual appetite was the chief source of sin. The rejection of manna is their contempt for the heavenly *xerophagia*. Moses and Elijah are instances of the aid which fasting gives to spiritual elevation, as well as Anna in the New Testament [cap.

82

V.-VIII]. Then Tertullian discusses the advantage of the partial fast on dry meats, and also the institution of “Stations”<sup>66</sup>. Little by little the defence of the one system changes into a fierce attack upon the other, “which reigns in wealth and satiety, not making inroads upon such sins as fasts diminish, nor feeling need of such visions as *xerophagiae* extort, nor apprehending such wars of your own as Stations dispel” [cap. XII.]. After a rapid transition once more to the question of prescription against novelty, and claiming true antiquity for his own views, Tertullian concludes with a stirring peroration upon the need of fasts in the present persecution [sc. that of Severus]. “Even to encounter beasts, it will be a Christian’s duty to practise emaciation!” [cap. XVII.]

83

## § 6. Marriage.

It is not necessary to devote any space here to recount and refute the particular slanders which the imagination of later writers evolved concerning the Montanistic theory of Marriage. These, with others of a similar character, will be dealt with in a note at the end of this book<sup>67</sup>. Nor need we recount the arguments in detail with which the champion of the New Prophecy strove to prove that the reforms were more ancient than the customs attacked. The nature of this reasoning we have seen in the former section. We need only regard the particular facts, and the relation which these Montanistic opinions bore to those held generally in the Christian Church.

---

<sup>66</sup> Of all the writers on Montanism, Wernsdorf seems to have devoted most learning to the very difficult subject of the special fasts. His conclusion is that the Montanists had “*duas proprias sibi ac peculiare quadragintas, unam mensis Junii post Pentecosten, alteram Decembris ante Nat. Christi, quarum quælibet quinque dies absolvebat a feria secunda ad sextam, ita celebrabant, ut siccis tantum cibis at potu aquæ uterentur, non abstinentes ab omnibus sed a delicatioribus cibis, non ab omni potione sed vini, non ‘recusantes’ sed ‘diminuantes et resecantes’ cibum.*” (*De Montanistis*, p. 69.) Tertullian’s own definition of the *Xerophagia* is:—“*siccantes cibum ab omni carne et omni jurulentia at uvidioribus quibusque pomis ne quid vinositatis vel ederent vel biberent.*” (Cap. 1.) Much difference of opinion still prevails as to the exact nature of the *Statio*. An old writer, Chladenius (*De Stationibus vett. Christianorum*. Lipsiæ, 1744), held that the Stations were not necessarily fasts, or joined to them, and remarked that the Montanists “*sabbati die solo vovam præstitisse stationem.*” He defines the Station as “*...diem aut insignem diei partem, quam quis privatim... precibus puiqua xneditationibus, libere destinavit.*” (p. 43.) Petavius, Rigaltius, and Daillé, all high authorities, thought that the *Stationes* were fixed days of special devotion, with an invariable fast until the 9th hour. As to this, a passage in Hermas seems clear:—“*Quid tam mane venisti? Respondi, quoniam stationem habeo. Quid est, inquit, statio? Et dixi, jejunium.*” (Lib. III. Sim. 5.) And even if Hermas be rejected as a doubtful authority (as Chladenius insists), we have both Clemens Alexandr. and Origen, who distinctly explain that “*Stationes=νηστεία.*” Tertullian’s own words are really sufficient by themselves: “*Hæc erit statio sera, quæ ad vesperam jejunans, pinguiorem onationem Deo immolat.*” (*De Jej.* cap. X.)

<sup>67</sup> Vide infra, § 9.

The Montanistic position is defined in the opening words of the treatise *De Monogamia*:- “Heretics do away with marriages; the ‘Psychici’ accumulate them. The former marry not even once: the latter not only once. What dost thou, Law of the Creator?” And, a few lines further on:- “We admit one marriage, just as we do one God.” This is perfectly in harmony with the (pre-Montanistic) treatise *Ad Uxorem*, where he extols in the highest terms the holy union “quod ecclesia conciliat, oblatio confirmat, obsignat benedictio, angeli renuntiant<sup>68</sup>.” Here, although a second marriage is not denounced as a crime, as a “decent adultery,” it is urgently deprecated as a departure from God’s original dispensation. Still, in the second Book, even those cases where a second marriage has been contracted are dealt with, and such persons (assumed to have acted under infirmity) are enjoined to marry only “in the Lord<sup>69</sup>.” This portion also deals at

84

length with the dangerous consequences of marriage between Christian and Heathen, not necessarily for the second time. The tone is far more decided and severe in the treatise *De exhortatione Castitatis*, culminating in the ninth chapter, where Tertullian concludes that “if we look deeply into his [sc. St Paul’s: he had been examining 1 Cor. ix. 5] meanings, and interpret them, second marriage will have to be termed no other than a species of fornication.” But still here the argument is to a great extent utilitarian, based on the spiritual and even temporal advantages of leading a single life after the first widowhood, if not throughout life. This standpoint is utterly abandoned in the final work already named, and the second marriage becomes an evil in itself, only suffered for a time on account of the hardness of men’s hearts, and now forbidden by the Paraclete to His followers. Tertullian revels as usual in a historical review of Biblical history. If Cain’s was the first crime after his parent’s disobedience, Lamech’s double marriage was hardly less culpable<sup>70</sup>. From Abraham’s case, denied as a precedent, he passes to the provisions of the Mosaic law; and here his arbitrary selection of rules to which he ascribes a permanently binding force, and those which he regards as abrogated, can hardly be defended<sup>71</sup>. The

85

teaching of our Lord and of St Paul is then examined, and the utterances favourable to celibacy held forth and insisted on [cap. IX. - XIV.]. Finally, those pleas of “infirmity,” so gently reasoned with in the early treatise, are now dissected with indignant scorn. “Such infirmity is equal to a third, and a fourth, and even (perhaps) a seventh marriage; as increasing

---

<sup>68</sup> *Ad Uxor.* II. 8. Wernsdorf, by assuming against all internal evidence, that the 2nd book was written after Tertullian had embraced Montanism, attempts to prove that Montanism admitted second marriages in exceptional cases. Against such a hypothesis, the treatise *De Monogamia* is decisive.

<sup>69</sup> “Spiritus sanctus qui viduas et innuptas integritati perseverare mavult, qui nos ad exōmplum sui hortatur, nullam aliam formam repetendarum nuptiarum, nisi in Domino præscribit. Huic soli conditioni incontinentiæ detrimenta concedit. Tantum, inquit, in Domino. Adjecit pondas legi suæ: tantum!” (*Ad Uxor.* II. 2.)

<sup>70</sup> “Post primum scelus, homicidium, tam dignum secundo loco scelus non fuit, quam duæ nuptiæ. Neque enim refert, duas quis uxores singulas habuerit, an pariter singulæ duas fecerint. Idem numerus conjunctorum et separatorum.” (*De Monogam.* c. 4.)

<sup>71</sup> “Während Tertullian die Vielweiberei der Patriarchen bei Seite setzt, als einer überwundenen Offenbarungsstufe angehörig, benutzt er das Mosaische Pniestergesetz für seinen Zweck, weil nichts dagegen sei, von den alten Vorbildern das anzuerkennen, was mit seinen eigenen Tendenzen übereinstimme.” (Ritschl, *Entstehung*, p. 503.) I cannot say that I go so far as Bitschl in attributing to Montanism, as expounded by Tertullian, “not a new ethical code, but ONLY the execution of the old one, as found in Old and New Testament.” (*Ibid.*) - This is “protesting too much.”

its strength as often as its weakness; but which will no longer have an apostle's authority, but of some Hermogenes, - went to marry more women than he paints<sup>72</sup>." One question only remains: was Tertullian as sincere and vigorous in his war against the Gnostic heresy which condemned marriage in itself, as against the digamists? Probably he was; but still it was rather the premises of Marcion that he detested than this especial practical conclusion. Celibacy is to the married state not as good to evil, but as the more favoured condition to the less<sup>73</sup>. But then this permitted monogamy is hedged in by such minute restrictions, and the praise bestowed on it is so much outweighed by the enthusiastic exaltation of virginity, that the lesson intended for the hearer cannot be doubted<sup>74</sup>.

Finally, we ask whether on this question any gulf existed between the opinions of Montanism, and those of the primitive Church in the 2nd century. Tertullian everywhere disclaims the slightest departure from the principles of Christianity. How is he confirmed by other writers? Athenagoras declares that "the remaining in virginity and in the state of a eunuch brings nearer to God," and that many of his contemporaries "grow old unmarried, in the hope of living in closer communion with God." And in the same chapter occurs the completely Montanistic utterance:- "a person should either remain

86

as he was born, or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only a specious adultery<sup>75</sup>." Theophilus gives evidence to the universal feeling in favour of monogamy<sup>76</sup> Irenæus declares repeated marriages to be so many fornications<sup>77</sup> even Clement of Alexandria deems them distinct marks of Christian imperfection<sup>78</sup>. Our conclusion, then, can only be that Montanism may have pressed to excess the doctrine which it found in the Church, but cannot justly be accused of introducing it.

## § 7. Penance.

In this most important branch of the subject, we are deprived of one portion of the evidence hitherto compared with the rest. For with the exception of a doubtful allusion by a writer quoted in Eusebius's history<sup>79</sup>, there is no reference to be found in any writer except Tertullian to the special opinions entertained by the Montanists upon repentance and the power of the keys. Fortunately his writings include two treatises, one most obviously

<sup>72</sup> *De Monogam.* cap. XVI.

<sup>73</sup> "Sanctitatem sine nuptiarum damnatione novimus, et sectamur, at præterimus; non ut malo bonum, sed ut bono melius." (*Adv. Marcion.* I. 29.)

<sup>74</sup> See this worked out in the most masterly manner by Neander. (*Antignostikus*, 2d ed. p. 245 ff.)

<sup>75</sup> Τὸ ἐν παρθενία καὶ εὐνουχία μείναι μᾶλλον παρίστησι τῷ θεῷ ..... Ὁ δεύτερος γάμος εὐπρεπὴς ἐστὶ μοιχεία. (*Legat.* c. XXXIII.)

<sup>76</sup> Παρ' οἷς (τοῖς χριστιανοῖς) σωφροσύνη πάρεστιν, ἐγράτεια ἀσκεῖται, μονογαμία τηρεῖται, ἀγνεία φυλάσσεται. (*Ad Autolyc.* III. 15.)

<sup>77</sup> "Samanitana praevaricatrix, quae in uno viro non mansit, sed fornicata est in multis nuptiis" (c. *Hær.* III. 17. 2.)

<sup>78</sup> *Stromata*, III, 12. 82. [And see Herm. *Past. Mand.* IV. 4.] And Justin Martyr has a remarkable passage: "by means of virgins, marriage, made lawless (ἄνομος) by lust, is destroyed." But notwithstanding Semisch, this Fragment cannot be deemed quite indubitably Justin's. (*Fragm. Resurr.* cap. III.)

<sup>79</sup> The evidently ironical question, "Does the prophetess forgive the martyr his robberies? Or the martyr forgive the prophetess her avarice?" (Apollonius ap. Euseb. V. 18), can hardly be described as throwing much light on the matter, as Ritschl thinks. Cf. *Entstehung*, p. 518.

composed before his adoption Of Montanism, the other as unquestionably subsequent to that step. A comparison of these works will be amply sufficient for our purpose.

The first of these is a fitting sequel to the tract *De Baptismo*. The subject is Repentance, that is to say, the means offered by the Church to those who had sinned

87

after baptism. The treatise begins with a general review of Repentance in the abstract, an investigation into its origin, as well as into the laws which regulate it. In the seventh chapter the real matter is reached, and it is approached (as it were) with reluctance. "It is irksome," says Tertullian, "to make mention of a second, - in that case, the last - hope; lest, by treating of a remedy yet in reserve, we seem to be pointing to a yet further space for sinning<sup>80</sup>." This mention Of a "last hope" appears certainly to be modified by what follows: "Let no one be less, because God is more good, by repeating his sin as often as he is forgiven. Otherwise he will find, be sure, an end of escaping, when he shall not find one of sinning. We have escaped once: thus far [and no farther] let us commit ourselves to perils, even if we seem likely to escape a second time<sup>81</sup>." This broader and freer view is endorsed by the earnest recommendations which follow:- "Dread by all means to sin again, but do not shrink from repenting again! Guard yourself from incurring peril, but not from being rescued from it. Let none be ashamed. Repeated sickness must have repeated medicine.... You have offended, but you can still be reconciled. You have One whom you may satisfy, and Him willing [to accept the satisfaction]." These admirable words, breathing as they do the purest spirit of Christianity, are fitly followed up in the next chapter, where the lessons of the prodigal son, the lost drachma, and the pardon offered to the erring Asiatic Churches, are pointed out and enforced. Next comes the outward means, the ceremony called in the Church the Ἐξομολόγησις. "It commands [the penitent] to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to cover his body in mourning (*sordibus*), to lay his spirit low in sadness, to exchange for seventies the sins he has committed; moreover, to know no food or drink but such as is plain, ....

88

to groan, to weep and cry unto the Lord their God; to fall at the feet of the presbyters, and kneel to God's dear ones. ... All this Exomologesis [does] that it may enhance repentance<sup>82</sup>." The treatise concludes with an earnest appeal to sinners to embrace this salutary humiliation.

Now, the first thing that strikes the reader is the diametrically opposed principle (to that of Montanism) which is furnished. Here the absolute necessity of an outward ceremony is insisted on, and the worthlessness of mere inward resolutions exposed. "But some say that God is satisfied if He be looked up to with the heart and the mind, even if this be not done in act..... These dispositions are ever wont to spring from the seed of hypocrites, whose repentance is never sincere<sup>83</sup>." But we saw in the two previous sections the strange inconsistency between the creed of spiritual liberty and the strict neo-Judaic code upon fasts and marriage. The discussion of the cause for this phenomenon we reserve for a later section: it is sufficient to note here that no very wide gulf had to be passed to make these opinions

---

<sup>80</sup> *De Pænitentia*, cap. VII.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. *Antignostikus*, p. 199 ff.

<sup>82</sup> *De Pænitentia*, cap. IX.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* cap. V.

Montanistic. Save only in one point: the limit for post-baptismal repentance was now drawn very close, and at times it seems to be excluded.

The subject of the treatise *De Pudicitia* was an episcopal edict, issued by Zephyrinus, which announced absolution to those adulterers and fornicators who had complied with the requirements of ecclesiastical discipline. “Oh edict,” exclaims Tertullian, “which cannot be characterized as a worthy act<sup>84</sup>! “At first, this work hardly seems to desert the stand-point of the former one, for he is undoubtedly right in contrasting the spirit of this edict

89

with “the primary discipline of the Christian name,” most rigorous in the case of these sins. But soon the influence of the new opinions shews itself:- “Why then do they grant indulgence, under the name of repentance, to crimes for which they furnish remedies by their law of multinuptialism<sup>85</sup>?” The next chapter is an attempt to refute his own position (previously assumed in the *De Pœnitentia*), as to the freedom and unlimited nature of the Divine grace. This culminates in a division of offences into the pardonable and the deadly<sup>86</sup>, not as affecting God’s power, but the discretion entrusted to the visible Church<sup>87</sup>. It is a mistake to suppose that Tertullian and the Montanists ever limited the power of the Church in this matter: “‘You say, the Church has the power of forgiving sins.’ This I acknowledge and sanction [so much the rather] as I have the Paraclete Himself in the persons of the new prophets, saying: ‘The Church has the power to forgive sins; but I will not do it, lest they err again<sup>88</sup>.’”

90

Met by the not unreasonable query, how he can expect repentance if he refuses an assurance of pardon, he answers that the repentance, if genuine, will not be in vain, [*non frustra agetur*,] but the pardon cannot expediently be declared by the Church, lest license to sin be imagined.

The second point of importance was the nature of the sins to be included in the category of mortal offences. It appears that some who were ready to treat with the utmost rigour murder

---

<sup>84</sup> “Audio etiam edictum esse propositum, et quidem peremptorium. Pontifex scilicet maximus edicit: ‘Ego at mœchiæ at fornicationis delicta pœnitentia functis dimitto.’ O edictum, cui adscribi non poterit: bonum factum!” (*Ibid.* cap. 1.)

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* cap. 1.

<sup>86</sup> “Sunt quædam delicta quotidianæ incursionis, quibus omnes sumua objecti. Cui enim non accidit, aut irasci inique, at ultra solis occasum, aut at manum immittera, aut facile maledicere, aut temere jurare. . . . ut si nulla sit venia istonum, nemini salus competat. Horum ergo aut venia per exoratum patris Chnistum.” And in Cap. II.: “Alia dalcita sunt remissibilia, alia irremissibilia, secundum quod nemini dubium est, alia castigationem mereri, alia damnationem. Secundum hanc differentiam delictorum pœnitentiæ quoque conditio discriminatur. Alia grit, quæ veniam consequi possit, in delicto scilicet remissibili. Alia, quæ consequi nub modo possit, in delicto scilicet irremissibili.”

<sup>87</sup> Wernsdorf was the first, I think, to see this clearly. “Quæstio non erat de foro Dei, sed de foro ecclesiæ.” (*De Montanistis*, p. 91.) Tertullian puts this very clearly (at the same time attempting to remove any inconsistency with his earlier position) in the 3rd chapter:- “Quantum ad nos, qui soluni Dominum meminimus delicta concedere, et utique mortalia, non frustra agetur. Ad Dominum enim remissa, et illi exinde prostrata, hoc ipso magis operabitur vaniam, quod eam a solo Deo exorat, quod delicto suo humanam pacem sufficere non credit, quod ecclesiæ mavult erubescere quam communicare. . . . Et si hic pacem non metit, apud Dominum seminat.”

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* cap. XXI. The Bishop of Winchester must have temporarily forgotten this passage, I think, when he wrote “The Montanists did not allow the Church the power of forgiving great sins after Baptism, even once.” (On Art. XVI.) The practical distinction might be almost non-existent; but the logical difference is obvious between a power which it is not expedient to employ, and absolute impotence.

and idolatry, were not disposed to regard sins of impurity with equal severity<sup>89</sup>. We can readily understand that the ascetic principles of Montanism would sternly oppose any such exception, if they did not place fornication and adultery in the worst category of all, i.e. with premeditated murder. At any rate they were *peccata mortalia*, while those guilty of nameless sins were to be excluded even from the ranks of public penitents<sup>90</sup>. Tertullian's objections to the exercise of the absolving power on the part of the bishops took their root in his conception of the Church, to which we devote a special section. He considered them as, indeed successors of the Apostles in teaching, but not necessarily (or even probably) in the possession of spiritual power and insight, the unfailing marks of Apostleship. These

91

he demands from those who claim the accompanying privilege. "Exhibit to me, apostolic Sir, prophetic evidences, that I may recognise your divine virtue, and vindicate to yourself the power of remitting such sins!" [cap. XXI.] Accordingly, the "Church" which has the power of so doing, is the Spiritual Church, enlightened by new revelations and purged by the new discipline<sup>91</sup>.

## § 8. The Church.

We have reached a stage in the investigations where it is possible to form the first general idea of the Montanistic principle, and the character of its opposition to the Church. It is true that, as we have seen, the Paraclete introduced no changes in formal doctrine, - still His presence and His revelations were new facts. It is likewise true that the asceticism of Montanism differed only in degree from the moral code universally accepted in the Christian Church - nevertheless the alteration involved a claim, and that claim as the certain cause of ultimate disunion and separation.

What, then, was the idea of the Church entertained by those who believed that the Paraclete spoke by the mouth of Montanus and Maximilla? In the first place, there was the division of those who believed these revelations, - the "Pneumatici" or *Spirituales*, and those who rejected them, - the "Psychici." Between these bodies peace might well prevail, for they comprise one church. "We share with them," says Tertullian in the Montanistic treatise on the Veiling of Virgins, - "the law of peace, and the name of brotherhood. They and we have one faith, one Christ, one God, the same hope, the same baptismal sacraments; let me say it once for all, WE ARE ONE CHURCH<sup>92</sup>." This view was by no means reciprocated

92

---

<sup>89</sup> "Idololatram quidem et homicidam semel damnas, mœchum vero de medio excipis, idololatræ successorum, homicidæ antecessorem, utriusque collagam? Personæ acceptatio est, miserabiliores pœnitentias reliquisti." (*Ibid.* cap. V.)

<sup>90</sup> It is not easy to decide whether these last-named were only excluded from the interior of the Church, the class of so-called *χειμαζόμενοι*, (as Neander thinks, *Antign.* 262,) Or banished altogether. Tertullian's words are: "Reliquas autem libidinum furias impias... non modo limine, verum omni ecclesiæ tecto submovemus, quia non sunt delicta sed monstra." (*Ibid.* cap. IV.)

<sup>91</sup> Tertullian makes the same demand to Marcion: "Edat aliquem psalmum, aliquem visionem, aliquam orationam, duntaxat spiritualem, in ecstasi, si qua linguæ interpretatio accessit." (*Adv. Marc.* v. 8.)

<sup>92</sup> "Communicamus cum Psychicis jus pacis et nomen fraternitatis. Una nobis at illis fides, unus Deus, idem Christus, eadem spes, cadem lavacri sacramenta. Semel dixerim, UNA ECCLESIA SUMUS." (*De Virg. Veland.* cap. 2.)

on the other side; the Montanists were reviled, and finally driven by force from the Church<sup>93</sup>. Themison is declared to “blaspheme against the holy church” because he wrote in favour of the Prophets<sup>94</sup>. And certainly it would have needed no small measure of Christian meekness to have submitted in silence to the title of “Carnal Christians” thus applied. The origin of the name was obvious: Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος (said the Apostle in his First Epistle to the Corinthians) οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ. The Psychic Christian had the Scriptures, but only their letter; he had the Church, but only the outward framework or polity; and a system of machinery which, unless directed in obedience to the Paraclete, might do more harm than good. For the Spiritual Christian, although he submitted gladly to the outward forms of the Church, there was much more within. He was himself a priest: he might be a prophet, an apostle. In his eyes, as Tertullian says:- “The Church is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity. [The Spirit] combines that church which the Lord has made to consist in ‘three.’ And thus, from that time forward, every number [of persons] who may have combined together into this faith is accounted a ‘church,’ from the Author and Consecrator<sup>95</sup>.” And from these premises he drew the conclusion: “The Church, then, will truly forgive sins: but it [will be] the Church of the Spirit,.. not the church which consists of bishops.”

93

Thus, while in theory the Pneumatic Church was situated concentrically within the Psychic: in reality this relation was soon lost. In Tertullian’s writings we can trace the gradual change of tone, sometimes even in the same treatise. Perhaps it might be possible, by help of the same minute criticism which recent research has bestowed on the writings of Shakspeare, to ascertain the order of Tertullian’s works, following the change of tone with regard to the Visible Church. By such a canon we should place very late the *Exhortation to Chastity*, notwithstanding other reasons against the course, for there the naked extreme of Montanism appears. “Are not even we laymen priests? ..... Where three are, a church is, albeit of laymen. For each individual lives by his own faith, nor is there acceptance of persons with God.... Therefore, if you have the right of a priest in your own person, in cases of necessity, it behoves you to have likewise the discipline of a priest<sup>96</sup>.” The more the Church tended in the direction of externalism, the more openly were these counter-claims put forth, and often without moderation of language or even adherence to scriptural ordinance. Points of difference, too, were added to the materials already existing, in themselves of slight moment, but capable of being magnified in the heat of controversy. Two of these may be here touched upon, as illustrations of the struggle.

It is unquestionable that all parties in the Church regarded martyrdom as the crowning glory of a Christian’s career. The follies, even the crimes, of past life were considered as triumphantly condoned. Even the Confessor, who had manfully undergone torture or imprisonment, gained a personal distinction and authority not always beneficial either to the

<sup>93</sup> Ὀλίγοι ἦσαν οὗτοι τῶν Φρυγῶν ἐξηπατημένοι, τὴν δὲ καθόλου πᾶσαν τὴν ὑπο τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐκκλησίαν (sc. The Catholic Church), βλασφημεῖν διδάσκοντες τοῦ ἀπηυθαδισμένου πνεύματος κ.τ.λ. (Anonymus ap. Euseb. *H. E.* V. 16.)

<sup>94</sup> ...βλασφημῆσαι δὲ εἰς τὸν κύριον καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ τὴν ἅγιαν ἐκκλησίαν. (Apollonius ap. Euseb. V. 18.)

<sup>95</sup> “Ecclesia proprie at principaliter est ipse Spiritus. Illam ecclesiam congregat, quam Dominus in tribus posuit.” (*De Pudic.* cap. XXI.) In the treatise *De Jejuniis* (cap. 11) the Catholic Church is described as “gloriosissima multitudo psychicorum.”

<sup>96</sup> *De exhort. Castit.* cap. VII.

Church at large or to the individual. It was natural that the Montanists should yield an excessive regard to a testimony which corresponded exactly with -their ascetic ideas. The scriptural

94

rule “when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another” (Matth. x. 23), was now derided as an unworthy cloak for weakness, and martyrdom, from being a privilege, was erected into a duty. One motive was obvious. If the Spirit of God were truly with the Pneumatici, He would sustain them under the pangs of death. And had the Montanists not been eager to dare the ordeal, we can imagine that bitter taunts would not have been wanting<sup>97</sup>. As however they did seek, and (in the majority of cases) endure martyrdom, the accusation took another turn, which we must notice. They were charged with (a) provoking, and counselling to provoke persecution; (b) denying the right to flee to another city; (c) passing off as martyrs those who had suffered as criminals; and finally, (d) preferring and teaching to prefer apostacy under torment to flight. The two first charges are not easy to refute, and it can only be alleged that similar theories were held by certain Christians doubtless from the very earliest times<sup>98</sup>. The third rests on the evidence of Apollonius (ap. Euseb.) and the Anonymus, the former of whom declares that a certain Montanist named Alexander, “who called himself a martyr,... was punished for robberies and other crimes<sup>99</sup>.” It is by no means asserted here that Alexander had not suffered as a Confessor as well, which in fact is admitted in the case of Themison. [We know that the words “martyr” and “martyrdom” were often employed as if convertible with what was more strictly “confessorship.”] And perhaps the least agreeable side of the controversy is the taunting comparison and

95

mutual depreciation of the character and motives of those who had endured punishment as Christians<sup>100</sup>.

The fourth and most serious charge is only found in the writings of modern assailants of Montanism. Tillemont states it thus: “Tertullian, in his *De Fuga in Persecutione* (cap. 10), puts into the mouth of a pious Christian, evidently a ‘Pneumaticus,’ these words:- ‘It is the Lord, He is mighty... If it be His pleasure that I die, let Him destroy me Himself, while I save myself for Him. I had rather bring odium upon Him by dying at His will, than wrath by escaping through my own<sup>101</sup>.’” This Tillemont explains as meaning:- “I will face martyrdom even should I apostatize under torture, rather than escape.” Surely, however, this is a grossly unfair comment. The sense of the passage is, obviously, that the Christian should not desert his post, but look to God for aid. Wernsdorf, as usual, attempts to explain matters by quoting

---

<sup>97</sup> The Anonymous writer admits that ὅταν ἐν πάσι τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἐλεγχθέντες ἀπορήσωσιν, ἐπὶ τοὺς μάρτυρας καταφεύγειν πειρῶνται, λέγοντες πολλοὺς ἔχειν μάρτυρας καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τεκμήριον πιστὸν τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ παρ’ αὐτοῖς λεγομένου προφητικοῦ πνεύματος.” (Ap. Euseb. *H. E.* V. 16.)

<sup>98</sup> It is clear that many who were not Montanists shared these opinions. “The Fathers ..... represented martyrdom as an object to be ambitiously sought.” (Kaye, p. 144)

<sup>99</sup> *H. E.* V. 18.

<sup>100</sup> The Anonymus admits that there were very many Montanistic Martyrs, and is reduced to the rather dangerous resource of pleading that many heretical sects, such as the Marcionites, had numerous martyrs also. (*Ibid.* V. 16.)

<sup>101</sup> “Dominus est, potens est, omnia illius sunt: ubi fuero, in manu ejus coin, faciat quod volt, non discedo; et si perire me volet, ipse me perdat, dum me ego servo illi: malo invidiam ei facere per voluntatem ipsius pereundo, quam bilem, per meam evadendo.”



the pre-Montanistic treatise *Ad Uxorem* (lib. I. cap. 3), which of course has no pertinence<sup>102</sup>. Finally, it is untrue to suppose that the Montanists exaggerated the merit of the mere act of martyrdom. It is, of course, possible to find detached passages in Tertullian's writings<sup>103</sup> seeming to bear out the view, but none, at any rate, which might not be matched in his orthodox successors. But, on the other hand, he speaks on more than one occasion of the worthlessness of

96

such an act when it is not the result of deep faith and conviction. He ridicules the pretensions of those who, on the strength of a few weeks' imprisonment, flaunted their vanity in the Church. And his satirical pen reaches a terrible bitterness when he describes the unhappy end of those who (as it is to be feared was sometimes the case) sustained or replaced their failing courage in a disgraceful way<sup>104</sup>.

Another dispute arose upon the question of the dress of virgins when in the church: the custom hitherto permitting these to keep the head uncovered, or but slightly veiled, while the Montanists strenuously enjoined the complete covering, as in the case of the married and widows. That the root of the controversy was far beneath the surface, is clear to any one who studies Tertullian's masterly analysis of the relation between Tradition and Truth, which he prefixes to his exhortation, although he also appeals to the authority of St Paul, to reasons of good taste, and to a very singular vision<sup>105</sup>. Other treatises, such as the *Soldiers' Crown*, and *On Theatres*, only involved, as regards their Montanistic colouring, a slight exaggeration of principles bound up in the spirit of Early Christianity. It is significant that not even an Epiphanius found any capital in this department.

## § 9. Sacraments and Ritual.

Once more we have to work on materials of a one-sided character, the accusations of writers who lived in later times, and with but slender assistance from Tertullian.

97

The question to be discussed in this section is, Did the Montanists introduce any changes into the outward service of the Church, or into the Sacraments? The best arrangement will be to treat, one after another, the accusations of wilful and radical innovation made by Epiphanius, Augustin, and many others.

---

<sup>102</sup> "Etiam in persecutionibus, melius est a permissu fugere de oppido, quam comprehensum et distortum negare." No doubt Tertullian always held to this sensible maxim: but unless Wernsdorf agreed with Hoffmann that all Tertullian's writings were Montanistic, he should not have quoted this one.

<sup>103</sup> Such as "tota Paradisi clavis tuus sanguis eat." (*De Anima*, 55.)

<sup>104</sup> Praxeas is "above all inflated with the pride of Confessorship, simply and solely because he had to bear for a short time the annoyance of a prison; on which occasion, 'had he given his body to be burned, it would have profited him nothing,' not having the love of God, whose very gifts he resisted and destroyed." (*Adv. Prax.* c. 1.) The account of the death of Pristinus, "your martyr, but no Christian one," could not be matched with anything in Juvenal or Swift. It does not bear quotation (*De Jejuniis*, cap. 12.)

<sup>105</sup> It is recorded in the 17th chapter. Wernsdorf calls it "visio satis lepida." And indeed it must have been a trial to the gravity of some hearers to learn that "nobis Dominus etiam revelationibus velaminis spatia metatus est."

The first-named expressly asserts that women filled the offices of presbyters and even of bishops among the Montanists<sup>106</sup>. Augustin appears to endorse the opinion. Here fortunately Tertullian is precise, and it is easy to understand the cause of the error. That women were allowed by the Montanists to prophesy in the Church, there can be no doubt. Even if the practice, as is probable, had been disused in the Church, its antiquity shielded it from any charge of heresy or innovation<sup>107</sup>. But we have evidence that a Montanist prophetess only revealed her visions “dimissa plebe,” i.e. after the regular service, and when only the select faithful remained behind<sup>108</sup>. And we also have a very precise statement in the treatise *De virg. velandis*, to the effect that “it is not permitted to a woman either to speak or teach, or baptize, or offer [the Eucharist], nor any other masculine function<sup>109</sup>.” In this Tertullian shews no change from the views expressed in the earlier tracts (that on Baptism and the Prescription of Heretics), written certainly before he had embraced Montanism<sup>110</sup>. The next point has been already

98

discussed in a former section<sup>111</sup>. It was there shewn, (a) that the keeping of Easter according to Roman or Asiatic use could never have become a note of Montanism; (b) that the evidence as to the rite adopted is at best conflicting; and (c) that the better opinion seems to be that the Montanists did adopt the Roman use<sup>112</sup>.

*Baptism.* Did the Montanists baptize “for the dead”? The accusation is made by Philaster alone<sup>113</sup>, of whom the irreverent Wernsdorf remarks, “*sir simplex, fortassè pius, red scriptor ineptus*” (p. 51). The learned German suggests that Philaster blundered between the Marcionites and the Montanists, which - would not involve, I imagine, any excessive want of charity to believe<sup>114</sup>. Tertullian alludes twice to the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 29), and though he certainly utters no specific condemnation of the practice, he in no way approves it<sup>115</sup>. “It is certain,” says Tertullian, “that they adopted this [practice] with such a presumption as made them suppose that this vicarious baptism would be beneficial to the flesh of another in anticipation of the resurrection.” This is not the language of a man who treats of a rite still exercised by a party to which he belongs, notwithstanding vehement attacks. Accordingly our conclusion must be to reject the statement of Philaster.

<sup>106</sup> Ἐπίσκοποι παρ’ αὐτοῖς γυναῖκες καὶ πρεσβύτεροι γυναῖκες καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ..... αἱ καθισταμένοι παρ’ αὐτοῖς γυναῖκες ἐν κλήρῳ. (Epiph. *Hær.* XLIX. 2.) And see Augustin, *Liber de Hæres.* § 27, and Wernsdorf, *de Montanistis*, p. 54 ff.

<sup>107</sup> Neander has some good remarks on 1 Cor. xi. 5 in his *Auslegung der Corintherbriefe*. (Berlin, 1859, p. 175.)

<sup>108</sup> See the whole passage (*De Anima*, cap. IX.) quoted supra, p. 63, note (2).

<sup>109</sup> “Non permittitur mulieri in ecclesia loqui, sed nec docere, nec tingere, nec offerre, neque ullius virilis muneris, nedum sacerdotis officii sortem sibi vindicare,” (Cap. 9.)

<sup>110</sup> In the latter treatise he condemns certain heretics among whom “ipsæ mulieres quam procaces! quæ audeant docere, contendere, exorcismos agere, curationes rapromittere, forsitan et tingere.” (Cap. 41.) And see *De Baptismo*, cap. 17.

<sup>111</sup> Vide supra, pp. 42 and notes 2-5.

<sup>112</sup> The fact of the Synod of Laodicea specially separating the Phrygians and the Quartodecimans, (for the former were to be rebaptized, the latter not,) I now think almost conclusive on this point. Cf. the Canons 7 and 8, and Hefele, I. 729.

<sup>113</sup> “Hi mortuos baptizant.” (Philastr. *de Hæres.* 49.)

<sup>114</sup> “Marcionitas voluit nominare *bonus vir*, quorum baptismus vicarius satis notus est, neque aliam habuit confusionis causam, quam quod utriusque sectæ nomen ab eodem elemento inchoatur.” (The analogy, I presume, of Monmouth and Macedon.)

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Adv. Marc.* v. 10, and *De res. carnis*, c. 48 (quoted above). Besides Wernsdorf, the subject is fully treated in Arnold’s *Upartheysiche Ketzeretzerhistorien*, p. 77 ff.

Were any unauthorized elements distributed in the Eucharist? According to Epiphanius, Philaster, and Augustin, cheese was partaken of; and the statement seems to find confirmation in an episode of the vision which appeared to the martyr Perpetua. She relates that she found herself in a spacious garden, in which sat a man with white hair, in the garb of a shepherd, milking his sheep.... He gave her a morsel of cheese (*casei buccella*), upon which “I received it with folded hands, and ate it; and all the saints around exclaimed, Amen.” This, together with Augustin’s positive statement<sup>116</sup>, and the absence of any evidence or assertion on the other side, would leave at least a strong presumption in favour of the idea. But in some cases a writer’s silence is more positive than even his utterance; and we can hardly believe that Tertullian’s combative honesty would have suffered him to pass over in silence so remarkable an innovation. It seems probable, then, that the cheese was not adopted as a Eucharistic element, but as an oblation: perhaps to be partaken of in the *Agapè*, but not in the solemn ceremony of the Church<sup>117</sup>.

Lastly we must deal with a topic which, were it possible, we would gladly pass over in silence. We must consider now the evidence upon which Epiphanius, Cyril, Philaster, Augustin, Isidor, and Theodoret accuse the party to which Tertullian and Perpetua belonged of participation in crimes so horrible that, if the charges be believed, Montanism deserves to the end of time to be the object of detestation<sup>118</sup>. It would be easy to reject the evidence at

100

once by the simple process of quoting the different accounts side by side, and pointing out the variations and contradictions involved; but such a course, allowable in jurisprudence, is not admissible in history. Besides, on one point all witnesses agree; and that is in the fact of Infanticide. A “fact,” at least, if these holy writers have spoken truly, which we must be so presumptuous as now to investigate<sup>119</sup>.

First let it be noted that neither Hippolytus nor the writers quoted by Eusebius know anything of these enormities. Clement, Origen, and Cyprian, all of whom mention Montanism in one way or another, are equally silent; so also is Athanasius. Cyril, in the middle of the fourth century, is the first to make the accusation. Let us transcribe his words:- “Montanus, most miserable of men,... cutting the throats of wretched little children, and chopping them up into horrid food; for the purposes of their so-called mysteries<sup>120</sup>.” Philaster, who wrote later, is vague in his details, but positive as to his facts. “And there [sc. at Pepuza were celebrated the cynical mysteries, and the horrible impiety with the child. For they say that [the Montanists]

<sup>116</sup> He distinctly identifies them with the Artotyritæ: “Artotyritæ sunt, (sc. Pbyrges,) .... offerunt enim panem at caseum, dicentes a primis hominibus oblationes de fructibus terræ et ovium fuisse celebratas.” (*Hær.* 26.) And compare Epiphanius, XLIX. 2, and Philaster (*Hæres.*LXXIV.).

<sup>117</sup> This solution I found in Wernsdorf. (P. 53.) It must be recollected that Epiphanius is doubtful whether the Artotyritæ were Montanists or a separate sect. And Timotheus Prasbyter (quoted by Fabricius in his notes on Philaster) makes them out to have been Marcionites.

<sup>118</sup> See Epiphanius (*Hær.* XLVIII.); Cyril (*Catech.* XVI. 4); Philaster (*Hær.* XLIX.); Augustin (*Hær.* XXVI.); Isidor of Pelusium (lib. I. ep. 242); Theodoret (*Fabul.* *Hær.* III. 2); &c. &c.

<sup>119</sup> Thus investigation would no doubt seem very presumptuous in the eyes of a certain modern school, whose writers speak of S. Philaster, S. Isidor, and so on, (cf. Canon Bright’s *History*, and others,) and who possibly wrote S. Kallistus, before the discovery of the *Philosophusena* revealed this distinguished person in his true light.

<sup>120</sup> “Ο Μοντανός ἀθλιώτατα παιδιά γυναικῶν μικρὰ σφάπτων καὶ κατακόπτων εἰς ἀθέμιτον βρῶσιν, προφάσει τῶν καλουμένων παρ’ αὐτοῖς μυστηρίων.” (*Catech.* XVI. 4.)

at Eastertide mingled the blood of a child with their sacrifice<sup>121</sup>.” The story gains, as might well be expected, immensely in graphic detail, by the end of

101

the century. Augustin cautiously shields himself under “it is reported,” but nevertheless furnishes us with an account how the child was pricked with needles, its blood mixed with flour, and made into bread, and so forth<sup>122</sup>. We will not even stop to point out the ridiculous contradiction between Cyril’s summary “chopping up,” and Augustin’s “needle-pricking,” upon which Wernsdorf grimly remarks: “*Uter ergo minus mentitur? utrumque enim mentiri, certum mihi est.*” That Isidor should join the chorus cannot surprise. [“*Ecce iterum Crispinus... monstrum scriptoris,*” exclaims Wernsdorf, “*cujus mendacia jam sæpe explosimus.*”] He perorates about “μαγγανείαις καὶ παιδοκτονίαις, μοιχείαις τε καὶ εἰδωλολατρείαις,” and there is no doubt but that he believed what he said<sup>123</sup>. Jerome is undecided: “*malo non credere, falsum sit omne, quod sanguinis est.*” Theodoret honestly admits the lack of any corroborating evidence. Of modern writers it is sufficient to say that they can be divided into two classes; those who indignantly repudiate the charge, and those who “*imitent de Conrart le prudent silence*<sup>124</sup>.” What shall be our conclusion? We shall not be disposed to believe an unproved indictment, because a piece of original slander has been copied and enlarged; nor shall we suppose that a man like Augustin would have repeated it had it not taken deep root in the popular mind. It seems that all writers forget that this crime of slaying a child was laid to the charge of

102

all Christians, originally, by their heathen opponents. [Cf. *The Apologies*, Justin I. 26; Athenagoras, 3; Tertullian, 2, 4, and especially cap. 7.] Now this charge was simply made because the Christians had private meetings, and it was possible that unknown and terrible rites were celebrated. This easy weapon was grasped by the enemies of Montanism, but not until Montanism had lost its numbers, and, above all, its mighty champion. Had Tertullian lived to hear this cruel falsehood, - “gross as a mountain, open, palpable,” he would have answered the worse than heathen slanderers: “Monsters of wickedness, we are accused of observing a holy rite in which we kill a little child and eat it.... This is what is constantly laid to our charge, and yet you take no pains to elicit the truth of what we have been so long accused. Either bring, then, the matter to the light of day, if you believe it, or give it no credit as having never enquired into it. On the ground of your double dealing, we are entitled to lay

---

<sup>121</sup> “Ubi et mysterium Cynicorum, et infantis execranda celebratur impietas. *Dicunt enim eos de infantis sanguine in Pascha miscere in suum sacrificium.*” (*Hær.* XLIX, Migne XII. 1165.) It is just possible that the word “Cynicorum” should be “Scenicorum,” or perhaps “Cyntillianorum,” (i.e. Quintillianists.) Cf. “τῶν Κυ?ντιλλίωνων” in Epiphanius (XLVIII. 14).

<sup>122</sup> “Sacramenta *perhibentur* funesta habere. Nam de infantis anniculi sanguine, quæ he toto ejus corpore minutis punctonum vulneribus extorquent, quasi eucharistiam suam conficere *perhibentur*, miscentes eum farinae, panemque inde facientes, qui puer si mortuus fuerit, habent apud eos pro martyre, si autem vixerit, pro Inagno sacerdote.” (*Hæres.* XXVI.) Augustin attributes the same enormities (“*perhibentur*” again!) to the Pepuziani, whom he distinguishes from the Montanists proper.

<sup>123</sup> Lib. I. epist. 242. (*Patrol. Gr.* LXXVIII. 332.)

<sup>124</sup> Most Church of England historians shirk the dilemma. The author of the History (described supra, p. 24) thinks that “there were some particular rites, but kept very secret from the uninitiated.” He expresses his conviction, however, that Montanus “*neither invented Transubstantiation, nor the Sacrifice of the Mass*” ! (P. 163.)

it down to you that there is no reality in the thing which you dare not examine!" [Apol. cap. VII.]<sup>125</sup>.

## § 10. Historical Position of Montanism.

If we now know something of the Montanists, - what manner of men they were, and what they believed, it now beboves us to form an opinion as to the position which the party occupies in history, and, at first, as to the causes which brought them into existence. There is no small danger of being perplexed by the multitude of theories which the ingenuity of different writers has suggested, but a steady reliance upon our previously ascertained facts will serve as an antidote. Neander deduces all that is characteristic in Montanism from the features of heathenism as modified by the Phrygian nationality<sup>126</sup>.

103

There is much that is attractive in this theory, more especially at a time when the historical influence of nationality is given perhaps an excessive share of attention. And if we believe the statement that Montanus was himself a convert from heathenism<sup>127</sup>, and perhaps had been a priest of Cybele formerly, the notion gains no little in consistency. But when we attempt to account for *all* the phenomena of Montanism on this hypothesis alone, its insufficiency becomes apparent. Nor is it even clear that all the points of superficial similarity are connected radically. For instance, it is not accurate, with Schwegler, (p. 80), to trace the ascetic views of Montanism on the subject of marriage to this source. [*“Ueberhaupt haben die Ansichten der Montanisten von Ehe und Ehelosigkeit so Manches was auf den Character der orientalischen Naturrligionen, auf ihr Bestreben die Geschlechtsdualität zu indifferenziren, zurückdeutet u. s. w.”*] It is rather, as we find in all later manifestations of cognate nature, the necessary corollary of the claim to higher and more spiritual knowledge. The objection is mentioned by Tertullian, and very fairly rejected<sup>128</sup>, with regard to fasting. We have seen elsewhere<sup>129</sup> that there is a danger in comparing the Montanistic theory of ecstatic inspiration with the heathen *μαντική*, the argument being somewhat more destructive than some of its modern employers

104

profess to think. At any rate the opinion was so clearly that of the majority of the Church, that an examination of the whole question would carry us much beyond our special subject.

---

<sup>125</sup> Pascal chewed long ago that it is a waste of time to attempt to prove a negative against the unscrupulous assertions of enemies. “C’est ainsi qu’il faut faire toutes les fois qu’on vous accusez les gens sans preuves. On n’s qu’à répondre à chacun da vous, *Mentiris impudentissuè!*” (*L. Pr.* 15.)

<sup>126</sup> “In der alten phrygischen Naturreligion erkennen wir den Character dieses zur Schwärmerei und rum Aberglauben geneigten, leicht an Magie und Entzückungen glaubenden Gebirgsvolks, und es kann uns nicht wundern wenn wir die phrygische Gemüthsart, die sich in den Ekstasen der Priester der Cybele und des Bacchus zeigt, in den Ekstasen und Somnambulismen der Montanisteir wieder finden,” (*Kirchen-Gesch.* I. 3. 871.) The same view was taken by Münter, Baumgarten-Crusius, and Kirchner.

<sup>127</sup> The Anonymus (*ap. Euseb.*) declares him to have been *τις τῶν νεοπίστων.* (*H. E.* V. 16.)

<sup>128</sup> “Sed bene, quod in nostris xerophagiis blasphemias ingerens, Casto Isidis et Cybeles eas adæquas. *Admitto testimoniale comparationem.* Hinc divinam constabit, quam diabolus divinorum æmulat imitatur. Ex religione superstitio compingitur.” (*De Jejuniis*, cap. 16.)

<sup>129</sup> Vide supra, pp. 65-68.

Shall we then accept the view of Schwegler, who makes Montanism a simple after-growth of Ebionitism? Here again, while admiring the ingenuity of the writer, and freely admitting that many of the analogies he points out are correct, he yet does not solve the problem, - he does not account for the existence of Montanism in itself, he does not shew us how the marvellous mixture of prophecy, ecstasy, ascetic severity, and chiliastic hope, came to be so moulded together<sup>130</sup>. But besides this shortcoming, his theory suffers necessarily from our very imperfect knowledge of the Ebionites themselves. We know, in fact, that at first all Christians were often called Nazareans or Ebionites. [καὶ πάντες δὲ Χριστιανοὶ Ναζωραῖοι τότε ὡσαύτως ἐκαλοῦντο.. Epiphanius. XXIX. 1.] The name (or nickname) was not bestowed on account of their accepting as Master so humble and poor a Christ, as Gieseler explained it, but rather as being themselves "poor," especially the case with the congregation at Jerusalem, where the name certainly originated.

### § 11. Montanism and Gnosticism.

Continuing the examination, we ask ourselves what relations existed between Montanism and Gnosticism. Tertullian's book against Marcion is a proof of the separations; what points of contact were there? Now both systems have at least this common ground, that they are based both upon a conception of the world's destiny. But the difference is that, while the Gnostics turned their

105

attention to the beginning of things, the absolute principles whether of revelation or of the world's development, the Montanists on the other hand laid all stress upon the final catastrophe, from which they (as it were) reasoned back to the present and even to the past. Neander seems to have expressed the nature of this great division very ably. There are two movements or forces acting in the Christian world in the first age after that of the Apostles: one idealistic, the other realistic; but both as well within as without the limits of the Church. The former attains its extreme in Gnosticism; the latter in Montanism. There does not seem any contradiction in the fact that the latter acknowledged a means of Revelation apart from, or rather explanatory of Holy Scripture; nor does a belief in the literal truth of the promises relating to the Paraclete involve in any way a "speculative direction," as Schwegler would infer. This writer is quite correct in describing the Montanistic doctrine of the three Stages as "modern ausgedrückt - die Annahme einer Perfectibilität des Christenthums," (p. 218), but surely the conclusion is quite gratuitous that, therefore, Montanism takes its place "*der Kirchenlehre gegenüber, auf eine und dieselbe Seite mit der Gnosis.*" And when he proceeds to find Gnostic elements in Tertullian's theory

106

of the Trinity, and quotes the use of the term προβολή as evidence, one is almost driven to the conclusion that he had not read the 8th chapter of the *Adv. Praxeam*, in which the word occurs. For how is it employed? "If any man shall think," writes Tertullian, "that I am

---

<sup>130</sup> "Diese Frage ist durch die Zusammenstellung des Montanismus mit dem Ebionitismus oder Judenehrenthum noch nicht beantwortet, man sieht ihm, je unpersönlicher er ersehlet und je allgemeiner und abstrakter die Beziehungen sind, die man ihm giebt, noch nicht tief genug in den innern Mittelpunkt comes Ursprungs und concreten Daseins hinein." (Baur in *Theol. Jahrb.* 1851, p. 548.) In this article, Baur is certainly unfair in considering Ritschl's work as a mere contradiction of Schwegler's. See p. 553 *ibid.*

introducing some προβολή, that is, some prolation of one thing out of another<sup>131</sup>, as Valentinus does when he sets forth Æon from Æon, one after another; -then this is my first reply to you: Truth must not therefore refrain from the use of such a term, and its reality and meaning, because heresy also employs it. The fact is, heresy has rather taken it from Truth, in order to mould it into its own counterfeit.” And to argue that Tertullian must be in some way approximate to Gnosticism, because he was by no means “the worst thinker that the Church possessed” (p. 218), is surely a burlesque of serious argument, and a significant commentary upon the value of the “Ebionitic” theory<sup>132</sup>.

In one singular analogy, not to be unduly pressed, but still not surely to be disregarded, Gnosticism and Montanism do approach one another. It is not in any theory or opinion, but in the persons of Tertullian and Marcion, who although bitter opponents, had not a few points of similarity. Both men, as Neander well said, “are alike in a stern one-sidedness, a fiery, passionate love, which embraced its object with all its forces, rejecting everything else..... The predominant element in both men was fulness and depth of feeling. All was the result of feeling, &c.” [*Antignosticus*, p. 400.] Only in this similarity, Marcion shewed himself least a Gnostic,

107

Tertullian most a Montanist. Both wished, and wished sincerely, to restore Christianity, just as Savonarola and Luther wished it. Both were hostile to the slowly encroaching inroads of hierarchical ambition and external formalism, But Tertullian was content to restore by the aid of the Spirit; Marcion with his own system.

## § 12. Summary.

We conclude then, as follows, as to the origin and character of Montanism:-

- I. That it was neither the individual theory propounded by a man, nor the reflection of any past manifestation, whether Jewish or Heathen; but a simple reaction towards the primitive simplicity of Christianity, with a claim to the fulfilment of distinct promises from Christ to His Spiritual Church.
- II. That a certain Montanus existed, and gave his name to the party; and that he, together with certain companions, claimed to have received revelations from the Holy Spirit.
- III. That these revelations contained nothing contrary to the Catholic Faith, as found in the Scriptures; and that this fact is certified by Epiphanius and other fathers of the Church.

---

<sup>131</sup> This technical term properly means anything which proceeds or is sent forth from the substance of another, as the fruit of a tree, or the rays of the sun. In Latin, it is translated by *prolatio*, *ensissio*, or *editio*. In Tertullian's time, Valentinus had given the term a material signification. Tertullian, therefore, apologizes for its use, when writing against Praxeas. (Newman's *Arians*, II. 4.)

<sup>132</sup> “Die Wasserscheide des Gnosticismus und Montanismus ist die entgegengesetzte Stellung zum Juden- und Heidenthum.” P. 219.

- IV. That the belief in the Paraclete, and in the Persons and Work of the Father and the Son, was that commonly held; and that the individual views of Tertullian may be regarded as substantially identical with those of his party.
- V. That the expectation of a speedy coming of the Lord, to be followed by a physical Millennium, and the reign of the Saints on earth, was common to the Montanists with many persons (like Justin Martyr) of unquestioned piety and orthodoxy.
- VI. That the Montanists received the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, with the same belief in their nature and efficacy, and with the same rites, as the Catholic Church.
- VII. That the accusations which malignity or cre-

108

dulity brought against them of celebrating revolting mysteries are supported by no evidence, are totally contrary to known facts and the statements of the earliest witnesses, and only confer a stigma upon the writers who disgraced themselves by repeating them.

- VIII. That, although women were admitted to prophesy and to communicate visions, they were allowed to exercise no ministerial function, nor was any innovation in ritual or in the form of Divine Service introduced<sup>133</sup>.
- IX. That the spiritual claims of the Montanists, and their belief in a speedy end of the world, encouraged a system of asceticism, not in harmony with the full liberty of the Gospel, as proclaimed by St Paul, but still in no way repugnant to the commands of Scripture, or the custom of the Church.
- X. That certain fasts, either entire or partial, were enjoined; but that no supererogatory merit was believed to be gained thereby.
- XI. That second marriage was condemned as contrary to the original dispensation of God, as well as to the injunctions of the Paraclete, but that (although celibacy was recommended to those able, as conducive to advantage) the rite of marriage in itself was never discredited.
- XII. That while sin after baptism (and even a repeated lapse) was freely absolvable by God's boundless grace and mercy, it was inexpedient for the ministers of

109

---

<sup>133</sup> In the notice of unauthorized rites ascribed to the Montanists, should have been included the curious gesture which gave rise to the nickname *Tascodrugitæ*, i.e. raising the hand, to the nose. Wernsdorf denies that it was the custom, but if it had been, "egregiè convenit in homines meditabundos."(!) Strauch (*Dissertatio de Montanistis*, § 17) also is of opinion that it was never practised. On the other side, see Epiphanius (*Hær.* XLVIII. 14); Nicetas (*Thesaur. orth. fid.* IV. § 20); and Baronius (anno 73). Tertullian declares:- "Atgui cum modestia et humilitate adorantes, magis commendabimus Duo preces nostras, *ne ipsis quidem manibus sublimus clatis, no vultu quidem in audaciam erecto.*" (*De Oratione*, cap. 13.)



the Church to declare absolution in the case of serious crimes, lest their repetition should follow.

XIII. That martyrdom was the highest privilege and glory to which a Christian could aspire: but yet that it did not confer merit unless proceeding from faith and a conviction that it was God's will.

XIV. That the Visible Church of Christ included all who, upon repentance and acceptance of the Rule of Faith, had been baptized; but that the Spiritual Church comprised those alone who accepted the higher teachings of the Paraclete, by the mouth of His prophets, and that each one of these belonged to the order of spiritual priesthood.

[Text scanned July 2003 by Robert I Bradshaw. It is not copyright and may be freely copied and distributed. Any typos should be reported to [rob@earlychurch.org.uk](mailto:rob@earlychurch.org.uk)]