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A STUDY OF EARLY MONTANISM
AND ITS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

A Thesis

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CHAPTER I

During the latter half of the second century, A.D., there arose in Asia Minor a religious group known as the Montanists. Because of certain tenets held by them, there has been much discussion and controversy among church historians and theologians concerning their actual relation to, and influence on the history and development of the Church. J. Rendel Harris has said:

The fact is that neither the history nor the character of Montanism is as yet properly understood, the eyes of even judicious critics having been dimmed through a long heredity of heresy-hunting. But, when we once realise the fundamental spiritual aims of Montanism (instead of merely treating it as an outward division of the Church) however much such aims may be liable to fanatical extravagance, a number of difficulties become clear to us in the history and discipline of the Church.¹

The purpose of this study is to investigate the background of Montanism, to examine its teachings, and to discover to what extent this phenomenon was radically different from the Christianity of the day, also to determine what contributions, if any, Montanism made to the teachings and practices of the Church. Most writers who have attempted to evaluate the aims of this spiritual group have based their judgments on accounts given of later adherents

¹ J. Rendel Harris, "Codex Bezae", Texts and Studies, Vol. II, pp. 194-195.

to the sect. In this study, the origin and character of the primitive movement and its attitude to the Church have received chief consideration.

Heretofore very little attention seems to have been given to the background of Montanist teachings. Historians have been so concerned about discovering in what ways the Montanists clashed with second century Christian orthodoxy, that they have neglected to investigate fully the sources of Montanist beliefs. The influence which Montanism has exerted on the Church both directly and indirectly, invites more thorough investigation. Most of the authorities to date have laid the emphasis on the condemnation of Montanism by the Councils of the third and fourth centuries.

A review of the related Christian literature suggests the following questions:-

1. Were there any factors in the natural environment and religious background of the Phrygian people which may have influence their relation to Christianity in some peculiar manner?
 2. Have the writers of the early Christian centuries given a fair representation of the character of the Montanist movement?
 3. Were the claims of the Montanists concerning spiritual manifestations contrary to accepted practices in the early Christian Church?
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4. Were there any peculiarities in the eschatological teachings of the Montanists?
5. Why did so outstanding a Church Father as Tertullian accept Montanism, and what effect did it have on his teachings?
6. Did Montanism have any influence on the closing of the New Testament Canon?
7. What influence, if any, did Montanism have on the teachings and practices of the Church?

It is the purpose of this study to seek to answer these questions in the light of all the available sources of information.

RELATED LITERATURE

This task is made difficult by the lack of original information on the subject. The investigator is forced to depend largely on the testimony of the opponents of the movement who lived after the Montanists had flourished and disappeared. From Eusebius down to Baronius the writers on Montanism reveal a bias against the sect and their statements are vague and of a conflicting character. Not until the seventeenth century did certain historians begin to study the movement from an objective standpoint.

The earliest of modern writers to present the Montanists in a favourable light was Gottfried Arnold,² No doubt the mysticism of Arnold recognised an antecedent in the spiritual claims of the Montanists. Arnold's treatise is open to the accusation of undue bias in favour of the sect, and his examination is too sympathetic. Later Mosheim,³ dealing with the subject, went back to the traditional treatment and condemned the Montanists as wild fanatics and rank heretics. The claims of the founders of Montanism came under severe review by Mosheim and his school, who did not hesitate to treat with contempt the religious enthusiasts.

Theophilus Wernsdorf,⁴ whose treatise De Montanistis commentatio historica-critica appeared in 1751, was strong in his assertion that the teachings of the Montanists were in complete agreement with the doctrines and practices of the Primitive Church.

Apart from the work of Strauch,⁵ De Montano discursus

² Gottfried Arnold, Unpartheyische Kirchen-und Ketzler-Historie (Frankfurt-on-Maine, 1792), pp. 79-83.

³ J.L. Mosheim, De rebus christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum commentarii (Helmstadt, 1753), pp. 410-424.

⁴ Theoph. Wernsdorf, De Montanistis commentatio historica-critica (1751).

⁵ Aegidius Strauch, De Montano discursus theologico-historicus (Danzig, 1680).

theologica-historicus, and Ruel,⁶ De Montano et Montanistis, also a monograph by Longerue,⁷ there was little more written on the subject of Montanism until the close of the eighteenth century.

The nineteenth century, which was so fertile in historical studies, gave due attention to the teachings of the Montanists. Only a brief mention of the more important writers can here be given. Neander⁸ wrote of the influence of the Phrygian country and people upon Christianity. He compared the excesses of Cybele worship with the Montanists' extreme tenets and deduced all that is characteristic in Montanism from the features of heathenism as modified by the Phrygian nationality.

Certain of the oracles of the Montanists were collected and edited by F. Münster⁹ in the year 1829, but this collection is incomplete and not fully annotated.

Schwegler¹⁰ in his Der Montanismus und die christliche

⁶ John L. Ruel, "De Montano et Montanistis", Ruel and Hartmann, Concilia illustrata (Nuremberg, 1675), pp. 283-300.

⁷ L. D. de Longerue, Dissertationes (Lipsiae, 1751).

⁸ A. Neander, Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche (Hamburg, 1843), Vol. II, pp. 877-908.

⁹ F. C. K. H. Münster, Effata et oracula Montanistorum (Copenhagen, 1829).

¹⁰ A. Schwegler, Der Montanismus und die christliche Kirche des zweiten Jahrhunderts (Tübingen, 1841).

Kirche, maintained that the early Montanists were not out of harmony with the Church and that Irenaeus as well as Tertullian was favourably impressed with them.

Ritschl,¹¹ spoke of Montanism as a reversion to the primitive Church of the Apostles. He was the first modern writer to enunciate clearly the theory that Montanism was a protest against the authority which was being vested in the bishops. Tertullian's opinion that the true Church was the spiritual Church (ecclesia spiritus) as against the Church of the bishops (ecclesia episcoporum) was endorsed by Ritschl. This view of Ritschl's called forth a sharp criticism from Baur.¹²

Hilgenfeld,¹³ in his Die Glossolalie in der alten Kirche, generally concurred with the view of Ritschl.

Albert Réville,¹⁴ in 1858, wrote an essay on Montanism in Nouvelle revue de théologie, enlarging upon the theories of Schwegler and Ritschl. Réville attributed to Montanism, as expounded by Tertullian, not the promulgation of a new ethical code, but a more serious practical application of the old one as

¹¹ A. Ritschl, Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche (Bonn, 1857): cf. Tertullian, De Pudicitia, xxi.

¹² F. C. Baur, "Das Wesen des Montanismus", Theologische Jahrbücher, X (1851), pp. 538-594.

¹³ A. Hilgenfeld, Die Glossolalie in der alten Kirche (Leipzig, 1850), pp. 115-136.

¹⁴ A. Réville, "Le Montanisme", Nouvelle revue de théologie (1858), pp. 49ff.

found in primitive Christianity.

Lipsius,¹⁵ in the year 1865, published his Quellenkritik des Epiphanius. This treatise was epoch-making for the study of heresies in the early Church and is of great importance in connection with an investigation of Montanism. Lipsius was the first to bring out the historical importance of the Syntagma of Hippolytus as the main source used by Epiphanius. He suggests that the Syntagma was written in Asia Minor about 190-195 A.D. when Montanism was flourishing there.

John de Soyres¹⁶ received the Hulsean prize in 1877 for his essay on Montanism and the Primitive Church. De Soyres gave a very favourable interpretation of the sect, but spent more time tracing the history and the supposed successors of Montanism through the centuries than presenting a truly critical evaluation of the actual oracles and teachings of the early Montanists.

The valuable treatise of Bonwetsch¹⁷ showed how the controversial character of Montanism grew out of its positive elements. Bonwetsch's collection of Montanist oracles was the most complete till the present century.

¹⁵ D. R.A. Lipsius, Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius (Wien, 1865).

¹⁶ John de Soyres, Montanism and the Primitive Church (Cambridge, 1878).

¹⁷ G. N. Bonwetsch, Die Geschichte des Montanismus (Erlangen, 1881).

H. Weinel,¹⁸ in 1899, though not writing directly on Montanism, presented a careful survey of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the early centuries. Weinel propounds the view that the ecstatic conduct of the Montanists did not differ materially from the described behaviour of the Hebrew prophets and resembled the account given of the disciples' experience on the day of Pentecost.

The outstanding work of the twentieth century on Montanism is by Labriolle, who published two volumes in 1913. The first, Les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme¹⁹ is more carefully prepared than the one by Bonwetsch. Labriolle's other volume La crise Montaniste²⁰ gives an account of the rise and progress of Montanism. Labriolle, however, does not investigate fully the Biblical foundation on which the Montanists built their teachings.

One year before Labriolle's work, Lawlor's²¹ article on The Heresy of the Phrygians was reproduced in the collection of essays entitled Eusebiana. This treatise makes no pretence of presenting a history of Montanism, but seeks to show that the North

¹⁸H. Weinel, Die Wirkungen des Geistes und der Geister im nachapostolischen Zeitalter bis auf Irenaeus (Freiburg, 1899).

¹⁹P. de Labriolle, Les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme (Paris, 1913)

²⁰-----, La crise Montaniste (Paris, 1913).

²¹H. J. Lawlor, "The Heresy of the Phrygians", Eusebiana (Oxford, 1912), pp. 108-135.

African Montanism adopted by Tertullian was very different from the Phrygian. In effect Lawlor denies the homogeneity of Montanism. His argument has been presented recently by E. Gregor Smith,²² who maintains that Tertullian did not accept any of the teachings of Montanus with the exception of the doctrine of the Paraclete.

Two more recent volumes are worthy of note. The one by Adolf Harnack,²³ entitled Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments und die wichtigsten Folgen der neuen Schöpfung, shows the influence Montanism had on the closing of the New Testament Canon. The other is by Robert Roberts, on The Theology of Tertullian.²⁴

The present investigator will make use of these and other works in a new evaluation of the subject and in an attempt to find an answer to the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter.

²²E.G. Smith, "Tertullian as a Montanist", Theology XLVI (June, 1943).

²³A. Harnack, Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments und die wichtigsten Folgen der neuen Schöpfung (Leipzig, 1914). English translation by Wilkinson (London, Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1925).

²⁴R. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian (London, 1923).

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY WRITINGS ON MONTANISM
CONSIDERED

The purpose of this chapter is to review and, as far as possible, to evaluate the writings on Montanism. This is not an easy task for two reasons, the first being that the primary sources are confined to a few isolated sayings of the Montanist leaders; the second, that most of the other sources appear to be biased and unfriendly to the movement. One outstanding exception is found in the writings of Tertullian. These are unique in that their treatment of the doctrines and practices of the Montanists is sympathetic. Other writings down to the seventeenth century present the Montanists as a group of heretics and wild fanatics. Why such an outstanding Church Father as Tertullian should have allied himself with this questionable movement has puzzled historians and theologians during the centuries. This subject, however, deserves a separate chapter.

Eusebius. Second in importance to the works of Tertullian

are the writings compiled by Eusebius.¹ He, however, makes no attempt to evaluate the source material of Montanism objectively and seldom fails to include anything derogatory about the sect. This has led Harnack to suggest that, as a historian, Eusebius has perhaps never sinned more than in his chapters which relate to Montanism.² Eusebius was a cool, scientific scholar who had little patience with the fancies of the Millemmarians in Asia Minor, and he has searched among the many works devoted to refuting Montanism to find out those which best suited his purpose. In chapters sixteen and seventeen of his fifth book he quotes a certain writer whose identity is not known. There has been much speculation regarding this author, but he still remains "The Anonymous". Saint Jerome³ sees in him Rhodon; Tillemont⁴ would name this nameless writer Asterius Urbanus, and Nicephorus Callistus⁵ thinks he is none other than Apollinarius of Hierapolis.

¹ Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, V, xvi-xix: also scattered allusions throughout Eusebius' History, viz. II, xxv, 5; V, iii, 4; xiv; VI, xx, 3. The text and translation of the Historia Ecclesiastica of Eusebius in the following pages is usually that of Kirsopp Lake for books I-V and J. E. L. Oulton for books VI-X, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, Vol. I, 1926; Vol. II, 1932).

² A. Harnack, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte (Gotha, 1879), Vol. III, p. 373: "Vielleicht hat Eusebius als Historiker nirgendwo mehr gesündigt als Hist. Eccl., V, xiv-xix."

³ Jerome, De Viris Illustribus, xxxvii; xxxix

⁴ Tillemont, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 441 f.

⁵ Nicephorus Callistus, H. E., IV, xxiii

We should do better to follow Eusebius and not attempt to identify him. The manner in which "The Anonymous" refers to others in the Church suggests that he held some high office - possibly he was a bishop. In speaking of Zoticus of Otrous he calls him by the name of our συμπρεσβύτερος.⁶ This is often used to signify a fellow bishop.⁷

It is clear from these chapters that the intent of "The Anonymous" is to warn his readers against the teachings of the Montanists, and he does not hesitate to heap infamy upon the founders of the movement. He claims that Montanus was possessed by an evil spirit and his followers were false prophets. One of the arguments of "The Anonymous" is that Montanists had no martyrs. "Is there any, good people," he asks, "of those whose talking began with Montanus and the women, who was persecuted by Jews or killed by the wicked?" and he answers, "Not one."⁸ McGiffert⁹ sees a flat contradiction to this in a subsequent passage¹⁰ by the same writer where he admits that the Montanists had many martyrs. McGiffert here accuses "The Anonymous" of

⁶ Eusebius, H.E., V, xvi, 5.

⁷ Ibid., VII, v, 6; xi, 3; xx, 1.

⁸ Ibid., V, xvi, 12: ἔστιν τις, ὃ βέλτιστοι, τούτων τῶν ἀπὸ Μοντανοῦ καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν λαλεῖν ἀρξαμένων ὅστις ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων ἐδιώχθη ἢ ὑπὸ παρὰ νόμων ἀπεκτάνθη; οὐδεὶς.

⁹ A. C. McGiffert, Eusebius p. 232.

¹⁰ Eusebius, H.E., V, xvi, 20.

having no regard for the truth. H. J. Lawlor¹¹ seeks to harmonise the two apparently contradictory statements by making the first refer to Montanus, Maximilla and Theodotus, who at the time of writing were dead, but not one of whom had died as a martyr. Whichever way the intent of "The Anonymous" is interpreted in this passage, he certainly does not bring forth any substantial argument against these Montanists. This nameless writer further quotes an oracle attributed to Maximilla where she states, "I am Word, Spirit and Power".¹² This oracle was later interpreted to mean that Maximilla claimed to be the Holy Spirit.

Again, "The Anonymous" accused the prophetess Maximilla of falsehood when she stated that wars were imminent. He declared that the prophetess had been dead now for thirteen years and peace had reigned during that time. Maximilla believed, with many others of her day, that she was living at the end of the age and that this world would not continue very much longer. She further taught that prior to the end of time there would be wars and rumours of wars. Language very similar to that of Maximilla is found in writings of the New Testament.¹³

¹¹ H. J. Lawlor, "The Heresy of the Phrygians", Journal of Theological Studies, IX (July, 1908), pp. 481-499; article reproduced in Eusebiana (Oxford, 1912), pp. 108-135.

¹² Eusebius, op. cit., V, xvi, 17.

¹³ Matthew xxiv, 6-7.

"The Anonymous" does assure us that he is not certain of some of his evidence. When speaking of the suicidal death of Montanus, Maximilla and Theodotus, he declares:

They say, at least, that this happened thus. But not having seen them ourselves we do not claim to have any knowledge of such things, my friend, for perhaps Montanus and Theodotus and the above mentioned woman died in this way, but perhaps they did not.¹⁴

Apollonius is much more intolerant and does not use such moderation in his writings about the Montanists as does "The Anonymous". He attributes fraudulent dealings to the leaders of this sect.¹⁵ This accusation seems inconsistent with other accounts of their behaviour and it is very difficult to conclude that a contemporary like Irenaeus would not speak of such things, and that a lawyer and keen critic such as Tertullian would have failed to detect such characteristics. Neither "The Anonymous" nor Apollonius, nor Serapion pretend to give any complete account of the doctrines of Montanism. They appear to have gathered together morsels of gossip and to have accused the founders of Montanism of trivialities, greatly enlarged to fit the purpose of the writers. As Mackinnon says when referring to the statements of "The Anonymous" and Apollonius:

¹⁴ Eusebius, op. cit., V. xvi, 15 (Lake, p. 479).

¹⁵ Ibid., V, xviii, 2, 6, 7, 9.

These and other bitter accusations show only a personal animosity which the Montanists' antagonism to the Church had aroused, and are clearly in large measure the fruit of misrepresentation and calumny.¹⁶

If the supposition be true that "The Anonymous" was a bishop, he would be inclined to treat with suspicion a sect which exalted the prophet above the bishop. Niven attributes the severity of the Church's attack on these Montanists to the fact that they despised the bishops.

Doubtless this 'degrading' of bishops explains the extraordinary virulence of the Catholic attack upon Montanism and the ludicrous inadequacy of Eusebius' account of it.¹⁷

Despite these rather severe criticisms, the writings of Eusebius still stand as the richest mine of information concerning the beginnings of Montanism, and for this, as Lightfoot has stated, "we owe a great debt to Eusebius".¹⁸

Epiphanius. On the subject of Montanism the writings of Epiphanius¹⁹ stand next in importance to those of Eusebius. Epiphanius wrote about 380 A.D. He was a realist who treated with contempt any manifestation of extreme spiritual ecstasy. Epiphanius asks his readers to compare the evidences of authentic prophecy in the Old and New Testament with those cited for false

¹⁶James Mackinnon, From Christ to Constantine, pp. 316-317.

¹⁷W. D. Niven, Expository Times, XXXIX, p.103 note.

¹⁸Lightfoot, "Eusebius", Dictionary of Christian Biography Vol. II, p. 324.

¹⁹Epiphanius, Panarion, xlvi (Migne, P.G., 1863, Vol. XLI, pp. 855 ff). The text of the early Fathers usually followed is found in Migne, Patrologia Graeca, Patrologia Latina, hereafter cited as P.G., and P.L.

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prophecies. He speaks of the self-control manifested by Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and contrasts this calmness with the ecstasy of the Montanists. He cites the vision of Adam and maintains that Adam had full control of himself. This is proved by the words which he spoke just after he came out of the 'ecstasy'. Epiphanius draws examples from the New Testament to show that the true prophet will always be in full control of himself. He speaks of the contemporary state of Montanism and how the movement was spreading. He mentions the etymology of the word 'Trascodrugites',²¹ inferring from it that there is here a reference to child murder. Epiphanius, however, admits that he is not certain if this accusation should be made against the Cataphrygians, or the Quintillianists, or the Priscillianists or the Pepuzists and it seems that he did not give too much weight to the rumour that later followers of Montanus practised child sacrifice.

With reference to Epiphanius' writing on heresy, Calder has suggested that he is more interested in refuting and reviling heresy than in recording the information we should like to possess concerning the heretics.²² Epiphanius' chronology is sometimes

²⁰ Epiphanius, Panarion, xlvi, 3.

²¹ Epiphanius, op. cit., xlvi, 14.

²² W. M. Calder, Antatolian Studies, p. 84.

contradictory. He gives two dates for the beginning of Montanism and fixes the death of Maximilla in the year 86 A.D., when she was not yet born. Hefele²³ thought that this was a clerical error for 186, which is possible. Epiphanius' sources are mentioned in the opening chapter of his monumental work Panarion.²⁴ He claims to have drawn from written documents, also from what he has heard (*ἐξ ἀκοῆς*), and besides these he gives his direct experiences (*ὀδύοις ὡς καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖς*).

Lipsius²⁵ was the first to call attention to the great importance of the Syntagma of Hippolytus, maintaining that the Syntagma was the common source underlying the writings on heresies by Pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius and Philaster. What is known of the heresies outlined in the Syntagma of Hippolytus strikingly coincides with those in the Panarion. On certain topics Epiphanius is held by some to have followed "The Anonymus"²⁶ in Eusebius, Rhodon²⁷ or Apollonius.²⁸ There are some analogies and, indeed, parallels

²³ C. J. Hefele, Conciliengeschichte, Vol. 1, p. 71.

²⁴ Epiphanius, Panarion, i, 1.

²⁵ D. R. S. Lipsius, Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius

²⁶ Hilgenfeld, Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums urkundlich dargestellt, pp. 573-577.

²⁷ H.C. G. A. Voigt, Eine verschollene Urkunde des antimontanistischen Kampfes, Die Berichte des Epiphanius über die Kataphryger und Quintillianer, untersucht, pp. 224-225.

²⁸ Harnack, Chronologie, Vol. II, p. 229.

in these writings to those of Epiphanius, but they do not give any conclusive proof that Epiphanius used them. The evidence goes to show that he was not content merely to transcribe a former treatise, but added his own comments. He quoted occasionally from contemporary witnesses, and one gets the impression that sometimes he is drawing from what he has heard. Labriolle has aptly said that "the identification of the authority quoted in Epiphanius is a game of hazard."²⁹ The writings of Epiphanius are, however, of great value for the study of Montanism, since he cites eight oracles of the original Montanist prophets.

Irenaeus. Irenaeus lived and wrote his Adversus Haereses³⁰ during the period when Montanism was attracting much attention, yet there are only a few doubtful references to this movement in his writings.

Several writers, such as Schwegler,³¹ have called attention

²⁹ Pierre de Labriolle, Les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme, p. 53.

³⁰ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., III, xi, (Migne, P.G., 1857, Vol. VII, pp. 879 ff.).

³¹ F. C. A. Schwegler, Der Montanismus, p. 223: "Seine Ansichten von Prophetengeiste, sein Chiliasmus, seine Verwerfung der zweiten Ehe, seine praktischascetischen Grundsätze überhaupt, nur dies Alles mit mehr Besonnenheit vorgetragen, lassen seine Verwandtschaft mit dem Montanistischen Systeme nicht verkennen." Cf. A. Harnack, "Das murator Fragment", Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, Vol. III, p. 371; A. Hilgenfeld, Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums, p. 504.

to the fact that the teachings of Irenaeus had much in common with the tenets of Montanism. When speaking of the coming of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus used the perfect tense, thus indicating his belief that the Paraclete had already descended upon men.³² Irenaeus spoke in very earnest tones of sin against the Holy Ghost in the case of those who refused to recognise the new revelations of the Paraclete.³³ He believed in the permanence of the prophetic gift in the Church.³⁴ He did not favour re-marriage,³⁵ and had much to say against false prophets.

³² Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., IV, xxxiii, 15: "Semper eundem Spiritum Dei cognoscens, etiamsi in novissimis temporibus nove effusus est in nos, et a conditione mundi usque ad finem in ipsum humanum genus."

³³ Irenaeus, op. cit., III, xi, 9 (Harvey III, xi, 12). Harvey is mistaken when he applies this text to the Montanists. It was the Alogi and not the Montanists who rejected the Paraclete and the gospel of St. John. Harvey, Sancti Irenaei, Vol. II, p. 51, note 2, Alli, i.e. the Alogi. No doubt Epiphanius' Alogi, Irenaeus' rejectors of Prophecy, and the sect described by Dionysius of Alexandria (Eus. H.E., VII, xxv) are identical. The Alogi found in St. John's writings so strong a bulwark for the Montanists' claims that they had no alternative but to reject them.

³⁴ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., II, xxxii, 4.

³⁵ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., I, xxviii, 2.

Tertullian's³⁶ reference to Irenaeus, however, rather points to the fact that Irenaeus was not a member of the Montanist party. Tertullian speaks of him with praise, but does not add to his name the significant term "noster", which he gives to Proculus the Montanist. The silence of Irenaeus on the followers of the New Prophecy would indicate that while being kindly disposed to them, he was not prepared, like Tertullian, to ally himself with them.

Clement. Whether or not Montanism was included in Clement's proposed treatise on heretics, it is impossible to say, since the work, if written, has been lost. Clement makes but brief mention of the Montanists and their custom of calling their adversaries 'Psychics'. "Let not the above mentioned people, then, call us, by way of reproach 'natural men' (*ψυχικούς*), nor the Phrygians either; for these now call those who do not apply themselves to the new prophecy 'natural men' (*ψυχικούς*)."³⁷

Origen. After the Anti-Montanist quoted in Eusebius Origen is the first ecclesiastical writer of the East to treat theoretically of Montanism. He deplored the blindness of those who claimed to be in possession of the Paraclete and who had brought difficulties to the Church:

³⁶ Tertullian, Adv. Valent., V: "Justinus philosophus et martyr, ut Miltiades Ecclesiarum sophista, ut Irenaeus omnium doctrinarum curiosissimus explorator, ut Proculus noster virginis senectae ut Christianae eloquentiae dignitas."

³⁷ Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis, 1V, xiii: (Migne, P.G., Vol. VIII, 1857, p. 1300):

These divisions and distinctions are unperceived by those who hearing him called in the Gospels the Paraclete, but not considering from what work or activity he takes this name, have likened him to some common spirits or other and by so doing have tried to disturb the churches of Christ even to the point of arousing no small dissensions among the brethren, . . . The men in question, however, owing to the poverty of their understanding, which renders them not only incapable of logically setting forth the truth themselves, but unable even to pay proper attention to what is said by us, have entertained low and unworthy views of his deity and so delivered themselves over to errors and deceits under the malign influence of some spirit of error rather than the wise precepts of the Holy Spirit, according to the saying of the apostle, 'Following the doctrines of daemon spirits, who forbid to marry', 'to the ruin and destruction of many', and 'urging to abstain from meats, in order that by the outward show of stricter observances they may lead astray the souls of the innocent.'³⁸

Origen's reference to the question of marriage and of fasting would indicate that he was speaking here of the Montanists. Origen taught that the Church added nothing by way of prophecy to the doctrine of Christ.³⁹ False prophets were severely criticised and there is little doubt that he regarded the Montanists as such.⁴⁰ This learned writer was the sworn enemy of feminine activity in the Church and looked with great disfavour on all who taught to the contrary.⁴¹

³⁸ Origen, First Principles, II, vii, 3 (translation by Butterworth, S.P.C.K., 1936), p. 118.

³⁹ Origen, in Matthaeum, xv, 30 (Migne, P.G., 1862, Vol. XIII, p. 1344).

⁴⁰ Ibid., XXVIII; "non propter falsos Phrygiae prophetas".

⁴¹ Origen, 1st Ep. to Cor., xiv. 36 (ed. J. Cramer, 1841, p. 279):

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπιτρέπεται ταύτη λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ:

cf. 1 Cor. xiv, 34: Αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν.

Adversus Omnes Haereses. The work by Pseudo-Tertullian entitled Adversus Omnes Haereses,⁴² shows much in common with the Syntagma of Hippolytus, the Panarion of Epiphanius and a book of Philaster concerning Heresies. The main point in this Adversus Haereses with reference to the Montanists is the splitting up of the later movement into two divisions.⁴³

Hippolytus. Hippolytus refers to the difference between orthodox Montanists and the Patripassian Montanists. In Books VIII and X of the Philosophumena he speaks contemptuously about Montanism and treats it with scorn.⁴⁴

Firmilian. Firmilian,⁴⁵ the great friend of Origen, brings some rather vague charges against the teachings of Montanism. He was very severe in his treatment of the Montanists and declared that directly they separated from the Church of God they were not able to have any grace or power, since all power and all grace lived in the Church. He considered the Montanists as heretics since they were outside the Church.

⁴² Harnack, Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie, XIX (1876) pp. 116 ff. attributes this work to Victorinus of Petau. On the other hand Jerome, Viris Illustribus, lxxiv, does not include this book among the works of Victorinus.

⁴³ Pseudo-Tertullian, Adv. Omnes Haereses, vii (Migne, P.L. 1844, Vol. II, p. 90).

⁴⁴ Hippolytus, Philosophumena, VIII; X. (Migne, P.G., 1860, Vol. XVI, pp. 3348 ff.).

⁴⁵ Firmilian, Epistola Firmiliani ad Gyprianum, 7, 10, 19 (Migne, P.L., 1844, pp. 1160 ff.).

Cyril. Cyril of Jerusalem⁴⁶ shows the development of the 'legend' of Montanus. The rumours of his day depicted Montanus as a monster who ate children.

Jerome. Jerome⁴⁷ states little more about the Montanists than is found in Eusebius; his writings show great disdain for the sect.

Pacian. Pacian,⁴⁸ bishop of Barcelona, is an important witness as proving the opposition of the Western Church to the Montanist doctrine of penance, which no other writer notes. He also makes mention of the difference in doctrine between the Montanists and the Novatians. This bishop makes the one curious blunder of including Praxeas among the Montanists, accusing them of reducing the Three Persons of the Godhead to One.

Didymus. Didymus,⁴⁹ in his De Trinitate, gives a reply to the Trinitarian errors of the Montanists. He criticises them for holding Monarchian views of the Godhead. He also condemns their

⁴⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, xvi, 8 (Migne, P.G., 1857, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 928 ff.).

⁴⁷ Jerome, Ep. ad Marcellan, xli (Migne, P.L., Vol. XXII, 1845, p. 474); Comment in Matt. I, ix, 15 (Migne, P.L., 1845, Vol. XXVI, p. 57).

⁴⁸ Pacian, Epist. ad Sympronianum Novatianum, i, ii, iii (Migne, P.L., 1845, Vol. XIII, pp. 1053-1064).

⁴⁹ Didymus Alexandrinus, De Trinitate, II, xv; III, xviii, xix, xxiii, xxxviii, xli (Migne, P.G., 1863, vol. XXXIX, pp. 720 ff.).

statements about prophetesses, and finally he deals with the question of ecstasy.⁵⁰ Ficker discovered a manuscript which he published in 1905.⁵¹ This manuscript is known as the Dialexis and is so much akin to the writings of Didymus, that one is led to conclude that he was the author. This treatise is in the dialogue form which was common from the second to the fourth centuries. It deals with prophecy, revelation, and the right of women to prophesy, and condemns the Montanists' claims for their prophets and prophetesses. The Dialexis states that since the time of Christ all who have assumed the rôle of the prophet have been false.

Augustine. Augustine⁵² gives little additional light on the teaching of Montanism. He mentions the accusation of ritual murder, following Epiphanius and Cyril of Jerusalem. He maintains that Tertullian formed a separate sect called the Tertullianists. Augustine claimed that the remnant of this

⁵⁰ Fragmenta ex Didymi expositione in Actus Apostolorum, x, 10 (Migne, P.G., 1863, Vol. XXXIX, p. 1677); Commentarius in Epistolam secundam Pauli apostoli ad Corinthios, v. 12 (Migne, P.G., 1863, Vol. XXXIX, p. 1704).

⁵¹ Gerhard Ficker, editor, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte XXVI (1905), pp. 446-463.

⁵² Augustine, De Agone Christiano, xxviii (Migne, P.L., 1861, Vol. XL, p. 305); Contra Faustum, xxxii, 17 (Migne, P.L., 1845, Vol. XLII, p. 506).

group returned to the Church in his time.

Ambrose, Hilary, Philaster, Theodoret, John of Damascus.

Ambrose,⁵³ Hilary,⁵⁴ Philaster,⁵⁵ Theodoret,⁵⁶ and John of Damascus⁵⁷ contribute but shreds of information about Montanism.

The Author of the Praedestinatus. The author of the Praedestinatus⁵⁸ follows Augustine but is much less careful in his statements about the Montanists. He makes errors relating to chronology and geography, and cites as authentic texts some passages he himself has forged. He states that Pope Soter and Apollonius, bishop of Ephesus, wrote against the Montanists. Neither Eusebius nor Jerome call Apollonius bishop of Ephesus, nor does any other author make Pope Soter write against the Montanists. Again, the writer of the Praedestinatus is guilty

⁵³ Ambrose, Comment in II Ep. ad Thess. (Migne, P.L., 1845, Vol. XVII, pp. 454 ff.).

⁵⁴ Hilary, Ad Constantium Augustum, II, ix (Migne, P.L., 1845, Vol. X, p. 570).

⁵⁵ Philaster, Liber de Haeresibus, xlix (Migne, P.L., 1845, Vol. XII, p. 1165). Philaster makes mention of their orthodoxy thus: "Isti prophetas et legem accipiunt, Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum confitentur, carnis resurrectionem expectant, quae et catholica Ecclesia praedicat."

⁵⁶ Theodoret, Αἰρετικῆς κακομυθίας ἐπιτομή, iii (Migne, P.G., 1864, Vol. LXXXIII, pp. 402-409).

⁵⁷ John of Damascus, Περὶ αἰρέσεων, lxxxvii (Migne, P.G., 1864, Vol. XCIV, p. 706).

⁵⁸ Praedestinatus, I, xxvi-xxviii (Migne, P.L., 1847, Vol. LIII, pp. 596 ff.).

of an anachronism when he states that Soter condemned the Tertullianists. Soter died 175 A.D. and the Tertullianists did not arise until forty years after. This work is full of inaccuracies and deliberate alterations and is of little value as source material for the study of Montanism.

Speaking of the accounts given by early writers of Montanism, De Soyres says, "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 evidences." ⁵⁹

Unfortunately we do not have any original works of the founders of Montanism. Certain of the church Fathers have cited a few short oracles from which we can glean some of the Montanists teachings. Apart from these most of the evidence is indirect and seems to have been written with a prejudice against the New Prophecy.

⁵⁹ John de Soyres, Montanism and the Primitive Church, p. 70, note 1.

CHAPTER III

CONDITIONS IN PHRYGIA FAVOURABLE
TO THE GROWTH OF MONTANISM

In order to have a better understanding of early Montanism, it is necessary to enquire into the natural surroundings and temperamental characteristics of the people amongst whom it originated. The movement was cradled in the centre of Asia Minor in the fertile valley of Phrygia.

Early writers describe the Phrygians as a very backward and illiterate race.

Herodotus spoke of them as akin to a race of slaves who could be taught only by the lash of their master's whip, and who improved by being beaten.¹ Cicero enlarged on this description² and Justin classed

¹ Herodotus II, 100: 'Ὡς δὲ φρύγες τὰ νῦν ὑμῶν πληγεῖς ἀμείνων ἔσσει';

² Cicero, Pro Flacco, xvii, 40: "Dubitabit, iudices, quin ab hoc ignotissimo Phryge nobilissimum civem vindicetis?"
Ibid., xxvii, 65: "Quam ob rem quaeso a vobis, Asiatici testes, ut, cum vere recordari voletis, quantum auctoritatis in iudicium adferatis, vosmet ipsi describatis Asiam nec, quid alienigenae de vobis loqui soleant, sed quid vosmet ipsi de genere vestro statuatis, memineritis, Namque, ut opinor, Asia vestra constat ex Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, Lydia. Utrum igitur nostrum est an vestrum hoc proverbium, 'Phrygem plagis fieri solere meliorem'?"

the Phrygians with the Barbarians.³

These criticisms were due in part to the fact that the Phrygians had remained foreign to the Graeco-Roman civilization which had developed so brilliantly in the Western part of Asia Minor and especially along the coast.

It should be noted, however, that the Phrygian people were very excitable in temperament and highly emotional, as was evidenced in the extravagant nature of their local worship of Cybele.

The climate of Phrygia is one of extremes: the long, cold winter standing out in striking contrast to the warmth and verdure of the spring, followed by a scorching summer. Such abrupt changes reacted upon the temperament of the Phrygians, causing them to be extreme in the manifestations of their varying emotions.⁴

Certain features of Phrygian life are worthy of brief notice:- Phrygia was a rich country, commerce in olive oil and rare wines played a leading rôle in its economic life, wool and woollen goods were exported in large quantities.

³ Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., cxix, 4: οὐδὲ βάρβαρον φύλον οὐδὲ ὁποῖα καρῶν ἢ φρυγῶν ἔθνη.

⁴ Franz Cumont (English translation with introductory essay by G. Showerman). The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 50

Cloths prepared in the work-shops of Phrygian Laodicea excelled in beauty.⁵ In the interior of the country were many large temple estates, not attached to any city but independent. These lands were owned by the sanctuaries of native gods and goddesses and cultivated by the primitive superstitious people. There were no schools or gymnasia, and the people looked to the temple for their cultural as well as their spiritual life. The annual marketing fair was held around the temple, and this site developed into a kind of πόλις.⁶

Not a few of the later cities of Phrygia bear names which suggest that they grew up around the temple, as is stated by Jones:

Some of them were commercial towns which owed their growth to the concourse of pilgrims, who frequented the temple especially at the great festivals.⁷

There were also large imperial estates with a rustic population engaged in agriculture. In addition to these large communities, there were many villages which were essentially self-contained centres of life looking to no larger world beyond.

Evidence from inscriptions tends to show that the Phrygian

⁵ Theodore Mommsen (English translation by W.P. Dickson), The Provinces of the Roman Empire, Vol. I, p. 36.

⁶ M. I. Rostovtzeff, Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Kolonates, pp. 272-273.

⁷ A. H. M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces, p. 39.

language was still, ^{spoken} in the backward mountainous parts of the country during the early Christian centuries.⁸

Certain Phrygian inscriptions showing that Phrygian was spoken till late in the third century have been found at Kadyn Khan, Kestel, Ladik, Serai Onu and Suverek.⁹ Greek and Latin were the languages of the cultivated classes, and were used by government officials, educated groups, and polite society. Many of the great cities put on a Western appearance and took Latin and Greek names. In the third century after Christ, the mass of the people spoke Phrygian, although those who wrote books wrote in Greek, and those who governed spoke Latin. In Phrygia as late as the fourth century, the rustic population knew little Greek or Latin.

In view of the highly emotional temperament of the people of Phrygia, it is not surprising to find that they were given to religious zeal and had great preference for extreme doctrine.

The wild riotous worship of the mother-goddess Cybele originated in Phrygia. This goddess symbolised the generative power of nature and her worship was accompanied by ceremonies

⁸ Theodore Mommsen, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 328.

⁹ "Corpus Inscriptionum Neo-Phrygiarum", Journal of Historical Studies (1911), pp. 161 ff; cf. Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society, X, (1923), pp. 25 ff.

of boisterous debauchery and low comedy. The servants of the goddess and priests engaged in their orgiastic dances, accompanied by the Phrygian flutes and the weird intonations of the people, all of which was calculated to throw the mind into a state of wild frenzy. The priests ran round screaming and shouting, and mutilating their bodies in a manner akin to the practices of the worshippers of Baal.¹⁰

This religion of Cybele developed into a syncretistic system, having in it elements of Mithraism, and Judaism, and was associated with the rites of Osiris, Attis and Adonis. By the end of the first century of our era, Mithraism was widespread and its worshippers usually built their sacred crypts beside the temples of the Magna Mater. The two religions of Cybele and Mithra flourished in intimate communion with each other. The taurobolium of Mithraism was introduced into the ritual of the Great Mother. Prudentius gives a striking description of this baptism of blood.¹¹ Many attempts were made to oppose the Phrygian mystic ceremonies to those of Christianity. It was held that the sanguinary purification imparted by the taurobolium was more efficacious than the

¹⁰ 1 Kings xviii, 28.

¹¹ Prudentius, Peristeph, X, 1011.

Christian rite of baptism, that the sacred food partaken of during those mystic feasts had greater life-giving properties than the bread and wine of the communion, and that this Mother Goddess occupied a position superior to the Mother of Christ.¹² Frazer holds the position that the commemoration of the death of Christ was placed by a great many churches as occurring on March 25th, no doubt to replace the celebration of Attis' death on the same date, in the same way as Christmas has been substituted for the Natilis Invicti.¹³

A further assimilation of the worship of Attis with that of Jehovah of the Jews is shown by a certain Roman inscription which is dedicated to Attis the supreme, (Ἄττις ὑψίστῳ)¹⁴ This epithet is very striking, since in Asia Minor ὑψίστος was the name used to designate the God of Israel.¹⁵

Numerous Jewish colonies were established in Phrygia by the Seleucidae, and these expatriated Jews must have agreed to

¹² Cf. Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses VIII (Paris, 1903), p. 424.

¹³ J.G. Frazer, "Adonis, Attis, Osiris", Studies in the History of Oriental Religions, pp. 256 f; cf. W. M. Ramsay, "The Worship of Artemis in Christian Times", Expositor, (June and August, 1904). Artemis is a mere variety of the Phrygian Cybele.

¹⁴ Inscript. Craec., Vol. XIV, p. 1081.

¹⁵ E. Schurer, Sitzungsl. Akad., XIII (Berlin, 1897), p. 200.

certain compromises with the worshippers of Attis and Cybele.¹⁶

The Phrygians seem to have had a very strong natural leaning towards Christianity, and it is probable that Saint Paul had marvellous success in his preaching of the gospel in this land. The exclusiveness which the Apostle usually found among the Jews was absent in Phrygia. The Jews who dwelt here had broken all connection with their own land,¹⁷ and were much more ready to accept Christianity than their brethren in other countries.

The Christianity of Phrygia, however, differed somewhat from the Palestinian Christianity. Sets of enthusiasts attempted to introduce certain Pagan rites into their new religion. While it is true that the natural temperament and the intellectual bias of the people took a new direction, yet the old type was not entirely obliterated, but rather assimilated. Thus many hybrid types of religion were nurtured in Phrygia.

The power of Christianity was demonstrated forcibly in Phrygia, and under its influence the religious enthusiasm manifested in the worship of Cybele was now directed to the Christian's God.

¹⁶ Graillot observes that on certain bas-reliefs Cybele was united with Theos Hypsistos, i.e. the God of Israel. Henri Graillot, "Les dieux Tout Puissants, Cybele et Attis", Revue Archeol. (Paris, 1904), p. 238, n. 7.

¹⁷ A. Neubauer, La géographie du Talmud, p. 315 states: "The baths and wines of Phrygia had separated the ten tribes from their brethren."

The rites which were celebrated in the Phrygian mysteries were the rites of a goddess and not of a god. The ordinary custom of Phrygia continued in the old habit of assigning prominence to the female element. Women magistrates appear frequently in the records of many cities in Phrygia, and women are mentioned as performing public duties much more freely than was the case in Greece. Even among the Phrygian Jews there are examples of Jewesses not merely filling magistracies in towns, but actually holding the responsible position of chief of the Synagogue, (ἀρχισυνάγωγος).¹⁸

This finds a striking parallel in the high estimation which the Montanists placed upon their original prophetesses and the rôle which women played in their organisation. To the Phrygian every act of religion on earth had its counterpart in the performance of the same rite on a higher level in the divine life. The Montanists' strict view of marriage was thus influenced by the old Phrygian belief that the marriage celebrated on earth between the man and the woman had its counterpart in the marriage which was supposed to take place above between the goddess and the god.

The religious ecstasy, the mystic oracles and the stern discipline of the Montanists found a ready response among the Phrygian people.

¹⁸ Ramsay, Cities and Bishoprics, Vol. II, pp. 649 ff.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORACLES OF MONTANISM

CITED BY EPHIPANIUS

Since the writings of the founders of Montanism are not extant, the oracles quoted by the Church Fathers occupy a place of primary importance for this study, in that they give an insight into most of the doctrines peculiar to this sect. Eight of these Montanist oracles are cited by Epiphanius. As has been already pointed out the sources employed by him are rather obscure. Lipsius¹ suggests that Epiphanius used the same original manuscript as Philaster, i.e., "The Syntagma of Hippolytus". He seems also to have had access to a book of Montanist oracles. In addition to these he drew quite largely from the verbal tradition of his time.

Epiphanius maintained that many of the teachings and practices of the Montanists were contrary to Scripture; especially did he condemn the ecstasy manifested by their prophets while in vision.

The following five oracles reveal the Montanists' view of inspiration. They believed that the prophet was taken

¹ D. Richard Adelbert Lipsius, Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius.

possession of by a divine power and was used as an instrument through whom divine messages were communicated.

Oracles one and two are here considered as a unit.

Oracle No. 1. Montanus adds again this: "It is I, the Lord God all powerful, who dwell in man." 2

Oracle No. 2. Montanus further states: "Neither an angel nor an ambassador, but I the Lord God the Father am come." 3

In an examination of these two oracles there is seen a striking resemblance to certain statements found in the Septuagint version of the old Testament.

The actual words κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ occur in the Septuagint version of the book of Amos.⁴ παντοκράτωρ meaning "all powerful" is very common in the same version for the Hebrew יהוה אלהים. This

² Eriphanius, Panarion, xlviii, 11: Μοντανὸς οὕτω λέγων· Ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ καταγιγόμενος ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ.

³ Ibid., Μοντανὸς ὅτι, Οὔτε ἄγγελος, οὔτε πρέσβυς, ἀλλὰ ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ἦλθον.

⁴ Amos ix, 5.

expression is reiterated in the New Testament,⁵ and occurs frequently in the writings of Justin⁶ and in the works of Clement of Rome.⁷ Similar words were commonly employed when assigning the attribute of omnipotence to the Syrian and Phrygian dieties.⁸

This teaching that the all powerful God resides in man is further expressed in the Septuagint of the book of Numbers,⁹ where the same verb καταγίνομαι is used.

The sense in which πρέσβυς is employed in the second oracle has been much debated. Voigt¹⁰ concluded that πρέσβυς was synonymous with ἄγγελος. The two ideas, however, are distinct and cannot be thought of as a duality of expression. It seems clear that Montanus is certifying that it is neither a divine messenger (ἄγγελος) nor a human ambassador (πρέσβυς) but the Lord God the Father who comes to dwell in man.

⁵ II Corinthians vi, 18; Apocalypse i, 8; iv, 8; xi, 17.

⁶ Justin, Dial. C. Trypho, xvi, 4; xxxviii, 2, 4.

⁷ Clement, ii, 3 (Lake, Vol. I, pp. 10-11). The text and translation of the Apostolic Fathers is that of Kirsopp Lake, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 volumes.

⁸ Cf. An inscription from Delos, Bulletin de correspondance hellenique, VI (Paris, 1882), No. 25, p. 502: Δὴ τῶ πάντων κρατοῦντι καὶ Μαρτὶ μεγάλῃ τῇ πάντων κρατούσῃ.

⁹ Numbers v, 3.

¹⁰ H.G. Voigt, Eine verschollene Urkunde des antimontanistischen Kampfes, p. 324.

Labriolle¹¹ pointed out that πρέσβυς is not found in the Bible and that neither the Apostolic Fathers nor the Apologists used it, but he has obviously overlooked the Septuagint passage from which Montanus was evidently quoting.¹²

These oracles do not aim at setting forth any view of the Godhead. As Zahn¹³ has well said, they were uttered not to announce a determined theology but under the illusion that the prophet spoke in God's place, or that God spoke through the prophet. This phenomenon is not unknown in the accounts of the Hebrew prophets,¹⁴ where the will and thought of the prophet are represented as functioning with the will and thought of God. Thus all distinction is abolished between the human personality and the divine when God makes Himself directly heard through the prophets.

That the prophet was conscious of a real union with God is not be doubted.

¹¹ P. de Labriolle, La crise Montaniste, p. 39.

¹² Isa. lxiii, 9; οὐ πρέσβυς οὐδὲ ἄγγελος, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἔσῳσεν αὐτούς.

¹³ Zahn, Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur, I, 1, 18.

¹⁴ II Sam. xxiii, 2; Isaiah i, 25-26; xlv, 22.

Hölscher¹⁵ drew attention to the fact that the prophet when speaking ecstatically thought of himself as an extension of the divine personality, and Wheeler Robinson¹⁶ has suggested that the concept of corporate personality can explain in what sense the prophet conceived of his union with God.

A similar view is set forth by Johnson,¹⁷ who gathers evidence from the Old Testament to show that the prophet regarded himself as the mouthpiece of God, and believed that he was not merely transmitting the message of God, but that through him God was actually speaking, since He had gathered the prophet's personality into His own.

Oracle No. 3 Maximilla states, "Hearken not to me, but hearken to Christ."¹⁸

Oracle No. 4. Montanus says, "Behold, man is as a lyre, and I myself play as a plectrum. Man sleeps and I watch.

¹⁵ Hölscher, Die Propheten, p. 25: "Die Profeten reden nicht nur im Auftrage und nach dem Geheisse Jahwes, wiederholen nicht nur Worte und Offenbarungen, die der Gott ihnen zugeraunt oder in der Vision gezeigt hat, sondern sie reden als Gott selbst und identifizieren sich, solange sie ekstatisch sprechen, durchaus mit ihm."; cf. Hertzberg, Prophet und Gott, p. 12: "Das Bewusstsein mit der Gottheit eins zu sein, gibt ihrer Stellung zur Gottheit das Gepräge."

¹⁶ Wheeler Robinson, Redemption and Revelation, pp. 149 ff.

¹⁷ Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, p. 36.

¹⁸ Epiphanius, Panarion, xlviil, 12: Μαξιμίλλα... λέγει Ἐμοῦ μὴ ἀκούσητε, ἀλλὰ Χριστοῦ ἀκούσατε.

Behold, the Lord is He who takes away men's hearts out of them and gives hearts to men."¹⁹

These two oracles further illustrate the Montanist theory of inspiration and the place of ecstasy in the experience of the prophets. Epiphanius condemns Maximilla for claiming to be Christ when she uttered the words: "Do not listen to me, but listen to Christ." Maximilla, however, in common with Montanus believed that she was but an instrument through whom the Spirit spoke. Thus this oracle is claimed by her to be an oracle of the Spirit. Voigt²⁰ sees an objection to this interpretation, and maintains that the Spirit would not distinguish Himself thus from Christ and show such humility. Evidently Voigt has overlooked the Johannine passages which state very clearly that the Spirit would conduct Himself in such a manner. It is recorded in the Gospel according to Saint John that the Spirit would not speak of Himself.²¹ Neither

19 Epiphanius, Panarion, xlviii, 4: ὁ Μοντανός φησιν, Ἰδοὺ, ἄνθρωπος ὡσεὶ λύρα, καὶ γὰρ ἵπταμαι ὡσεὶ πρῆκτρον· ὁ ἄνθρωπος κοιμᾶται, καὶ γὰρ γρηγορῶ· Ἰδοὺ, κύριός ἐστιν ὁ ἐξιστάνων καρδίας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ διδοὺς καρδίας ἀνθρώποις.

²⁰ Voigt, op. cit., p. 325, note 1.

²¹ John xvi, 13.

does He speak on His own authority, but He utters that which Christ has confided to Him.

The teaching of this oracle is further illustrated by Montanus' comparison of the lyre and the plectrum. This comparison is not found in the sacred Scriptures, but occurs in Cicero²² and Prudentius.²³

Christian literature offers similar language. In the Odes of Solomon²⁴ it is stated, "As the hand on the harp, so the Lord's Spirit on His members." The author of the Cohortatio ad Graecos stated concerning the prophets:

They ought to present themselves pure to the energy of the divine Spirit in order that the divine plectrum itself, descending from heaven, and using righteous men as an instrument like a harp or lyre, might reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly.²⁵

This writer, in common with the Montanists, did not believe that inspiration was a mere increase in the productivity of human intelligence; he denied, in fact, that the prophet

²² Cicero, De Natura Deorum, ii, 149.

²³ Prudentius, Perist., x, 6.

²⁴ Odes of Solomon, vi.

²⁵ _____, Cohortatio ad Graecos, viii: Οἷς.

ἔδῆσε . . . καθαροὺς ἑαυτοὺς τῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ Πνεύματος
 παρασχεῖν ἐνεργείᾳ ἰν' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατιὸν
 πληκτρον, ὡσπερ ὄργανῳ κιθάρας τινὸς ἢ λύρας, τοῖς δικαίοις
 ἀνδράσι χρώμενον, τὴν τῶν θεῶν ἡμῶν καὶ οὐρανίων ἀπο-
 καλύψῃ γνῶσιν.

retained any natural consciousness during inspiration; in other words, the one inspired entered a state of ecstasy.

Athenagoras also uses the figure of the musician to illustrate how the prophets became the instrument of the Spirit:

Lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the divine Spirit, they uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute player breathes into a flute.²⁶

Hippolytus speaking of the prophets states:

They had always in them the Logos as a plectrum, actuated by which they announced those things which God willed.²⁷

Clement of Alexandria, speaking of the lifeless instruments, lyre and harp, compares them with the living instrument:

A beautiful breathing instrument of music the Lord made man, after His own image.²⁸

²⁶ Athenagoras, *Leg. ix*: κατ' ἑκστάσιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος, ἃ ἐνήργουντο ἐξεφώνησαν συγχρησαμένου τοῦ πνεύματος ὡσεὶ καὶ αὐλητῆς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεῦσαι.

²⁷ Hippolytus, *De Antichr.*, ii: ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς αἰὲν τὸν λόγον ὡς πληκτρον. δι' οὗ κινούμενοι ἀπήγγελλον ταῦτα ἅπερ ἤθελεν ὁ θεός.

²⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, i.

This metaphor of the lyre and the plectrum sets forth the Montanist view of inspiration. The prophet, or the one inspired, was considered as wholly yielded to the all-powerful control of the divine Spirit. The Spirit is the plectrum, the man is the lyre and the melody is the man's voice speaking the words of the Spirit. The Spirit causes the human instrument to vibrate and the voice of the prophet then becomes the tongue of the Spirit.

The second part of the oracle teaches that the natural faculties of the prophet are asleep during inspiration, the supernatural alone being active.

Plato's view of inspiration is somewhat similar:

No man in his wits attains prophetic truth and inspiration His intelligence is either enthralled by sleep or he is demented by some distemper or possession.²⁹

Speaking of the priestesses of Delphi and Dodona in the Phaedrus, Plato stated that they uttered few things of value in their sane minds (*σωφρονούσαι*); they were supposed to enter into an abnormal condition of trance for the purpose of uttering their oracles.

²⁹ Plato, Timaeus, lxxii.

A study of the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament reveals the fact that during inspiration they often manifested ecstasy.³⁰ A typical example is found in the record of Saul, the king of Israel, where the prophet Samuel announces to him: "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."³¹

The fulfilment of this is stated thus: "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart."³² The idea here expressed of Saul receiving "another heart" finds a parallel in this oracle by Montanus.

The prevailing view of antiquity was that the divine Spirit or the Deity entered into man rather than that the man approached God. This view is in harmony with the Hebrew conception of man as a body animated by the life-principle or soul.³³ The soul being the life-principle of the body could not ascend alone to God. In order for communion between God and man to be made possible, it was necessary that the Spirit of God should descend upon man.

³⁰ I Sam. xviii, 10; xix, 24; I Kings xviii, 28 f; cf. Theodore Robinson, "The Ecstatic Element in Old Testament Prophecy," Expositor, 8th series, xxi (1924), p. 224.

³¹ I Sam. x, 6.

³² Ibid., 9.

³³ For a discussion of these terms, see Wheeler Robinson, The People and the Book.

The record in the New Testament of the day of Pentecost asserts that the disciples believed themselves to be in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets and that the Spirit had taken possession of them so that they spoke with other tongues.³⁴ In the early Church visions, dreams and apocalypses were not unknown even among those who called themselves orthodox.³⁵

Oracle 5. "The Lord has sent me as adherent, teacher, interpreter of this work, the promise and the covenant, compelled, willing and not willing, to learn the knowledge of God." ³⁶

³⁴ Acts ii; cf. Joel ii.

³⁵ Ignatius, Ad. Rom., vii, 2; Justin Martyr, Dial. C. Tryph., xxxix, lxxxii.

³⁶ Epiphanius, Panarion, xliii, 13: Ἀπεστειλέ με κύριος τούτου τοῦ πόνου καὶ τῆς ἐπαγγελίᾳ καὶ τῆς συνθήκης ἀρετιστὴν, μηνυτὴν, ἑρμηνευτὴν, ἠναγκασμένον θέλοντα καὶ μὴ θέλοντα, μαθεῖν γνῶσιν θεοῦ.

Maximilla is here stating a similar thought to that expressed by Montanus in his analogy of the "lyre and plectrum" when in this oracle she claims to be the medium through whom the divine plans are communicated.

The oracle reveals a duality of divine and human consciousness in Maximilla's experience.³⁷ One difficulty in this explanation, as Labriolle has shown,³⁸ lies in the circumstance that the three participles ἠναγκασμένον, θέλοντα, θέλοντα are masculine. The Greek language, however, permits, when ambiguity is impossible, a masculine participle to be used where a feminine subject is understood. This frequently occurs in the Greek tragedies.³⁹ Further, these three participles immediately follow the masculine substantives αἰρετιστής, μηνυτής, ἐφημευτής and agree with them in gender.

Some have thought that Epiphanius had misquoted Maximilla for Montanus, but his strong emphasis on the name Maximilla makes this rather unlikely. Münter's explanation is more plausible:⁴⁰

³⁷ Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. II, p. 97, note 3.

³⁸ Pierre de Labriolle, La Crise Montaniste, p. 74.

³⁹ Sophocles, Antig., 926; Euripides, Hippol., 1105.

⁴⁰ F. C. K. H. Münter, Effata et oracula Montanistorum, p. 12: "Caeterum notandum est Prophetidem de se loque, . . . quasi muliebrem sedum vates facta, exuisset."

Moreover, it is to be noted how the prophetess speaks of herself, ... as if, when she became a seer she laid aside her female sex.

Bonwetsch,⁴¹ Zahn,⁴² and Hilgenfeld⁴³ accept Münter's suggestion and attribute the masculine gender to the fact that the prophetess during ecstasy assumed the rôle of a prophet. When Maximilla had willingly (θέλοντα) resigned herself to become the instrument of the Spirit, her own will was then given up to be controlled by a power outside herself. This compelling force so constrained her to declare the divine message, that she ceased to be able to direct her own course.

The record of the 'call' of many of the Hebrew prophets presents a somewhat similar experience to that of Maximilla.

Amos,⁴⁴ Hosea,⁴⁵ Isaiah⁴⁶ and Jeremiah⁴⁷ were conscious of the compelling character of their task and began their careers in an experience of inescapable constraint.

γνώσις θεοῦ is a Pauline expression⁴⁸ and occurs also in the book of Wisdom⁴⁹ and in Sirach.⁵⁰

⁴¹ G. N. Bonwetsch, Geschichte des Montanismus, p. 59.

⁴² T. Zahn, Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, II, ii, 965.

⁴³ A. Hilgenfeld, Die Ketzergeschichte de Urchristentums, p. 630

⁴⁴ Amos vii, 14

⁴⁵ Hosea i, 2.

⁴⁶ Isaiah vi.

⁴⁷ Jeremiah i, 4; xx, 9.

⁴⁸ Romans xi, 33.

⁴⁹ Wisdom ii, 13; ἐπαγγέλλεται γνώσιν ἔχειν θεοῦ.

Ibid., xiv, 22 πλυνᾶσθαι περὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γνώσιν.

⁵⁰ Sirach xxxvi (xxxiii), 8; ἐν γνώσει κυρίου.

Dibelius⁵¹ sees a technical meaning derived from Greek mysticism in the use of γνώσις in Saint Paul's epistle to the Philippians.⁵² Deissman, on the other hand, thinks that there is here no reference to speculative knowledge of Christ, but to personal and pneumatic acquaintance with Christ, and illustrates the meaning of the word from a first century decree of the Byzantines.⁵³

Hellenistic mysticism in its most lofty manifestations undoubtedly influenced Christianity. γνώσιν Θεοῦ here, however, means not so much contemplation or intuition of God, as the knowledge of providential designs.

From this oracle it is seen that Maximilla believed that she had allowed herself to be controlled by a dominating power outside of herself. She also maintained that the Lord had chosen her as a special instrument to reveal to humanity His work and knowledge.

The next three oracles deal with the salvation of the righteous; the nearness of Christ's second advent; and the descent of the New Jerusalem at Pepuza.

⁵¹ H. Lietzmann, editor, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament.

⁵² Phil., iii, 8: διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου.

⁵³ Deissmann (English translation by L. R. M. Strachan), Light from the Ancient East, p. 383, note 8.

Oracle No. 6. "What do you say (of) the superman who is saved?" "The righteous shall shine," he says, "a hundred times brighter than the sun, and those who are small among you, once saved, shall shine a hundred times more than the moon." 54

This oracle is made up of an interrogative phrase and a positive affirmation.

It would appear that the interrogative is a question put by Montanus to the Spirit. The Spirit in his reply magnifies the exalted state of the elect. Here two classes are spoken of among the saved. The first is composed of those who have practised righteousness constantly, and the second of those, who, without attaining to a high degree of merit, yet finally triumph.

The figure of the righteous shining is one familiar in the Old Testament. In the Septuagint this same verb λάμπω is used in the writings of the prophet Daniel, who declares of the wise that they shall shine as the heavenly lights.⁵⁵

54 Epiphanius, Panarion, xlviiii, 10: Τί λέγεις τὸν ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον σωζόμενον; λάμπει γὰρ ὁ δίκαιος, φησὶν, ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον ἑκατονταπλασίονα, οἱ δὲ μικροὶ ἐν ὑμῖν σωζόμενοι λάμπουσιν ἑκατονταπλασίονα ὑπὲρ τὴν σελήνην.

55 Dan. xii, 3: καὶ οἱ συνιέντες, λάμπουσιν ὡς ἡ λαμπρότης τοῦ στεφάνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δικαίων τῶν πολλῶν ὡς οἱ ἀστέρες εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

There is also an allusion in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew ⁵⁶ to the righteous shining as the sun, and Epiphanius thinks that Montanus obtained his oracle from this New Testament text.

The habit of speaking of spirits under the figures of heavenly bodies is seen in the writings of Clement of Alexandria. ⁵⁷

In this oracle Montanus over-emphasises certain expressions of the Old and New Testaments, in that he is not satisfied with the comparison of the righteous shining as the heavenly bodies, but desires their brilliance to be one hundred times that of the sun and moon. Epiphanius is right when he condemns this exaggeration.

Oracle No. 7. She whom they call Maximilla the prophetess declares: "After me there will no longer be a prophetess but the end." ⁵⁸

This declaration is akin to that recorded by "The Anonymous"

⁵⁶ Matt. xiii, 43.

⁵⁷ Clement, Strom., VI, xiii; φωτεινὸς δὲ ἦδη καὶ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος λάμπων κατὰ τὴν εὐεργεσίαν σπεύδει τῇ γνώσει τῇ δικαίᾳ δι' ἀγάπης Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν ἁγίαν μονήν.

⁵⁸ Epiphanius, Panarion, xliii, 2; φάσκει γὰρ ἡ παρ' αὐτοῖς λεγομένη Μαξιμίλλα ἡ προφητις ὅτι, φησὶ, Μετ' ἐμὲ προφητις οὐκέτι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ τὸ τέλος.

of Eusebius, who like Epiphanius proceeds to condemn Maximilla as a false prophet.

There seems little doubt as to the source of this oracle since the expressions resemble so closely those uttered in the great eschatological discourse of Christ.⁵⁹

ΣΥΝΤΕΛΕΙΑ according to Moulton and Milligan's lexicon means "consummation, completion in relation to time." It occurs in the Greek version of Sirach,⁶⁰ and in the prophecy of Zechariah,⁶¹ and in Jeremiah.⁶² This word is always used in the New Testament for the end of the world.⁶³

The Montanists believed in the near advent of Christ and the end of the world. This eschatological hope was shared by many of the writers of the New Testament⁶⁴ and there can be no doubt that a strong eschatological element is found also in the early church. Ignatius,⁶⁵ the writer of the Didache,⁶⁶ Hermas,⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.

⁶⁰ Si. xlvii, 10: ἐκόσμησε καιροῦς μέχρι συντελείας.

⁶¹ Zech. i, 18 συντέλειαν καὶ σπουδὴν ποιήσει.

⁶² Jer. xxvi (xlvi), 28; ποιήσω συντέλειαν ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει.

⁶³ Matt. xiii, 39, 40, 49; xxiv, 3; xxviii, 20; Hebrews ix, 26.

⁶⁴ I Thess. iv, 13-18; James v, 6; I Peter iii.

⁶⁵ Ignatius, Ad Eph., xi, i.

⁶⁶ Didache xvi, 6.

⁶⁷ Hermas, Sim., ix.

Justin Martyr,⁶⁸ and Irenaeus⁶⁹ all spoke of the nearness of the end of the world.

The writings of Irenaeus, however, may fitly be taken to mark the close of the distinctive primitive age of Christian eschatology. From this time on the primitive eschatology of the Spirit was giving way to the mediaeval eschatology of authority, and there was a slow but steady decline of the eager expectation of an immediate return of the Lord.

The beginning of this movement is seen in the New Testament⁷⁰ and thenceforward with every fresh decade the primitive hope silently retires more and more into the background. The Montanists raised their voices against this and believed it to be their duty to revive the hope in the immediate return of Christ. When their predictions failed and Maximilla's prophecy regarding the end of the world proved false, the whole character of the Montanist movement came under severe review.

Epiphanius in quoting the following oracle says it is not clear to him whether it should be attributed to Quintilla or Priscilla.

⁶⁸ Justin, Dial. c. Tryph., lxxxii.

⁶⁹ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., V., xxiii, xxviii.

⁷⁰ II Tim. ii, 18; II Pet. iii, 4-10.

Oracle No. 8. "In the form of a woman, clad in a dazzling robe, Christ came to me. He imparted wisdom to me and revealed to me that this place (Pepuza) is sacred and that here Jerusalem will descend from heaven." ⁷¹

The prophetess here tells of a vision akin to that of Cornelius recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. ⁷²

"Shining raiment" is the radiance in which Christ appeared to the prophetess. This type of appearance of a heavenly messenger is common in both the Old and New Testaments. ⁷³

In this oracle the prophetess declares in full consciousness the dream which she had during sleep and she gives it as a revelation of Christ. ⁷⁴

This is probably the only time that Christ is said to appear as a woman. However, this likeness may have been in the dazzling white apparel or, as in the Gospel to the Hebrews and in sundry fragments of Gnostic origin, where the feminine is applied to the Spirit.

⁷¹ Epiphanius, Panarion, xlix, 1: 'Εν ιδέᾳ φησὶ, γυναικὸς ἐσχιματισμένος ἐν στολῇ λαμπρᾷ ἦλθε πρὸς με Χριστὸς, καὶ ἐνέβαλεν ἐν ἐμοὶ τὴν σοφίαν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψέ μοι τουτονὶ τὸν τόπον εἶναι ἅγιον, καὶ ᾧδε τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατιέναι.

⁷² Acts x, 3.

⁷³ Dan. vii, 9: Apocalypse i, 13-16.

⁷⁴ For a similar incident, cf. Acts x, 13.

Karl Holl⁷⁵ comments on ἐν ἰδέᾳ γυναικός thus: "It is clear that Christ was in the place of a goddess who had been worshipped in former times." Holl continues quoting from Irenaeus, "He declares that the infinitely exalted Tetrad descended upon him from the invisible and indescribable places in the form of a woman (for the world could not have borne it coming in its male form)."⁷⁶

The word σοφία as used in the New Testament means "a knowledge of divine things," but in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Proverbs it is hypostatized.⁷⁷

Rendel Harris sees a connection between the feminine word Sophia and the appearance of Christ in female form:

Every verse of the Old Testament or of the New, which treats of the descent of the spirit of prophecy, is a hinge in the Montanist system. If they read in the Old Testament that the Sophia enters into holy souls in all ages and makes them friends of God and prophets, this magnificent statement is the reason why Saint Priscilla says that Christ appeared to her in female form and imparted to her the Sophia.⁷⁸

This oracle speaks of the sacred place, Pepuza, where the heavenly Jerusalem will descend, and to this little town in

⁷⁵ Karl Holl, Epiphanius Ancoratus und Panarion, p. 242, note.

⁷⁶ Iren., Adv. Haer., I, xiv, 1.

⁷⁷ Proverbs viii.

⁷⁸ Rendel Harris, "Codex Bezae," Texts and Studies, Vol. II, pp. 194-195, cf. Origen, Homil. in Jer., xiv, 5: Τίς δὲ γεννᾷ

προφήτας; σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ· ἔλεγεν οὖν τὸ οἶμοι ἐγὼ μήτηρ, ὡς τίνα με ἔτεκες, ὦ σοφίη;

Phrygia the Montanists gave the name of Jerusalem.⁷⁹

The conception of a celestial Jerusalem is frequently found in apocalyptic literature.⁸⁰ In the Old Testament⁸¹ there are many references to the exaltation of the righteous in a restored Jerusalem. In fact, this had become an essential item of Jewish eschatology.

This conception, undoubtedly Jewish in origin, was later accepted into Christianity. As is quite apparent, the Apocalypse of the New Testament, although impregnated with the Christian spirit, utilized the images found in Jewish writings.⁸²

Justin affirmed that at the second Parousia, Jerusalem would be the place of reunion of Christians with Christ and also with the prophets and patriarchs.⁸³ Irenaeus, who held millennial ideas, believed that the New Jerusalem would appear again on earth.⁸⁴ One is reminded of the answer of a martyr to the governor of Palestine during the persecution of Diocletian: "My country is Jerusalem."⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Eusebius, H.E., V. xviii, 2 (Lake, pp. 486-487).

⁸⁰ Apocalypse of Barak; Book of Enoch; Apocalypse of Saint John.

⁸¹ Zech. xiv, 4; Micah ii.

⁸² Apoc. xxi 1; cf. Gal. iv, 26; Heb. xii, 22; also A. Ritschl, Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche, p. 59.

⁸³ Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., lxxx.

⁸⁴ Iren., Adv. Haer., V, xxxv, 2.

⁸⁵ Eus., Mart. Palest., xi, 9; cf. Saint Augustine, Ep. ccxii.

The reference in this oracle to the New Jerusalem illustrates the Montanist spirit of Judaical localism, and the suggestion of Pepuza as being the site chosen for the future centre of religious life brought unfavourable criticism on the movement.

CHAPTER V

THE MONTANIST ORACLES FOUND IN THE WRITINGS OF
EUSEBIUS, DIDYMUS AND TERTULLIAN

Oracle No. 9. "And let not the spirit which speaks through Maximilla say in the same work - that according to Asterius Urbanus, 'I am pursued as a wolf from sheep. I am not a wolf; I am Utterance, Spirit, and Power.'" ¹

This oracle claims that the Spirit who speaks in Maximilla is so persecuted by the Church, that He is kept away from approaching the flock, just as a wolf is driven from the sheep. The figure of the wolf to represent the enemy of the true people of God is familiar in the Gospels and in illustrations employed by the Apostolic Fathers. ²

¹ Eusebius, H.E., v. xvi, 17; καὶ μὴ λεγέτω ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τῷ κατὰ Ἀστέριον Ὀρβανὸν τὸ δεῖν Μαξιμίλλης πνεῦμα 'διώκομαι ὡς λύκος ἐκ προβάτων· οὐκ εἰμι λύκος· ῥῆμά εἰμι καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ δύναμις.'

² Matthew vii, 15; x, 16; Luke x, 3; John x, 12; Ignatius, Ad. Phil., ii, 2.

The Spirit objects to being identified as a wolf, and states in this oracle that "He is Utterance, Spirit, and Power."

There has been considerable discussion concerning the

significance of the three words: ρῆμα, πνεῦμα, δύναμις.

Lawlor sees in them the three persons of the Montanist Trinity:

Son, Spirit, and Father.³ Zahn agreed with Lawlor⁴ that ρῆμα

should be here taken as synonymous with λόγος to signify

Christ. There is, however, no example of such use in the New Testament, the Apostolic Fathers, or the Apologists of the second century.

Thus it would appear unwarranted to read into the text of this oracle any reference to the Trinity. It is true that

δύναμις sometimes has a "hypostatic" sense,⁵ but in the

New Testament it is more often treated as an attribute of the Spirit.⁶ In this oracle the Spirit defines Himself by the

³ Lawlor, "The Heresy of the Phrygians," Journal of Theological Studies, IX (1908), p. 483.

⁴ T. Zahn, Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, II ii, 964.

⁵ Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., cxvi, 1; cxxviii, 2.

⁶ Luke iv, 14; Acts vi, 8; Romans xv, 13; cf. Hermas, Mand., vii, 2; xi, 5.

common term πνεῦμα. The other two terms signify attributes of the Spirit; ῥῆμα has reference to the divine utterance of the Spirit,⁷ while δύναμις is the attribute of power which He possesses.

Oracles ten and eleven - the one quoted by Didymus, the other by Tertullian - present various aspects of the teachings of the Montanists regarding the Godhead.

Oracle No. 10. "For he says, Montanus said: 'I am the Father and the Son and the Paraclete.'" ⁸

Didymus criticises Montanus for holding Monarchian views of the Godhead. He is followed by Ritschl who also sees Monarchianism in this oracle.⁹ But there seems evidence that the early Montanists did not hold Monarchian views, and Tertullian certainly despised Monarchian teaching.

Certain Church fathers, notably Cyril,¹⁰ accuse the Montanists of identifying their founder with the very form of

⁷ John v, 47; xiii, 47; xvii, 8.

⁸ Didymus of Alexandria, De Trinitate, III, xli, 1: Μοντανὸς γὰρ, φησὶν, εἶπεν· Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ ὁ Παράκλητος.

⁹ Ritschl, Die Entstehung, p. 488.

¹⁰ Cyril, Catechetical Lectures, XVI, viii: Μοντανὸς... ἐτόλμησεν εἶπεῖν ἑαυτὸν εἶναι τὸ ἄγιον πνεῦμα.

the Paraclete, if not of God the Father.

Jerome,¹¹ on the other hand, who never misses an opportunity of attacking the Montanist theory of the form of inspiration, has the fairness to admit that the Montanists simply maintained that the Paraclete had come to dwell in Montanus.

The purpose of this oracle is not to set forth a theory of the Godhead, but rather to emphasise the idea that the prophet was God's mouthpiece.

Oracle No. 11. "The Word, therefore, is both in the Father always - as He said, 'I am in the Father;'¹² and always with God, - according to what is written, 'And the Word was with God;'¹³ and never separate from the Father or other than the Father, since 'I and the Father are one.'¹⁴ This Word will be an emanation of the truth, the guardian of the Unity; whence we declare that the Son is a prolation from the Father, but not separated from Him. For God sent forth the Word, as the Paraclete also declares, just as the root puts forth the trunk of the tree, and the fountain the river, and the sun the

¹¹ Jerome, Contr. Vigil., viii: "Paracletum (in) Montanum venisse contendunt."

¹² John xiv, 2.

¹³ John i, 1.

¹⁴ John x, 30.

ray. For these examples are also emanations of the substances from which they proceed."¹⁵

The imagery here used to represent the relationship of the Deity was not unfamiliar during the second century. Justin,¹⁶ Athenagoras,¹⁷ and Hippolytus¹⁸ had made similar comparisons. In fact, the words of Hippolytus are almost identical with this oracle.

Tertullian cites this teaching of Montanus in his argument against Praxeas, who did not believe in the Trinity. It is evidently not a direct quotation but was probably loosely quoted from memory by Tertullian. The first part of the oracle is an exposition of the teaching of the Gospel according to Saint John.¹⁹

¹⁵ Tertullian, Adv. Praxean, viii:

"Sermo ergo^{et} in Patre semper, sicut dixit: 'Ego in Patre' (John xiv, 2), et apud Deum semper, sicut scriptum est, 'Et sermo

erat apud Deum' (John i, 1), et nunquam separatus a Patre aut alius a Patre, quia: 'Ego et Pater unum sumus' (John x, 30). Haec erit probola veritatis, custos unitatis, qua prolatum dicimus Filium a Patre, sed non separatum. Protulit enim Deus sermonem, quemadmodum etiam Paracletus docet, sicut radix fruticem et fons fluvium et sol radium. Nam et istae species probolae sunt earum substantiarum, ex quibus prodeunt."

¹⁶ Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., cxxviii, 3-4.

¹⁷ Athenagoras, Legatio, x, 3.

¹⁸ Hippolytus, Contra Nostum, xi: 'Ἀλλ' ὡς φῶς ἐκ φωτός

ἢ ὡς ὑδὼρ ἐκ πηγῆς ἢ ὡς ἀκτῖνα ἀπὸ ἡλίου.

¹⁹ John i.

It is clearly evident that in this quotation Tertullian is referring to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, as he wished to convince his readers of the error of the Monarchian views of Praxeas. Tertullian said of Praxeas that "he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father." 20

Tertullian's doctrine of the Trinity was a necessary corollary to the Montanist theory of the three stages, and its effect was to neutralize any tendency to subordinate the Spirit either in respect of state or work, and to strengthen the cause of Trinitarian against Monarchian attacks. The assertion of certain writers such as Hippolytus,²¹ Theodoret²² and Pseudo Tertullian²³ concerning a body of Montanists who adopted Noetian or Sabellian opinions finds no place in the works of Tertullian.

20 Tert., Adv. Prax., i.

21 Hippolytus, Adv. Omn. Haeres., VIII, xii; τινὲς δὲ
 χυτῶν τῆ τῶν Νοητικῶν ἀίρέσει συντιθέμενοι τὸν
 Πατέρα αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν Υἱὸν λέγουσι.

This, however, seems to contradict Hippolytus' evidence in the earlier part of the chapter where he states: "They acknowledge God to be the Father and Creator of all things, as the Church does, and what the Gospel testifies respecting Christ." These contradictory statements naturally deprive the evidence of Hippolytus of the weight to which its date and the usual impartiality of the writer would entitle it.

22 Theodoret, Haer. Fabul., III, 2.

23 Pseudo Tert., Adv. Haer., vii.

It is very unlikely that Tertullian would have entered upon the campaign against Praxeas with such confidence had the Montanists of Tertullian's day shown any leanings to the views of Praxeas. That the early Montanists were orthodox on the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be fairly well established. Epiphanius begins his account of them by stating: "Concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they agree with the holy Catholic Church." 24

Firmilian also corroborates this statement of Epiphanius: "Although they (i.e., the Montanists) receive new prophets, yet they appear to accept the same Father and Son with us." 25

Philaster testifies that the Montanists acknowledge the Father, Son and Spirit, and the resurrection, as does the Catholic Church. 26

In oracles twelve and thirteen from the writings of Tertullian, the Montanist teaching on Martyrdom is set forth.

Oracle No. 12. "And if you ask counsel of the Spirit, what does He approve more than that utterance of the Spirit?"

24 Epiphanius, Haer., xlvi, 1.

25 Firmilian, Ep. lxxv, 7.

26 Philaster, Liber De Haersibus, xlix; "Isti prophetas et legem accipiunt, Patrem et Filium, et Spiritum confitentur, carnis resurrectionem exspectant, quae et Catholica Ecclesia praedicat."

For nearly all incite to martyrdom, not to flight; as we also quote from him: 'If you are exposed to public trial,' says he, 'it is for your good; for he who is not exposed to public trial before men is sure to be so tried before the Lord. Do not be ashamed; righteousness brings you forth into the public gaze. Why should you be ashamed of gaining glory? The opportunity is given you when you are a spectacle to men.'²⁷

Oracle No. 13. "So also elsewhere do not choose to die on bridal beds, nor in miscarriages, nor in fevers, but as martyrs, that He may be glorified who has suffered for us."²⁸

These oracles are cited by Tertullian as an exhortation to Christians not to evade martyrdom. In support of this position, he gave the example and teachings of Christ and the Apostles. Oracle thirteen encourages the Christian not only to endure martyrdom but to seek after it and to long for it as an end to be desired above a natural death. In oracle twelve the Spirit

²⁷ Tertullian, De Fuga, ix: "Spiritus vero si consulas, quid magis sermone illo Spiritus probat? Namque omnes paene ad martyrrium exhortantur non ad fugam; ut et illius commemoremur: 'Publicaris,' inquit, 'bonum tibi est; qui enim non publicatur in hominibus, publicatur in Domino. Ne confundaris, iustitia te producit in medium. Quid confundaris laudem ferens? Potestas fit, cum conspiceris ab hominibus.'"

²⁸ Ibid., Sic et alibi: "Nolite in lectulis nec in aborsibus et febribus mollibus optare exitu sed in martyriis, uti glorificetur qui est passus pro nobis."

advises a confessor who is suffering for the faith not to shun punishments inflicted by the courts, because punishment bravely endured will bring joy and the experience of new power.

Tertullian taught that the soul of the martyr would receive special treatment, passing immediately into heaven and avoiding the intermediate state through which all other souls must pass.²⁹ Tertullian suggested that this soul, having attained glorification immediately after death, was then given the right to intercede for sinners.³⁰

This desire for martyrdom is further illustrated when Perpetua, giving an account of her baptism, declared: "Within the space of these few days we were baptized; and the Spirit bade me ask for nothing else when I came from the water but for endurance in the flesh."³¹

In referring to the martyrdom of Perpetua, it is further stated that she took the faltering hand of a young novice of a gladiator, and moved it to her own throat. The story ends by intimating that such a woman as Perpetua could not otherwise have been killed, if she had not wished it herself, since the unclean

²⁹ Tertullian, De Anima, lv.

³⁰ Tertullian, Ad Martyres, i.

³¹ Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis, i. 2; cf. A. J. Mason, The Historic Martyrs of the Primitive Church, p. 89.

Spirit was afraid of her.³²

A similar record is left of Satorus, who is reputed to have said as he saw the wild beasts approaching him, "One bite of the leopard and I am perfected."³³

Later Montanists seemed to avoid martyrdom, if we are to believe Apollonius when he states that Themisto purchased his liberation from chains with a large sum of money and then boasted as a martyr.³⁴ Another later document recorded by Ruinart which has many marks of genuineness tells of the governor, Martianus urging one, Achatius by name, to sacrifice and recant and follow the example of the Cataphrygians, who had in a body abandoned Christianity and made their offerings to their gods.³⁵ Evidently this zeal for martyrdom which possessed the early Montanists was not found among their successors.

Oracle No. 14. "'But,' you say, 'the Church has the power of forgiving sins!'" This I acknowledge and take account of more than you; I who have, in the persons of the new prophets, the Paraclete Himself who says, 'The Church has the power to forgive

³² Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis, vi, 4; cf. Robinson, Texts and Studies, Vol. I, No. 2; Ruinart, Acta primorum Martyrum, p. 80.

³³ Mason, op. cit., p. 104.

³⁴ Eus., H.E., V, xviii, 5.

³⁵ Ruinart, Acta sincera, p. 152.

sins; but I will not use it, lest they commit other sins."³⁶

The basis for the belief that the Church had power to forgive sins is probably found in the Gospel according to Saint John xx, 22-23:

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The records of early Montanism are not sufficiently complete to make it possible to formulate a statement concerning their penitential system, but some have thought that such a system was hinted at in a rather vague passage in Eusebius:

Who then is it that forgives the other his sins?
Is it the prophet who forgives the martyr his robberies,
or the martyr who forgives the prophet his cupidity?³⁷

This inference would have no point unless it was recognised that among the Montanists, prophets and martyrs claimed a certain right of pardon. It is known that Tertullian later worked out a system of penance.

³⁶ Tertullian, De Pudicitia, xxi: "'Sed habet,' inquis, 'potestatem ecclesia delicta donandi.' Hoc ego magis et agnosco et dispono; qui ipsum Paracletum in prophetis novis habes dicentem: 'Potest ecclesia donare delictum sed non faciam, ne et alia delinquant.'" ³⁷ Eus., H.E., V. xviii, 7.

The more heinous sins were called by him capitalia delicta, also inconcessibilia and immundabilia. Sinners who had been guilty of such ceased to be members of the Church and no ministration of the Church was appointed for them.³⁸

In an earlier tract Tertullian rather reluctantly teaches that there is forgiveness for post-baptismal sins. He, however, cautions thus: "It is irksome 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."³⁹

This mention of the "last hope" is somewhat 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."⁴⁰

The limit for post-baptismal repentance was now drawn very close, and at times it seemed to be excluded. The subject of the treatise De Pudicitia was the episcopal edict of Zephyrinus, which gave absolution to those adulterers and fornicators who

³⁸ Tert., De Pudicitia, ii.

³⁹ Tert., De Poenitentia, vii.

⁴⁰ Ibid., cf. Neander, Antignostikus, p. 199 ff.

had complied with the requirements of ecclesiastical discipline. Tertullian cries out against this edict thus, "Oedict, which cannot be characterized as a worthy act!"⁴¹

There has been considerable discussion on the word "Church" as used in this oracle. Schwartz,⁴² declared that it was the orthodox Church, while Adam⁴³ believed it referred to the Church of the Spirituales, i.e., the Montanist Church.

It would be assuming too much to say that the Montanists called themselves the Church at the time of Tertullian. The reference would seem to be to the orthodox Church. 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. He considered the bishops were the successors of the Apostles in teaching but not in spiritual power and insight.

Tertullian was anxious to have but one Church. Speaking of those whom he termed Psychici as against the Spirituales he remarked, "Let me say it once for all, we are one Church."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Tert., De Pudicitia, i: "O edictum, cui adscribi non poterit: bonum factum!"

⁴² E. Schwartz, Busstufen und Katechumenatsklassen, (Strassburg, 1911) Vol. II, p. 7

⁴³ Karl Adam, "Der Kirchenbegriff Tertullians," Forschungen zur christlichen literatur - und Dogmengeschichte, A. Ehrhard und J.P. Kirsch, (Paderborn, 1907), pp. 143, 148.

⁴⁴ Tert., De Virg. Veland., ii: "Semel dixerim, una ecclesia sumus."

Tertullian taught that the Psychic Church had only the outward machinery, but the true Church had the Spirit.⁴⁵ The orthodox Church had the outward right to pardon, but this right was not exercised by the Montanists.

This oracle suggests that Montanus claimed the right of pardon for himself, but he refused to exercise it. His reason for this refusal was that he feared, should the sinner have too easy a pardon, there would be the tendency to lapse back into the same sins.

Oracle No. 15. "Again, through the holy prophets, Prisca⁴⁶ it is proclaimed that the holy minister is competent to administer sanctity. 'For purity,' says she, 'makes for harmony, and they see visions, and bowing their heads, they hear distinct voices, as salutary as they are mysterious.'"⁴⁷

In chapter ten of De Exhortatione Castitatis, Tertullian is writing on purity and emphasises the necessity of chastity that prayer and meditation may be effectual. It is in this

⁴⁵ Tert., De Jejunis, xi; De Pudic., xxi.

⁴⁶ Also called Priscilla.

⁴⁷ Tert., De Exhortatione Castitatis, x: "Item per sanctam prophetidem Priscam ita evangelizatur quod sanctus minister sanctimoniam noverit ministrare. 'Purificantia enim concordat,' ait, 'et visiones vident, et ponentes faciem deorsum etiam voces audiunt manifestas, tam salutare quam et occultas.'"

setting that he quotes this oracle from the prophetess Prisca. Tertullian taught that the individual who wished to give himself to a life of prayer should abstain from all fleshly desires. The minister who would offer holy and acceptable prayer must himself be holy like the Being to whom the prayer is offered.

This teaching doubtless found its Scriptural basis in the Old Testament. In the presence of the God of the Hebrews cleanliness and purity were exacted of the children of Israel. No one was allowed to come into the camp unless he was pure both physically and morally; "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, . . . therefore shall thy camp be holy: that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee."⁴⁸ Similar teaching is found in the writings of Saint Paul.⁴⁹

A number of writers failing to note carefully the context of this oracle, have read into it an exhortation to the clergy alone.

Ritschl interpreted these words as a recommendation of celibacy for the clergy.⁵⁰ Hilgenfeld also suspected a

⁴⁸ Deuteronomy xxiii, 14.

⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians vii, 5.

⁵⁰ A. Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 504: "Nur ein heiliger das heisst, jungfräulicher Diener kann das Heilige recht verwalten."

criticism addressed to the clergy or against the proud pretensions of some servitor of the Church.⁵¹ This error was already found in Münter.⁵²

Thus Hilgenfeld understood purificantia enim concordat that purity makes unity in place of clerical discord. Labriolle's interpretation seems to accord better with the context. He states, "Purity, especially sexual, causes harmony to reign (in the soul of those who value prayer)."⁵³

The reference to seeing visions (*visiones vident*) is referred to in the prophecy of Joel.⁵⁴ Ponentes faciem deorsum indicates the attitude of prayer. The suggestion that a prophet should hear distinct voices (*voces manifestas*) finds a basis in the experience of prophets of both Old and New Testament times.⁵⁵

⁵¹ A. Hilgenfeld, op. cit., p. 593: "Es scheint einen Gegensatz gegen den Klerus oder gegen sich überhebende Diener der Kirche zu enthalten. Ein heiliger Diener weiss Heiligkeit zu üben. Reinheit schafft Einheit anstatt klerikaler Zwietracht, und die einigen reinen Diener sehen Gesichte."

⁵² F. Münter, op. cit., p. 16: "Quae quidem verba coelibatum ministrorum ecclesiae aperte commendant, cum Montanistae alias secundas tantum nuptias improbarunt."

⁵³ P. Labriolle, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵⁴ Joel ii, 28; Acts ii, 17.

⁵⁵ M. Weinel, op. cit., p. 162-163.

The teaching of the oracle is that chastity and purity are pre-requisites for the spiritual communion. Prisca lays emphasis upon the value of continence for the reception of revelations. Philo had already emphasised this point in

Quis Rerum Divinarum:

For the prophet utters nothing of his own, in all his words there is to be discerned the Voice of Another. It is not lawful for any non-virtuous (φαιδλος) man to become the interpreter of God, so by the fitness of things no vicious man is capable of the state of enthusiasm. Such things belong to the wise man alone, because the wise man alone is the sounding instrument of God, struck and played by God after an invisible sort.

Philo calls this possession by God "divine madness."

Philo's⁵⁶ idealized description of the order of the Therapeutae comes to its high point in depicting the nocturnal ceremony which conferred the rapture of ecstatic enthusiasm upon the ascetic who practised abstemious living and continual meditation.

It is clear from this oracle that the Montanists believed that purity of heart was necessary before one could receive that insight which comes from divine illumination.

⁵⁶ Philo, Vita Contemp., 83-89.

Oracle No. 16. "Thus far touching my eulogy of the flesh, in opposition to its enemies, who are, notwithstanding, its greatest friends also; for there is nobody who lives so much in accordance with the flesh as they who deny the resurrection of the flesh. They deny its punishment and they despise its discipline. It is a shrewd saying which the Paraclete utters concerning these persons through the prophetess Frisca: 'They are carnal, and yet they hate the flesh!'"⁵⁷

Hilgenfeld cites this oracle of Frisca as an outstanding example of the identity of the Montanist oracles with the glossolalia spoken of by Saint Paul.⁵⁸ But to one who is willing to study the context the oracle is perfectly intelligible. Tertullian was writing in condemnation of those who denied the resurrection of the flesh. He says that they hate the flesh in that they deny the resurrection, and yet they devote their lives to the indulgence of the flesh.

⁵⁷ Tert., De Resurrectione Carnis, xi: "Hucusque de praeconio carnis adversus inimicos et nihilominus amicissimos eius. Nemo enim tam carnaliter vivit quam qui negant carnis resurrectionem. Negantes enim ejus poenam, despiciunt et disciplinam. De quibus luculentef et Paracletus per prophetidem Friscam: 'Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt.'" ⁵⁸

⁵⁸ A. Hilgenfeld, Die Glossolalia in der alten Kirche, p. 125.

SUMMARY

From the study of these oracles, it is possible to formulate the following teachings of the Montanists:-

1. The Montanists declared that during inspiration the voluntary faculties of the one inspired were suspended, the prophet thus becoming the passive instrument of the Spirit.

2. According to the Montanists the prophet, while in vision, was often ecstatic. They maintained that the Lord took away the natural heart out of man and gave him a new heart.

3. The Montanists believed in the speedy coming of Christ and warned their generation of the nearness of the end of the world and of the catastrophes which were imminent. They taught that the New Jerusalem would descend at the city of Pepuza, a small town in Phrygia.

4. To the Montanists of Tertullian's time martyrdom was something to be coveted and was the highest privilege and glory to which a Christian could aspire.

5. The Montanists taught that it was inexpedient for the ministers of the Church to declare absolution in the case of serious sins, lest there should be a repetition of such sins by the offender.

6. Chastity and purity were considered by the Montanists to be pre-requisites for Spiritual communion, and the virtuous man alone was a suitable sounding instrument for God.

7. According to the Montanists there were three persons in the Godhead - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was known to them as the Paraclete who, they maintained, was being persecuted by the orthodox Church and was thus being prevented from approaching the true flock of God.

CHAPTER VI

TERTULLIAN AS A MONTANIST

Tertullian was the great pioneer of Western Christianity in doctrine and language. He is the first Latin writer who quotes Scripture with freedom and stands forth pre-eminent as one of the most important of the early defenders of the faith and the founder of the great African school of Christian apologetics. That such an outstanding figure in the early Christian Church should have accepted the teachings of the Montanists has been a problem which many writers have attempted to solve.

The purpose of this chapter is to try to discover why Tertullian was attracted to the New Prophecy, what influence Montanism had upon him, and what was his influence upon the teachings of the Montanists. The chapter is divided into five sections: (1) Tertullian's character and Montanism. (2) Tertullian's writings and Montanism. (3) Tertullian and Phrygian Montanism. (4) Tertullian as a Montanist teacher. (5) Tertullian's break with the Church.

I. TERTULLIAN'S CHARACTER AND MONTANISM

Tertullian was austere in character and puritanical in discipline, and thus the strict doctrines and practices of Montanism appealed to him. A Christian, he taught, had no right to attend the theatre or amphitheatre.¹ Women should put aside gold and precious stones as ornaments.² Virgins should conform to the law of Saint Paul for women and keep themselves strictly veiled.³ He praised the unmarried state as the higher.⁴

His legal outlook complied singularly with the strict Montanist doctrines which imposed a multiplicity of acts on daily living. The reward of eternal recompense to those who followed the strict rules, and the menace of eternal punishment to those who refused, appealed to Tertullian's sense of justice. To him, the God Who loved His children was also the inflexible and jealous Judge Who had established fear as the foundation of man's salvation,⁵ and Who had placed temptations in this world in order to prove the faithful. From this conception of God, Tertullian logically deduced the necessity of a life of mortification completely co-ordinated and balanced.

1 Tertullian, De Spectaculis, viii.
 2 " , De Cultu Feminarum, II, v-ix.
 3 " , De Virginibus Velandis, vii.
 4 " , De Monogamia, iii.
 5 " , De Cultu Feminarum, II, ii.

He passed in review the different forms of secular life, trades, ceremonies, languages, and attacked those who endeavoured to live as comfortable a life as possible at the price of unhappy compromises.

II. TERTULLIAN'S WRITINGS AND MONTANISM

The classification of the writings of Tertullian is a task which has been undertaken by many scholars. In the year 1845, Bishop Kaye, writing on the works of Tertullian, classified them into four groups as follows:-

1. Works probably written while he was yet a member of the Catholic Church.
2. Works certainly written after he became a Montanist.
3. Works probably written after he became a Montanist.
4. Works respecting which nothing certain can be pronounced.

Kaye's classification has been criticised as being unsatisfactory from the standpoint of chronology. This chronological difficulty has been recognised by others such as Uhlhorn,⁶ Bonwetsch,⁷ and Noeldechen.⁸

Antignostikus written by Augustus Neander in 1849, is a profound exposition of the works of Tertullian. Neander

⁶ J. G. W. Uhlhorn, Fundamenta chronologiae Tertullianae.

⁷ G. N. Bonwetsch, Die Schriften Tertullians nach der Zeit ihrer Abfassung untersucht.

⁸ E. Noeldechen, "Die Abfassungszeit der Schriften Tertullians", Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur. Vol. V.

arranged Tertullian's writings in two divisions with a pre-Montanist and Montanist section in each division. Fuller, in the year 1887, followed Kaye's classification with a few additions suggested by Bonwetsch. De Soyres,⁹ writing on Montanism, adopted the results of Uhlhorn's study on the subject.

A very thorough and comprehensive account of the chronology of the life and writings of Tertullian has been given by Harnack.¹⁰ He suggests that Tertullian became interested in Montanism about the year 202 or 203, and that he did not write any of his treatises now extant until 204. This silence is accounted for by Harnack as falling at a time when Tertullian was going through a severe inner struggle and thus refrained from writing. Another suggestion made by Harnack is that Tertullian may have written certain treatises such as De Ecstasi during this period. Harnack, like most of his predecessors, arranges the writings of Tertullian according to a pre- and post-Montanist scale. All through his analysis he makes reference to a definite event in Tertullian's life when he was converted to the New Prophecy.

Harnack placed his first book against Marcion at the latest in the year 203 A.D. and infers that this treatise was written before Tertullian accepted Montanism.

⁹ John De Soyres, op. cit., p. 6, n. 1.

¹⁰ A. Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius, Vol. II, pp. 256-296.

Two considerations lead to the conclusion that a later date is to be preferred. From chapter twenty-nine it is evident that Tertullian had already fully accepted the doctrine of the Paraclete. In chapter fifteen Tertullian says that he is writing in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Severus, i. e., A.D. 207-208.

This treatise certainly belongs to a later date than Harnack has given to it and should be listed ~~as~~ among the Montanist group of Tertullian's writings.

In a more recent treatise by Roberts, a chronological classification has been carefully worked out showing the order and the date of the writings of Tertullian.¹¹

This author, however, does not attempt in his classification to list the treatises which Tertullian wrote before or after his acceptance of Montanism. Roberts maintains that the method of determining the priority of one writing to another without reference to the theological conceptions contained in them, is to be preferred. He says: "Strange though it may seem at first thought the problem of placing the whole series of writing in a definite order is really less difficult, and more satisfactory in its results, than is the problem of deciding merely which writings are pre-Montanistic and which were written after Tertullian

¹¹ R. E. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian, p. 79.

became a Montanist."¹²

J. Rendel Harris and S. K. Gifford in the introduction to their edition of the Acts of the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas¹³ direct attention to the difficulty with which any of Tertullian's writings, except a few tracts, can satisfactorily be labelled non-Montanistic. They have themselves transferred what previous writers have regarded as probably Tertullian's earliest existing writing to the Montanist period of his life. Gwatkin has suggested: "Tertullian was a Montanist at heart long before he accepted the oracles of the new prophecy."¹⁴

Labriolle has also stated that Tertullian's ideas were not radically modified by Montanism. He notes that Montanist teachings are to be found in Tertullian's early treatises but that the arguments in favour of this sect are more fully developed in his later works.¹⁵

The natural temper of Tertullian from the first was so much akin to the spirit of Montanism, that unless there occurs distinct allusions to the "New Prophecy" or expressions specially connected with Montanistic phraseology, the general tone of any work is not

¹² R. E. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian, p. 99

¹³ J. Rendel Harris and S. K. Gifford, The Acts of the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas, pp 28 ff.

¹⁴ H. M. Gwatkin, Early Christian History, Vol. II, p. 239

¹⁵ P. de Labriolle (English translation by H. Wilson), Latin Christianity, p. 95.

a very sure guide.

After a careful investigation of Montanistic terms and ideas one has little difficulty in labelling certain of Tertullian's later writings as definitely Montanistic. Several of his treatises make reference to Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla, in a way which clearly shows that Tertullian had accepted their teaching.¹⁶ Such words as prophetae,¹⁷ prophetae novi,¹⁸ nova prophetia,¹⁹ novae prophetiae²⁰ abound in many of his later works.

References to the Paracletus²¹ and to the Spiritus sanctus²² bring more of Tertullian's writings within the orbit of Montanism.

From this analysis the following treatises can be listed as Montanistic:

Adversus Marcionem, I, III, IV, De Anima, De Corona Militis,
De Fuga in Persecutione, De Res. Carnis, De Virginibus Velandis,
Adversus Praxean, De Exhortatione Castitatis, De Monogamia,
De Jejuniis, De Pudicitia.

¹⁶ Tertullian, De Jej., i; xii; De Res. Carnis, xi;
De Exh. Cast., x; Adv. Prax., i.

¹⁷ Tertullian, Adv. Prax., i; De Pudic., xii.

¹⁸ " , De Pudic., xxi.

¹⁹ " , Adv. Marc., III, xxiv; IV, xxii; De Res. Carn.,
lxiii; De Mon., xiv; Adv. Prax., xxx.

²⁰ Tertullian, De Jej., i.

²¹ " , De Virg. Vel., i; Adv. Marc., I, xxix;
De Anima, lv; lviii; De Fuga, i; xi; xiv; De Res. Carn., xi;
De Jej., x; xi; xii; xiii; xv; De Mon., ii; iii; iv; xiv;
Adv. Prax., i; ii; viii; xiii; De Pud., i; xii; xxi.

²² Tertullian, De Cor., i; De Jej., xiii.

A chronological study of the writings of Tertullian reveals that certain works other than the foregoing list were written after he became a Montanist, but the subject matter in them is not such as to afford much scope for the introduction of the peculiar tenets of Montanism.

III. TERTULLIAN AND PHRYGIAN MONTANISM

Several historians suggest that Tertullian did not accept the teachings of the Phrygian Montanists. H. J. Lawlor in a paper read before the Cambridge Theological Society in July, 1908, argued against the homogeneity of Montanism, and stated that the Montanism of Tertullian and of North Africa, compared with that of Phrygia, was a purified Montanism. One of the proofs which Lawlor gives for his thesis is from Didymus of Alexandria, who condemns the Montanists for holding the Sabellian teaching on the Godhead. From an examination of the oracle quoted by Didymus,²³ however, it would appear that Montanus was simply claiming to speak on behalf of the deity, and was not propounding any theory of the Trinity.

Speaking of the ecstasy manifested by the Phrygian prophets, Lawlor suggests that it was very different from the ecstasy which Tertullian commends. Tertullian certainly upholds in his later writings the ecstatic form of prophesying very much akin to

²³ Didymus of Alexandria, De Trinitate, III, xli, 1.

that described in the Montanist oracle on ecstasy.²⁴ The words used by him would fitly describe one of the Montanist prophets. Thus, to base the thesis that Tertullian was not a Montanist in the early sense of the term upon the argument that the ecstasy was more violent in one case than another, seems to be rather hazardous.

When speaking about the infamy heaped by Apollonius upon the Phrygian Montanists, Lawlor is willing to grant that these statements are exaggerated. So where Tertullian radically disagrees with Eusebius' account of the early Montanists in Phrygia, the student would naturally accept the record of the learned Latin Father rather than that of the later historian.

Gregor Smith carries the suggestion of Lawlor a step further, and claims that Tertullian did not accept any teachings of the Montanists except the doctrine of the Paraclete.²⁵ On the question of fasts, celibacy, descent of the New Jerusalem, and the attitude to women teachers, Smith claims that Tertullian held opposing views to those of Montanus. From an examination of these four doctrines, one is led to affirm that the differences in a few details are not sufficient to warrant the conclusion that Tertullian did not wholly accept Phrygian Montanism.

²⁴ Tertullian, Adv. Marc., IV, xxii; De Animus., xlv.

²⁵ Gregor Smith, "Tertullian as a Montanist", Theology, XLVI (June, 1943), pp. 129-130.

Tertullian enforced the necessity of frequent fasts on the authority of the Paraclete. As to the Phrygian Montanist fasts, the information is too scanty to build into a system.

On the question of celibacy, there is no evidence that either Tertullian or Montanus enforced this, but they both had a decided preference for the celibate life.

With reference to the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, it is true that Tertullian does not make mention of the city of Pepuza as the place, but he agrees with Maximilla that the Holy City will descend in the near future.²⁶

In his acceptance of the Paraclete, Tertullian adopted the teachings of Montanus and his followers who, he maintained, were used as the mouthpiece of the Spirit. He quoted the following words as spoken by the Paraclete through the prophetess Prisca:

"De quibus luculente et Paracletum per Prophetidem Priscam,

'Carnes sunt et carnem oderunt.'"²⁷ To whom does he refer when

he speaks thus: "Qui ipsum Paracletum in prophetis novis habeo."?²⁸

There seems no question that when Tertullian speaks of the New Prophets he refers to Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla. This is definitely stated in his work on fasting, where he contrasts the "Psychics" with the "Spirituals", and shows that the "Spirituals"

²⁶ Tertullian, Adv. Marc., III, xxiv; De Spectaculis, xxx.

²⁷ " , De Res. Carn., xi.

²⁸ " , De Pudic., xxi.

are those who believe in the New Prophecies and who follow Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla:

They (the Psychics) are opposed to the Paraclete; on account of this the new prophecies are rejected, not that Montanus and Priscilla and Maximilla preach another God, nor that they disjoin Jesus Christ, nor that they overthrow any rule of faith or hope.²⁹

IV. TERTULLIAN AS A MONTANIST TEACHER

Tertullian not only accepted Montanism himself, but spared no effort in propagating its teachings. As has already been pointed out, the teachings of this Cataphrygian sect were admirably suited to his austere and zealous nature. Though at first he had no inclination to separate from the Church, yet because of his puritanical ideas he eventually felt compelled to do so.

Tertullian's theory of Progressive Revelation. With the coming of the Paraclete, Tertullian and the Montanists asserted that a new and superior insight had been granted to them exceeding any revelation of the past.

For Tertullian, doctrine and discipline were subject to development.

²⁹ Tertullian, De Jej., i; "Hi Paracleteo controversiam faciunt; propter hoc novae prophetiae recusantur; non quod alium Deum praedificent Montanus et Priscilla et Maximilla, nec quod Jesum Christum solvant, nec quod aliquam fidei aut spei regulam evertant." cf. Epiphanius, Haer., xlvi, 1; Firmilian, Ep., lxxv, 19.

He maintained that in the period before the Mosaic law God had granted to His creation very great liberties. Justice then was not based on an explicit code, but on the natural fear of God.³⁰

When the Patriarchs practised polygamy, they even had concubines.³¹ "We admit", says Tertullian, "that the flesh had taken its frolics before Christ."³² It was necessary at first to institute what afterwards would need to be modified.³³ God permitted all things so that He might later be able to refuse some.³⁴ This was the one method which could readily be used the better to punish man for his original fault, in making him feel more keenly the practical retrenchings on the liberties which he might have possessed.

Soon in effect there came the Mosaic legislation with its fundamental precepts inscribed in the Decalogue, with its threat of "eye for eye". This Tertullian thought was an excellent remedy, a preventive which turned aside the desire to hurt others by the fear of like treatment. Tertullian taught that the food prohibitions of the law were destined to prepare man for the

³⁰ Tertullian, De Virg. Vel., i.

³¹ " , Ad Uxorem, I, ii.

³² " , De Pudic., vi.

³³ " , Ad Uxorem, I, ii; "Necessarium fuit instituere, quae postea aut amputari aut temperari mererentur."

³⁴ Tertullian, De Jej., iv; "Permittens omnia, ut demeret quidam."

abstinences to come. The minutiae of rites which, enveloping the Jewish life with daily prescriptions, furnished an antidote to the people's taste for idolatrous ceremonies, did not permit them to lose for a single moment the sense of the divine presence.³⁵ These laws and the prophets were to continue until John.³⁶

Tertullian was always anxious to elude the conclusions which the Catholics held about the indulgence of the Saviour in regard to certain sinners, so he admits that the life of Christ constituted a sort of interregnum, and that the Christian discipline began to be renewed at the Passion of Christ. The Christian newness (*novitas christiana*) consisted neither in an alteration of faith in God nor indeed in an easing of disciplinary rules. The reign of grace freed men from the fears and rites and the "burdens" of the ancient law. The discipline already established, however, continues: "The yokes of works have been done away, but not those of disciplines,"³⁷ and "Lest perchance it be thought that the law is more lenient

³⁵ Tertullian, Adv. Marc., II, xviii-xix; De Jej., v.

³⁶ Matthew xi, 13; Luke xvi, 16.

³⁷ Tertullian, De Pudic., vi: "Operum juga rejecta sunt, non disciplinarum."

in its new disciplines than in its old."³⁸

Tertullian makes reference to the fact that Christ taught the suppression of divorce which was tolerated by Moses.³⁹

In place of "Thou shalt not commit adultery", the Gospel declares, "He who regards with concupiscence has already committed adultery in his heart." In place of "Thou shalt not kill", "He who says to his brother, 'Raka', exposes himself to Gehenna."⁴⁰

All the former disciplinary ordinances have thus been conserved and even added to by Christ, who has led humanity from infancy to youth.⁴¹

Tertullian cites the analogy of a tree growing from the seed and states that it is the same with justice. In its rudiments, it is based upon the natural fear of God. By the Law and the Prophets, it comes to infancy. By the Gospel, it knows the ardour of youth. Now by the Paraclete, it takes on a more stately maturity.⁴²

³⁸ Tertullian, De Pudic., xii; "Ne forte lex lenior existimetur in novitate disciplinarum, quam in vetustate."

³⁹ Tertullian, De Monog., xiv.

⁴⁰ " , De Pudic., vi.

⁴¹ " , De Exh. Cast., vi.

⁴² " , De Virg. Vel., i.

Tertullian continually quotes the sayings of the Paraclete in order to get over the difficulty of the uncertainty and what was considered the laxity of many commands of the New Testament.⁴³

The opponents of the Montanists condemned them, severely for holding the view that the full gift of the Holy Spirit was not granted by Christ to His apostles but was given to the Montanists.⁴⁴

Tertullian's views on Marriage. Tertullian based his earlier views on marriage on the following statement found in Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμήστωσαν. κρείττον γάρ ἐστι γαῆραι ἢ πνυροῦσθαι.⁴⁵

He interpreted this passage to read that the Apostle did not hold marriage as good in itself, but that it was a safeguard from a worse evil. In his first letter to his wife, he counselled her, should she outlive him, not to marry again. In this treatise he represented perseverance in widowhood as being profitable to the moral development rather than obligatory.⁴⁶

⁴³ Tertullian, De Fuga in Persecutione, i; vi; ix; xiii; De Corona Militis, i.

⁴⁴ Philaster, Liber De Haer., xlix; Augustine, Haer., xxvi.

⁴⁵ I Corinthians vii, 9.

⁴⁶ Tertullian, Ad Uxorem, I, vii: "Nam etsi non delinquas renubendo...."

In his second letter he gave his wife permission to marry a second time provided she married a Christian. This is inconsistent with Montanist monogamy. In the first book against Marcion, while Tertullian did not condemn marriage, he recommended celibacy as a better state, claiming that celibacy was to the married state not as good to evil, but as the more favoured condition to the less.⁴⁷

As Tertullian grew older, he became more rigorous on the question of marriage. In De Exhortatione Castitatis second marriages were strictly forbidden by him;⁴⁸ even first marriages were looked upon as a concession or indulgence from God. In De Monogamia Tertullian claimed the authority of the Paraclete for holding a view on second marriage which was more strict than, and even contradictory to, that of the Apostle Paul. His argument is put in the form of a question thus: "If Christ abrogated that Moses commanded, because from the beginning it was not so,... why should not the Paraclete alter what Paul permitted?"⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Tertullian, Adv. Marc., I, xxix: "Non ut malo bonum, sed ut bono melius;" cf. Adv. Marc., V, vii.

⁴⁸ Tertullian, De Exh. Cast., ix.

⁴⁹ " , De Monog., xiv: "Si enim Christus abstulit quod Moyses praecepit, quia ab initio non fuit sic,... cur non et Paracletus abstulerit quod Paulus indulsit?"

Taking this as a basis Tertullian did not hesitate to inflict stricter discipline than that enjoined in the New Testament.

In the treatise De Monogamia second marriage is considered by Tertullian as the equivalent of adultery.⁵⁰ Monogamy is thought of as a sacrament.⁵¹ Tertullian states: "One marriage we acknowledge as we do one God."⁵² He cites the example of Christ to show that the highest state of all is the unmarried.⁵³ In his later writings Tertullian impugned second marriage more strongly than ever and classed all who had re-married under the category of those who could enjoy no remission.⁵⁴ Those who recommended a less rigid course, he called by the harsh name of animales, i.e., foreigners to the influence of the Spirit.

Here it is clear that Tertullian had placed burdens on the believers grievous to be borne. In his zeal the reformer has gone beyond the teaching of the New Testament.

In the opinion of Saint Augustine, it was this extreme attitude held by Tertullian on the question of marriage which branded him as a heretic, by the very fact that he assumed a position contrary to that maintained by Saint Paul.⁵⁵

50 Tertullian, De Monog., viii.

51 Ibid., xi.

52 Ibid., i: "Unum matrimonium novimus, sicut unum Deum."

53 Ibid., iii.

54 Tertullian, De Pudic., i.

55 Augustine, Haer., lxxxvi; Ep. Ad Julianum Viduam, iv, 6.

No doubt the moral laxity of the times influenced Tertullian's teaching on marriage. Hippolytus tells us of bishops, presbyters and deacons who had been twice and thrice married, who were appointed to high office in the Church.⁵⁶ Tertullian resented this procedure and attempted to bring laymen as well as Church officers under strict rules. He reasoned that since the particular regulation concerning marriage was binding on presbyters, this was an argument for its being binding also on laymen. "Are not even we laics priests?" he asks.⁵⁷

Tertullian and the Montanists were stricter on the question of second marriage than the Church of the second century. The Church discouraged second marriage,⁵⁸ Tertullian held it to be fornication. That which the Church permitted in special cases the Montanists excluded by a law which admitted no exception.

Tertullian's views on women. In the first of the two treatises De Cultu Feminarum Tertullian speaks of women with

⁵⁶ Hippolytus, Philos., IX, vii: ἡξελυτο

ἐπισκοποὶ καὶ πρεσβυτέρου καὶ τῶν κληρικών

ἐπίσκοποι καὶ τῶν κληρικών καθ' ἑαυτοὺς κληρικοί

⁵⁷ Tertullian, De Exh. Cast., vii: "Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus?"

⁵⁸ Athenag., Leg., xxxiii; Theoph., Ad Autol., III, xv; Iren., Adv. Haer., III, xvii.

great affection and calls them "beloved sisters" (*Sorores dilectissimae*).⁵⁹ He expresses similar thoughts in the opening of the second book: "Servants of the living God, my companions in dependence, my sisters ...without being tender, this little work will show the tenderness which I have for you in an affair which pertains to your salvation."⁶⁰

He does, however, admonish women to quench their charms rather than use their time to enhance them. He states that women should live in modesty because Eve, the first woman, was responsible for the loss of the human race.⁶¹ He further accuses women of being responsible for the death of the Son of God. One could easily see how Tertullian could be interpreted as the enemy of this sex. In another treatise of the same period, that on Baptism, he refers to Paul's prohibition, that a woman should not teach or baptise but should be silent in the Church.⁶² Tertullian also refuses the right of women to exorcise, and declared that they should be modest, retiring and silent.⁶³

59 Tertullian, De Cultu Feminarum, I, i.

60 Ibid., II, i.

61 Genesis iii.

62 Tertullian, De Baptismo, i.

63 " , De Praescriptione Haereticorum, xli.

In his Montanistic works there is a decided change in his attitude to women and he accepts Maximilla and Priscilla as prophetesses. He speaks of the holy prophetess Prisca and evidently esteemed highly her sayings, of which he most probably had a collection.⁶⁴

In his fifth book against Marcion Tertullian attempts to explain this inconsistency in his teaching and asserts that the Apostle Paul, far from being the uncompromising enemy of women, allowed them to prophesy when he imposed the veil on women who prophesied.⁶⁵

The woman who found herself under the control of the Spirit escaped from the common restrictions, for nothing had the right to paralyse the Spirit. From this Tertullian argued that Priscilla and Maximilla were authentic prophetesses speaking in ecstasy; this would also hold true for the sister referred to in the treatise on the soul.⁶⁶ Tertullian notes

⁶⁴ Tertullian, De Exh. Cast., x; De Res. Carn., xi.

⁶⁵ " , Adv. Marc., V, viii; cf. I Cor. xi, 5, 16.

⁶⁶ " , De Anima, ix: "Est hodie soror apud nos revelationum charismata sortita, quas in ecclesia inter Dominica solemnia per ecstasin in spiritu partitur; conversatur cum angelis, aliquando etiam cum Domino, et videt et audit sacramenta Post transacta solemnia, dimissa plebe, quo usu solet nobis renuntiare quae viderit, nam et diligentissime digeruntur, ut etiam probentur."

that it was in a state of ecstasy in the Spirit (per ecstasin in spiritu) that this sister received these visions.

Allowing this prophetess to repeat her vision was interpreted by Tertullian as abstaining from quenching the Spirit. He, however, confined the manifestations to a precise rule and would not allow this prophetess to reveal her vision till the service was over. In this way the respect for tradition was reconciled with the duty of not allowing the fruit of revelations so precious to be lost.

Tertullian on the Efficacy of Fasting. Charges of heresy and novelty were made against Tertullian and his Montanist friends with regard to fasting. Here again, the extreme nature of Tertullian's reforms was manifested. The new law was stricter than the old, and on fasting it laid down extensive regulations.⁶⁷ The bishops had ordered a weekly "half-fast" lasting till three in the afternoon; the Montanists prolonged it till the evening. They also ordered a new fast of two weeks' duration with abstinence from flesh and wine, from bathing and from juicy fruits.⁶⁸ To Tertullian, fasting became an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. He attributed a God-propitiating significance to fasting, celibacy and martyrdom, and called them merita.

⁶⁷ Eusebius, H. E., V, xviii, 2: ὁ νηστείας νομοθετήτα.

⁶⁸ Tertullian, De Jej., i.

Harnack, commenting on this, stated:

Tertullian was the first who definitely regarded ascetic performances as propitiary offerings and ascribed to them the potestas reconciliandi iratum deum.⁶⁹

Tertullian declared that one of the best ways to make amends (satisfactio) to God for certain sins which had been committed was to fast. He suggested: "Man is to make satisfaction to God through the same things through which he had offended (in Adam's fall)."⁷⁰ The penitent must offer to an offended God self-humiliation (castigatio) in food and dress.

Tertullian, however, did not make true religion consist entirely of outward forms, but his anxious zeal at times would over-step the bounds of heart religion, and would find an expression in outward performances.

The enemies of the New Prophecy complained that the Montanists had attempted to deprive Church members of individual initiative by substituting a series of heavy mortifications ex imperio for mortifications which were ex arbitrio.

Tertullian's teaching on Ecstasy. According to Tertullian the soul is always active (semper mobilis, semper exercitata).⁷¹ Different from the body. it knows not, nor has need of, repose. This is the sign of the soul's immortality. When the body sleeps

⁶⁹ A. Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. II, p. 136.

⁷⁰ Tertullian, De Jej., iii.

⁷¹ " , De Anima, xliii.

the soul is freed. This activity of the soul Tertullian calls ecstasy.⁷² Tertullian is careful to explain that this ecstasy has no morbid associations.

He admits the complete passivity of the prophet and declares that the soul is actuated by something outside of itself when prophesying.⁷³

Tertullian does not conceive of the Spirit letting the soul be normal when He comes to it. Sensitive life is suspended. There is to Tertullian a necessary modification of the human reason when the soul is in direct contact with God, therefore visions and prophecies necessarily postulate ecstasy.⁷⁴

Tertullian's views on Penitence. In De Paenitentia Tertullian expressly stated that all crimes, without exception, committed after baptism may once, but only once, be pardoned by the Church upon repentance.⁷⁵ In this treatise Tertullian makes no reservations of certain sins as being inadmissible to penance or incapable of being forgiven. Again in Ad Martyres Tertullian argued in favour of a practice of restoring penitents to the communion of the Church at the request of persons confined in prison on account of their profession of Christianity.⁷⁶

⁷² Tertullian, De Anima, xlv: "Hanc vim ecstasin dicimus."

⁷³ Ibid., vi: "Ostendimus ... moveri animam ab alio, cum vaticinatur, cum furit, utique extrinsecus."

⁷⁴ Tertullian, Adv. Prax., xv.

⁷⁵ " , De Paenit., vii; viii; ix.

⁷⁶ " , Ad Martyres, i.

He laid great stress on what he termed the fulfilment of repentance, as he stated: "Let us repay the patience of Christ which He has Himself paid for us."⁷⁷ In another important passage he points out the foolishness of expecting the pardon of sins without the fulfilment of repentance, this being the price determined by God for the repurchase (*redimendam*) of freedom from punishment.⁷⁸

Tertullian hardened with the years, and in De Pudicitia he divides all sins into two types; some are remissible, others are irremissible. "For every one is agreed", continues Tertullian, "that some sins deserve 'castigation' and others 'damnation'. Every sin is wiped out by pardon or punishment - by pardon after castigation, by punishment after damnation."⁷⁹ Corresponding to these two classes of sins Tertullian states that there are two penances, one which can obtain pardon, i.e. in a remissible sin, and another which cannot possibly obtain pardon, i.e. in an irremissible sin.

"Everybody knows", said Tertullian, "that there are two kinds of sins, one unimportant, of daily recurrence, for which we can get pardon through Christ, the advocate with the Father,"

77 Tertullian, De Patientia, xvi.
 78 " , De Paenitentia, vi.
 79 " , De Pudic., ii.

and opposed to this type there is another class of sins "more serious and deadly which does not obtain pardon, and for which Christ will not act as advocate".⁸⁰

Speaking of adultery Tertullian adds that the moment it is discovered the offender must be expelled from the Church.⁸¹ The adulterer, according to Tertullian, could look for no subsequent reconciliation even though he performed the official penitential exercises. He was once and for ever outside the Church.

Tertullian, in his great desire to show men the seriousness of sin and the importance of baptism, maintained that the marks of shame borne by the flesh which had been soiled subsequently to baptism, could not be washed away by penance.

In De Pudicitia he retracted the milder interpretation on penance propounded before in De Paenitentia, which is but another example of Tertullian's attitude becoming more severe as his writings advance.

Tertullian's eschatological Teaching. In his earlier treatise De Oratione Tertullian includes an earnest prayer for

⁸⁰ Tertullian, De Pudic., xix: "Modica et media ... delicta quotidianae incursionis.... Horum ergo erit venia per exoratore[m] Patris Christum ... ut graviora et exitiosa, quae venim non capiant.... Horum ultra exorator non erit Christus."

⁸¹ Ibid., vii: "Simil apparuit, statim homo de Ecclesia expellitur."

the Great Change for which he was longing.⁸² In his third book against Marcion⁸³ Tertullian tells the story of an apparition which was supposed to have appeared in Judea. According to his account there was a city suspended in mid-air. This city, presumably the New Jerusalem, was soon to descend to earth and receive the saints. Following the descent of the city there will be a resurrection of the righteous who will inhabit the earth for one thousand years. At the end of this millennium there will be a general judgment of the wicked and this world will be destroyed by fire. This was the eschatological outlook of the early Montanists, with the exception that they substituted the city of Pepuza as the place where Jerusalem would descend from heaven.

The eschatological teaching of Tertullian shows a striking similarity to that of the Old Testament prophets and especially to the record in the Apocalypse of Saint John.⁸⁴ Similar views were held by Justin Martyr,⁸⁵ Papias⁸⁶ and Irenaeus.⁸⁷

Tertullian's Theology. Tertullian's teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in two of his treatises - the Apology and Adversus Praxean.

82 Tertullian, De Oratione, v.

83 " , Adv. Marc., III, xxiv.

84 Revelation xx- xxii.

85 Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., lxxx.

86 Eusebius, H. E., III, xxxix, 12.

87 Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., V, xxxii - xxxiii.

In the Apology⁸⁸ Tertullian teaches that the Son proceeds from God, and is called God, because of His unity of substance (ex unitate substantiae) with God: "That which has come forth from God is, at the same time, God and the Son of God; and the two are one." In this passage there is no mention of the Holy Spirit, but emphasis is laid on the spiritual existence, within the substance of God, of Word, Reason and Power, which are not yet described as personal existences. This doctrine serves as a basis for the development which Tertullian unfolds in his Montanist treatise against Praxeas.

In this later work Tertullian reveals the fact that his connection with the Montanists had brought to him a clearer view of the relationship of the Persons in the Godhead as an οἰκονομία: "We, however, as we indeed always have done, and more especially since we have been instructed by the Paraclete (who leads men into all the truth), believe that there is one only God, but under the following dispensation or οἰκονομία as it is called."⁸⁹

The οἰκονομία is that this only God has a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and who sent also from heaven, from the Father, the Holy Spirit.

⁸⁸ Tertullian, Apology, xxi.

⁸⁹ " , Adv. Prax., ii.

This οἰκονομία is further elucidated by Tertullian thus: "As if in this way also one were not All, in that All are of One, by unity, that is, of substance, while the mystery of the οἰκονομία is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."⁹⁰

Tertullian is desirous of maintaining the unity of substance when he writes: "And how you ought to regard the other, I have already declared; (other) in respect of rôle, not of nature; by way of distinction, not of division."⁹¹

Praxeas believed that the idea of the "One God" implied that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One and the same. Tertullian attempts to show that the "One" is the "All" provided that the "All" are derived from the "One", that is to say by unity of substance; and provided also that there be preserved the mystery of the providential order, which arranges the Unity in a Trinity, setting in their order, three:- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. "Three, however, not in unchangeable state, but in rank; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in appearance; - but of one substance and of one state and of one power, because there is one God from Whom these ranks and forms

⁹⁰ Tertullian, Adv. Prax., iii.

⁹¹ Ibid., xii: "Alium autem quomodo accipere debeas, jam professus sum; personae, non substantiae nomine; ad distinctionem, non ad divisionem."

and appearances are derived, in the name of Father, and Son and Holy Spirit."⁹²

In regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, Tertullian built up a theory which was in advance of any found up to his time, and which contained all the essential elements of the later doctrine of the Church.

It is true that Tertullian failed to formulate the full Trinitarian statement, such as that developed by the Cappadocians at a later period, but he at least attempted a solution of the difficult problem, which proved a great service to succeeding generations of theologians.

Flight during Persecution. Tertullian's severe attitude towards discipline is further illustrated in his writings on flight during persecution. In *Ad Uxorem*⁹³ and *De Patientia*⁹⁴ he had said that it was wise to flee from persecution.

Many fashionable Christian were accepting easy terms which

⁹² Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.*, ii: "Tres autem, non statu, sed gradu, nec substantia, sed forma; nec potestate, sed specie; unius autem substantiae, et unius status, et unius potestatis; quia unus Deus, ex quo et gradus isti et formae et species in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti deputantur."

⁹³ Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem*, I, iii: "Etiam in persecutionibus melius est ex permissu fugere ... quam comprehensum et distortum negare."

⁹⁴ Tertullian, *De Patientia*, xiii: "Si fuga urgeat, adversus incommoda fugae caro militat."

the State offered to those who were willing to acknowledge the State religion.⁹⁵ In view of this growing tendency Tertullian in De Fuga changed his outlook and declared that when Christ told his disciples to flee, this was only for a special time; he was not making a permanent law. Tertullian stated here that the faithful must not flee. He put the following words into the mouth of a pious Christian: "I had rather bring odium upon Him by dying by His will, than anger by escaping through my own."⁹⁶

This volte-face on the part of Tertullian is but another evidence of his becoming progressively strict in doctrine and practice⁹⁷ as he is taught by the Paraclete, who, according to Tertullian, would treat severely those who chose flight instead of martyrdom.⁹⁸

V. TERTULLIAN'S BREAK WITH THE CHURCH

Few men of the second century had a more profound regard for the Church than did Tertullian. He calls this institution by the endearing title of mother.⁹⁹ It was with great reluctance

⁹⁵ Tertullian, De Fuga in Persecutione, xii: "Tu autem pro es pacisceris cum delatore, vel milite, vel furunculo aliquo praeside." Ibid., xiii: "Nescio dolendum an erubescendum sit, cum in matricibus beneficiariorum (i.e. court officers) et curiosorum (i.e. detective police) inter tabernarios et lanios et fures balnearum, et aleones, et lenones, Christiani quoque vectigales continentur."

⁹⁶ Ibid., x: "Malo invidiam ei facere per voluntatem ipsius pereundo, quam bilem, per meam evadendo."

⁹⁷ Ibid., iv: "nullo modo fugiendum erit quod a Deo evenit."

⁹⁸ Ibid., xi.

⁹⁹ Tertullian, De Oratione, ii: "Me mater quidem ecclesia praeteritur."

that Tertullian changed his view. No doubt he was influenced by the conduct of Callistus, a Roman bishop, who started the theory that there must be wheat and tares in the Church and that the Ark of Noah with its clean and unclean beasts was her type.¹⁰⁰

Callistus went further and claimed a position of primacy to which Tertullian thought he had no right. Tertullian reproached him for this and spoke scathingly of the titles Pontifex Maximus, Episcopus episcoporum, Benedictus Papa and Apostolicus.

Callistus maintained that as the successor of Saint Peter he had the power of the keys. Tertullian answered that the Church which can forgive sins through the instrumentality of a spiritual man must be the Church of the Spirit and not the Church which merely consists of a number of bishops.¹⁰¹ His later writings reveal a clear-cut distinction between what he terms the "Spirituales", i.e. those who follow the Paraclete, and the "Psychics" or those who are merely following the flesh.

On the other hand his narrow, rigid views on marriage and fasting, and his assumption of superiority became too much for the patience of the Church.

Many leaders of the orthodox Church were counselling their followers to flee from persecution and suffering. Tertullian despised such counsel and stated that "It is plain that as they

¹⁰⁰ Hippolytus, Philos., IX, vii.

¹⁰¹ Tertullian, De Pudic., xxi: "Ecclesia Spiritus ... non ecclesia numerus episcoporum."

have rejected the prophecies of the Holy Spirit, they are also proposing the refusal of martyrdom."¹⁰² Thus Tertullian finally took the step of separating himself from the Church.

102 Tertullian, De Corona, i.

CHAPTER VII

MONTANISM AND THE SETTLEMENT
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

A rigid organisation and a fixed Canon of Scripture were contrary to the free spirit of the Montanist movement as E. Gregor Smith has noted:

In Hegel's dictum, 'life creates organisation and organisation kills life.' But is this the right and necessary course for Christianity in the world? The Montanists believed that it was neither right nor, in the power of the Holy Spirit, necessary. The closing of the Canon represented to them only one concrete sign of a movement towards reliance on the past, which was contrary to the very promises of Christ contained in the Scriptures. To rest in this way on the forms of the past, was for the Montanist, treason to the revelation.¹

The Montanists in their teaching attempted to enlarge on the revelation of the Apostolic age and the New Testament. This brought them into immediate difficulty with the Church, which esteemed the age of the Apostles as the golden time of revelation which could never be again attained. The Church feared that any current ecstatic utterances might bring in contradictory and disturbing elements, and so hastened to adopt a fixed and closed Canon.

The purpose of this chapter is to show the part played

¹ E. Gregor Smith, "Tertullian and Montanism", Theology, XLVI (June, 1943), p.131.

by the Montanists in the final settlement of the New Testament. The chapter is divided as follows:- (1) The New Covenant and the new document. (2) The time when the New Testament Canon originated. (3) The New Testament Canon during the years 170 - 220 A.D. (4) The task of the selection of books for the collection.

I. THE NEW COVENANT AND THE NEW DOCUMENT

Immediately after the ascension of Christ the Apostles went everywhere preaching the death and resurrection of their Master. They quoted freely from the Old Testament to substantiate their claims that He was indeed the Messiah. As time went on they recorded their various accounts of His life and teachings. They taught that God had established a New Covenant with His people through Christ. With the passing of the Apostles there developed in the Church a desire for a document to support this New Covenant.

At first, many felt that this document was to be found in the Old Testament sayings and prophecies which spoke of a time when the Lord would enter into a new relationship with men. In this already existing corpus of writings they read the message of salvation, and found therein the authority required. The author of the Epistle of Barnabas

taught that to him whose eyes were enlightened, the New was clearly discernible in the Old. Ignatius in his great enthusiasm for the Christian faith, felt no need of a written document: "But to me, the charters are Jesus Christ, the inviolable charter is his cross, and death, and resurrection."²

But this was not sufficient for the ordinary Christian who felt the need of some written document upon which to base his beliefs. Therefore an attempt was made to compile a concordance of prophecies from the Old Testament with their corresponding fulfilment in the New. One such compilation is referred to by Eusebius³ as the Ἐκλογαί of Melito. Unfortunately this work has not been preserved, but we know it was made up of extracts from the Law and the Prophets concerning the Saviour and the Christian faith.

About the middle of the second century, Justin asserted that many important Churches set one Gospel (perhaps more than one) alongside of the Old Testament. He knew of a practice of reading aloud in public worship the "Memorabilia of the Apostles" (the Gospels) and the writings of the Prophets.⁴ At this time, Christian writings were placed on a level with the Old Testament in public worship. Because

² Ignatius, Ad Philadelphians, viii, 2: ἔμοι δὲ ἀρχαῖά ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὰ ἄθικτα ἀρχαῖα ὁ σταυρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ θάνατος, καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις αὐτοῦ.

³ Eusebius, H.E., IV, xxvi, 13.

⁴ Justin, Apol., I, lxvii.

of this, there sprang up the idea of a second sacred collection of writings which gradually became known as the Canon of the New Testament.

II. THE TIME WHEN THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON ORIGINATED

In order to evaluate the part played by Montanism in the delimitation of these Sacred Scriptures, it is very important to understand the approximate time when the idea of a New Testament Canon was taking shape.

Harnack has pointed out that during the years 110-130 A.D. there was no finally fixed New Testament Canon, but public lections from the Four Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, and also other works, were the custom.⁵

Zahn did not agree with Harnack's view, but stated:

It may be regarded as certain that about the years A.D. 80 to 110, both the "fourfold" Gospel and the corpus of thirteen Pauline Epistles were in existence and had been introduced into public worship along the whole line from Antioch to Rome.⁶

Zahn further declared that the Montanists added to this a collection containing the Logia of the Paraclete. As will be seen the weight of evidence is in favour of Harnack's view. Public lection was a strong factor in demanding a

⁵ A. Harnack (English translation by J.R. Wilkinson), The Writings of the New Testament, p. 221.

⁶ T. Zahn, Grundriss der Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, Eine Ergänzung zu der Einleitung in das Neue Testament, p. 40.

New Testament Canon but was not qualified to determine which books should be included or excluded. Justin places Ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων on the same level with the writings of the prophets, but there is no indication that Justin had a New Testament; he relies on the Law and the Prophets, which are Scripture, and upon "memoirs and other writings of the apostles", which are as plainly not Scripture. Sometimes, as, for example, when he is differentiating between "Old Covenant" and "New Covenant",⁷ he would surely have revealed his knowledge of the New Testament if he had been aware of its existence.⁸

Marcion about 140 A.D. stands out as one of the first to bring into shape a second sacred collection. This teacher rejected the Old Testament and gave to his Church a collection of writings which included an edition of the Gospel according to Saint Luke, ten of Saint Paul's Epistles, and a work of his own entitled "Antitheses". Marcion makes no mention of the Pastoral Epistles, The Acts of the Apostles or the Apocalypse; and it is clear that at this time the Church had no Litera Scripta Novi Testamenti. Gregory spoke thus of the

⁷ Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., li.

⁸ See F. Overbeck, "Über das Verhältniss Justins des Märtyrers zur Apostelgeschichte", Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie (1872), Vol. XV, pp. 306 ff.

value of Marcion's work:

The whole Marcionitic movement had its great value for the criticism of the Canon in its testimony, which is undoubtable, to the mass of the New Testament books. Marcion's books were a selection from the books of the Church. In the second place, it shows with the clearness of daylight that up to that moment no Canon had been determined upon by the general Church, and in the third place, it shows how tenaciously the Christians clung to what books they had, when the stormy and vigorously generalised Marcionitic movement with its arraignment of the remaining books, succeeded after all in making no lasting impression upon the general contents of the New Testament.⁹

Knox has further asserted that Marcion's distinction between Scriptures "false" and "true" forced the Church, almost against its will, to distinguish between Scripture "old" and "new".¹⁰ Harnack has also placed emphasis upon Marcion's importance for the formation of the New Testament.¹¹

The Gnostic school of Valentinus arose about the time of Marcion and set up, in the place of the Old Testament, the word of the Lord contained in the Gospels. The letter of Ptolemy to Flora is typical of the teaching of the Valentinian school on this point; "We shall prove our statement from the Words of our Saviour; for with their help it

⁹ Caspar Rene Gregory, Canon and Text of the New Testament, p. 82.

¹⁰ John Knox, Marcion and the New Testament, p. 31.

¹¹ Harnack, Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott, pp. 242 ff; cf. Harnack, Neue Studien zu Marcion, pp. 20 ff.

is alone possible to arrive without stumbling at the understanding of reality."¹² As a secondary authority the Valentinians held the Pauline Epistles and their own secret Apostolic tradition.

A study of the beginning of the New Testament Canon reveals that until A.D. 170 the Church had not yet given much consideration to the compilation or final closing of this collection.

III. THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON DURING THE YEARS 170 - 220 A.D.

The years 170 - 220 A.D. are the formative period for the definite beginning of the New Testament Canon. Before this there was a mass of undefined Christian literature. Zahn himself, speaking of this period, declared: "The New Testament at that time was far from being something clearly defined."¹³ Because of the collection of sacred writings made by the heretics, the Christian Church in self-defence began to formulate a Canon. As Harnack said:

The Church must collect everything that was Apostolic, declare herself to be its sole and rightful owner and weld together the Apostolic so closely with the Canon of the Old Testament that for the future right interpretation was secured. Further, she would be compelled to set up a rule of faith as a rule for interpretation, and finally to assign to herself the sole right of interpretation.¹⁴

¹² Ptolemy, Ep. Ad Floram, i, 9.

¹³ T. Zahn, op.cit., p. 15.

¹⁴ A. Harnack, op.cit., p. 32.

One vital question before the Church at this time was whether this collection of writings should be closed or whether it could be left open and added to by current spiritual utterances. Many difficulties would arise should this collection not carry within itself the idea of complete finality. There would be grave danger of such a collection degenerating if it were not limited strictly to time and topic. Prophecy was now falling into disrepute and was in danger of becoming a wild and unwholesome emotionalism. It was to preserve Christian teaching from the vagaries of this esoteric surge that the Canon was finalised.

Towards the end of the second century the idea developed in the Church that the Apostolic age with all that belonged to it was superior to any which had followed, and that no period since then could possibly attain to its high standard. As time advanced, and the distance between the present and the Apostolic age became greater, so the respect and reverence for anything Apostolic increased.

Mackinnon has pointed out:

The emphasis on tradition as the germ of truth and the attestation of office, the appeal to the Apostolic age as the grand authority for the developing organization, teaching and practice of the Church, were incompatible with the principle of a progressive revelation, independent of traditions and of the ecclesiastical development for which the sanction of tradition was adduced.¹⁵

¹⁵ Mackinnon, op.cit., p. 320.

The Montanists and the Canon Controversy. It was at this juncture that the Montanists entered the controversy. The feeling was prevalent in the Church that anything which did not bear the Apostolic title was of little value. Unlike Marcion and the Gnostics, the Montanists at this time were within the Church, and held in high esteem the teachings of the Church, but they maintained that with the coming of the Paraclete the best was yet to be, both in revelation and in doctrine. They argued that no final and fixed Covenant of unapproachable sanctity had been given in the Apostolic age, but that there was a New Prophecy going even beyond the revelations of the past, and that continually the novum or novissimum revealed itself in vision and prophecy.

In opposition to this teaching the Catholic Church began to limit the writings for acceptance into the Canon, and to reject all that did not bear the stamp of the Apostolic. From this time the idea of a fixed and closed Canon was accepted and, according to Tertullian, "the Holy Spirit was chased away".¹⁶ Harnack puts it that the Spirit was chased into a book.¹⁷ From this time forward the Catholic Church maintained that all the messages of the Spirit to the Church were to be found in the Book. Current prophesying was now

¹⁶ Tertullian, Adv. Praxean, i.

¹⁷ Harnack, op.cit., p. 36.

treated with grave suspicion since the Apostles were considered as having attained the highest perfection. Clement of Alexandria remarked: "Each has his own proper gift of God, one in one way, another in another, but the Apostles abounded in all."¹⁸

A Christian inspired by the Spirit was not now looked upon by the Church as being able to write or to utter statements which would carry the authority of the Apostolic age. All such claimants were immediately frowned upon, as is evidenced by the remark of Apollonius against the Montanist Themiston: "He dared in imitation of the Apostle, to compose an epistle general, to instruct those whose faith was better than his."¹⁹

It was contended that none had now the right to compose general epistles which would be ranked with those of the New Testament. It is significant that Melito, Bishop of Sardis, (circa 170 - 180 A.D.) a native of Asia Minor, the home of primitive Montanism, should speak of "The books of the Old Testament".²⁰ It is reasonable to infer from

¹⁸ Clem. Alex., Strom., IV. xxi: "Ἐκαστος ἔχει χάρισμα ἀπὸ θεοῦ ὃ μὲν οὕτως, ὃ δὲ οὕτως· οἱ ἀπόστολοι δὲ ἐν πᾶσι πεπληρωμένοι.

¹⁹ Eusebius, H.E., V. xviii, 5: Ἐτόλμησεν, μιμούμενος τὸν ἀπόστολον, καθολικὴν τινα συνταξάμενος ἐπιστολήν, κατηχεῖν μὲν τοὺς ἄμεινον αὐτοῦ πεπιστευκότας.

²⁰ Ibid., IV, xxvi, 14.

this expression that this writer, who was a deadly foe of the Montanists, knew also of a compilation of early writings known as "Books of the New Testament".

Also in Asia Minor "The Anonymous" of Eusebius, in his desire to write against the Montanists, is fearful lest in any way he should be interpreted as adding to the injunctions of the Word of the New Covenant of the Gospel:

But from timidity and scruples lest I might seem to some to be adding to the writings or injunctions of the word of the new covenant of the gospel, to which no one who has chosen to live according to the gospel itself can add and from which he cannot take away.²¹

This statement from "The Anonymous" shows that the New Testament Canon was now finally closed. While the Gnostic controversy did beget in the Church the idea of a New Testament, it was the Montanists' claim to prophetic inspiration which hastened the closing of the Canon and the delimitation of Sacred Scripture. It has been suggested, not without good reason, that because of this the Apocalypse occupies the last place in the Canon. The last words of this book show that the Church recognised that no further writing would be accepted. Any attempt at such would be

²¹ π. β., v, κνι, β: δεδιώς δὲ καὶ ἐξουλαλούμενος μή πη δόξω τισὶν ἐπισυγχῆ ἄφειν ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεσθαι τῷ τῆς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καινῆς διαθήκης λόγῳ, ὃ μῆτε προσθεῖναι, μῆτε ἀφελεῖν δυνατόν τῷ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον αὐτὸ πολιτεύεσθαι προηρημένῳ.

considered a sin against the Holy Ghost and would result in eternal death for him who dared to add to the Sacred Collection.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.²²

The Time and Place of Early Montanism. A study of the time and place of the rise and development of Montanism throws considerable light on the keen interest manifested by the Catholic Christians on the question of the Canon. It is interesting to note that the first agitation for a definite Canon originated in Asia Minor, where the Montanists made their first appearance. Harnack has noted that the evidence pointing to Asia Minor as the place where our four Gospels were grouped together is found in Papias, Clement of Alexandria, the Muratorian Fragment, Hippolytus and Eusebius.²³

The time of the early controversy over the development of the Canon coincided with the early literary activity of the Montanists. The date when Montanism arose has been investigated by several historians, the first of whom is referred to in Eusebius as "The Anonymus". Maximilla, the prophetess, had been dead thirteen years when this unnamed author wrote his treatise, and during those thirteen

²² Revelation xiii, 18.

²³ A. Harnack, Chron. d. A. d. 100-200, pp. 631-701.

years peace had reigned throughout the world.²⁴ To place this period of thirteen years of peace is an extremely difficult problem for the historian, but from the evidence it seems best to identify it with the reign of Commodus (180-192), with the addition of some months under Pertinax and Didius Julianus. "The Anonymous" further states that Montanism originated under the pro-consulate of Gratus. Unfortunately, we do not know definitely the time of the pro-consulate of Gratus. The Chronicle of Eusebius gives 172 A.D. as the time when Montanism appeared. Epiphanius gives three different dates and thus leaves the question in uncertainty. The Chronicon Paschale suggests 182; Pearson, Dodwell and Peander 156-157; Schwegler and Hefele 140-141; Tillemont and Walsch follow Eusebius, giving 172 A.D. Le Soyres claims an early date for the rise of Montanism, placing it at 130 A.D. In the absence of evidence as to the precise date of Gratus, we assume that Montanus began his preaching about the beginning of the second half of the second century.²⁵

By 177 A.D., the date of the martyrs of Lyons, Montanist

²⁴ Eusebius, I.F., V, xvi, 19.

²⁵ For a full discussion of the suggested time when Montanus began to preach, see Schwegler, Montanismus, pp. 249 ff; Hitschl, Entstehung, pp. 525 ff; De Lorenz, Montanism, pp. 25 ff.

influence seems to have spread to Gaul and even in Rome many were stirred by the prophesyings at this early date. Those believers in Lyons sent letters to their brethren in Phrygia and, in addition to the fixing of the date 177 A.D., they give us some idea of the influence of Montanism outside Phrygia at this time. By the year 180 A.D. the influence of the Montanist movement had become extensive. It gave no small concern to those who were arguing that prophetic utterances ceased with the Apostolic age. The issue was now joined between those who regarded inspiration as the sole possession of the Apostles, and those who believed it to be a continued operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Canon in the Time of Irenaeus. Previous to the time of Irenaeus there had been several attempts to formulate a fixed New Testament Canon, and as has been shown this took place at the same time as Montanism was spreading Westward.

Irenaeus was the first ecclesiastical writer who used the two Canons as such. He spoke of the Old Testament as being inferior to the New, and called it "Legisdatio in servitute". While Irenaeus did not make mention of a fixed completed Canon, yet he tends to treat the New Testament compilation as already closed. It is evident from his

writings that he considered the New Testament collection as having a definite structure: i.e. Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Pauline Epistles.

The Muratorium Fragment on the Canon. The Muratorium Fragment written about the year 200 A.D., further illustrates the fact of the Church's decision not to admit any late (non-Apostolic) document into the New Testament collection. It referred to the Shepherd of Hermas as having been written superrime temporibus nostris and declared that it ought not to be admitted into the Canon. This same fragment spoke disparagingly of Montanism and its claims, as follows: "Unacum Basilide! Asianum Cataphrygum constitutorem - rejicimus." It made mention of the seven epistles of the Apocalypse and the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Churches, as being addressed to one Church throughout the world;²⁶ the Epistles to Philemon, Titus and Timothy are in honore ecclesiae;²⁷ the Epistle of Jude and the Epistles of John in Catholica habentur;²⁸ and the Apocalypse of Peter, according to the view of some, "ought not to be read" in ecclesia.²⁹

²⁶ Muratorium Fragment, lines 47-59.

²⁷ Ibid., lines 63-68.

²⁸ Ibid., line 68.

²⁹ Ibid., lines 71-73.

Thus it can be seen that the books of the New Testament at that time were called "Holy Scripture" and were all quoted with the phrase γέγραπτα, like the books of the Old Testament. The New Testament had now become the Book of the Church, and was used to oppose heathen, heretics like the Gnostics, and enthusiasts like the Montanists.

Tertullian's View of the Three Stages of Revelation. The Montanists, with Tertullian as their champion, set up a collection of the sayings of the Paraclete (spoken through Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla), and assigned to it a place of highest honour. This, they claimed, was according to the promise of Christ that the Paraclete would do greater things than those which had been done before. Tertullian taught that the Paraclete, in relation to Christ and His Apostles, occupied a position like that of Moses in relation to Abraham. In both cases Grace came before and was followed after a certain period by the coming of the Law. Since the revelation in Christ and His Apostles was for the Church represented in the written work known as the New Testament Canon, it became a problem for Montanists like Tertullian to know what status to assign to the Prophecies of the Paraclete. For Tertullian there were now three groups of Sacred Writings, viz., The Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Oracles of the Paraclete. Tertullian recognised these oracles as

belonging to the instrumenta ecclesiae, the Old Testament and the New Testament he named the instrumenta pristina.³⁰

These instrumenta ecclesiae included the oracles in which the Christian Law had first come to clearer expression, the famous deeds of the faithful who had submitted to the direction of the Paraclete, the visions they had received, and the martyrdoms they had endured through His power.

The writer of the preface to the Passion of Perpetua, believed by Rendel Harris³¹ to be Tertullian, looked upon the deeds of the Christians before the time of the Paraclete as being imperfect. He believed that now, through the Paraclete, the Church had arrived at perfection and that all

³⁰ Tert., De Monog., iv. The expression "evolvamus communia instrumenta scripturarum pristinarum" does not refer only to the Old Testament (the plural itself and also what follows render this improbable), but to both Testaments in distinction from the word of the Paraclete active in the present. The same is true of De Resurr., lxiii: "Quia hæreses esse oportuerat, ut probabiles quique manifestarentur hae autem sine aliquibus occasionibus scripturarum audere non poterant, idcirco pristina instrumenta quasdam materias illis videntur subministrasse ... sed ... iam omnes retro ambiguitates et quas volunt parabolas aperta atque perspicua totius sacramenti prædicatione discussit per novam prophetiam de paraclete inundantem."

³¹ J. Rendel Harris and S. Gifford, The Acts of the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas.

prophetic utterances should be set forth to the Church in public lection and received into her instrumentum.³²

As the Epistles of Paul were incorporated into the Holy Scriptures, which then consisted of the Old Testament and Gospels and had become part of the instrumentum ecclesiae, so now Tertullian would have the Church accept the oracles of the Paraclete and the records of the spiritual heroes of the new age into her instrumentum - not as an addition to the New Testament, but as a fundamental authority standing side by side with it. There is no doubt that Tertullian thought these oracles should have superior prestige to the writings of the Apostolic age since the Paraclete was now present in His fullness. The Paraclete had now led Christians "into all the truth" and had told them "what they could not bear before".³³

³² Cf. Preface Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis: "Sed viderint qui unam virtutem Spiritus unius Sancti pro aetatibus iudicent temporum, cum majora reputanda sunt novitiora quaeque ut novissimiora secundum exuperationem gratiae in ultima saeculi spatia decretam (here follows the passage from Joel). Itaque et nos qui sicut prophetias ita et visiones novas pariter repromissas et agnoscimus et honoramus, ceterasque virtutes Spiritus Sancti ad instrumentum Ecclesiae deputamus necessario et digerimus et ad gloriam Dei lectione celebramus.... Et nos itaque quod audivimus et contrectavimus, annuntiamus et vobis.

³³ 2 John xvi, 13.

Pristinae Scripturae (Old and New Testaments); Prophetia nova cum documentis martyrum - this was Tertullian's arrangement of authorities. Thus he fancied that in the Montanistic writings the true Church possessed as an addition to the New Testament Canon an instrumentum novissimum. In Tertullian's opinion, this instrumentum novissimum transcended the New Testament and contained the final revelation for the Christian life (given by the Paraclete), and also contained records that testified to the actual existence of the perfect life.

IV THE TASK OF THE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR THE COLLECTION

The early Church believed that he who spoke or wrote of the Lord spoke under the influence of the Spirit of God.³⁴ Thus by the middle of the second century there had arisen several groups claiming divine inspiration for their writings. At this time Montanism was wielding a strong influence and setting its prophetic writings alongside those of the Apostolic Church. The author of the Didache forbids any criticism of the utterances of Christian prophets; indeed he compares such criticism to the sin against the Holy Ghost.³⁵

³⁴ 1 Cor. xii, 3; Didache iv, 1.

³⁵ Didache xi, 7.

Thus it became necessary for the Church to set up a criterion by which it might be determined what should be included in the New Testament Canon. It was decided that the test of the Apostolic should be applied to all writings making claim to inspiration. The Church was built upon the foundation of the Apostles and, according to the Apocalypse, the twelve foundation stones of the city will bear the names of the twelve Apostles.³⁶ Early in the second century, when Polycarp spoke of the commands of Christ, he mentioned the Apostles in addition.³⁷ What Serapion said at the beginning of the third century about receiving the Apostles as Christ was true from the second century onward.³⁸ It necessarily followed that books of prophecy as such must fall out of account unless they were able to produce some other claim to authority. Although the writers claimed to be personally inspired by the Holy Spirit they possessed no missio canonica. According to this fundamental principle almost every prophetic element was eliminated when the new Canon was constituted. It is seen that a very decided change had taken place in the attitude of the Church toward prophetic writings.

³⁶ Rev. xxii, 14.

³⁷ Polycarp, Ad Phil., vi, 3: καὶ οἱ εὐαγγελιστάμενοι ἡμᾶς ἀπόστολοι.

³⁸ Eusebius, H.E., VI, xii, 2: ἡμεῖς γάρ, ἀδελφοί, καὶ Πέτρον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀποστόλους ἀποδεχόμεθα ὡς Χριστόν.

At first the Apocalyptic and Prophetic works were the only ones considered to rank in equality with the Old Testament, but now they were considered unworthy of inclusion and everything Apostolic took first place. This change occurred during the years 150-180 A.D. The Montanist teaching, in its attempt to enlarge on the revelation of the Apostolic age, no doubt was one factor which helped to bring this process to completion. Because the Montanists held such high and exalted opinions of the utterances of the prophets, the Church hastened to complete a collection of books of the New Testament, thus setting a limit on Christian revelation. It is interesting to observe that opposition both to Marcionism and to Montanism forced the Church to give attention to the category of the Apostolic, but from quite different points of view. The reaction against Marcion's narrow view led the Church to seek to enlarge the idea of the Apostolic, while on the contrary the Montanists' attempt to enlarge on past revelations compelled the Church to define the limit of the Apostolic.

Why was one Apocalypse included in the New Testament Canon?

In order to answer this question we may begin with a statement from the Muratorium Fragment already referred to:

We also accept Apocalypses but only two - those of John and Peter; yet the latter is rejected by a minority among us. The Shepherd of Hermas ought not to be spoken of as a part of the Canon, either now or at any future time...our Canon can only contain Apostoli. Neither can

it be added to the Old Testament as some wish who point to the prophetic character of the work; for this Book of the prophets is finally closed.³⁹

Evidently this author is prepared to admit two prophetic books into the New Testament. There was a protest from many who argued that Apocalyptic books had no right to be included in the new Canon. The Johannine and Petrine Apocalypses were first admitted simply because of their Apostolic character which took precedence over the Apocalyptic. Soon the authorship by Saint Peter of the Petrine Apocalypse was called into question because it had a suspicious savour of Gnostic teachings, and finally dropped out of use, being regarded as pseudo-Petrine. The Shepherd of Hermas fought hard and long against being expelled. Although severely criticised by Tertullian yet it was dearly loved by Origen, but the lack of Apostolic backing caused it to be defeated although it held a place for some time.

The Johannine Apocalypse was fiercely attacked, especially by the Alogi, but its ancient and venerable character allowed it to occupy the last place in the New Testament collection. Since the Montanists drew much of their inspiration from the Johannine writings, it is probable that their reverence for the Apocalypse was one reason for its late admission to the Canon of the Eastern Church.

³⁹ Muratorium Fragment, 71. ff.

CHAPTER VIII
THE MONTANIST DOCTRINE OF THE PARACLETE
COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
AND EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the teaching of the Montanists concerning the Paraclete or Holy Spirit with that of the New Testament and early Christian literature. The chapter is organised as follows: (1) The Holy Spirit as portrayed in the New Testament. (2) The doctrine of the Holy Spirit in early Christian literature. (3) The relation of the Church to the Holy Spirit.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS PORTRAYED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In order to understand the New Testament doctrine of the Paraclete it will be helpful to trace the development of the idea of the Holy Spirit in Jewish literature. To the Jews the inspiration of the prophets was associated with a special endowment of the Spirit. This impartation of the Spirit manifested itself in various ways. In the early stages of its operation it was intermittent, sudden and ecstatic; later its action became more calm and settled.

Always it was recognised as a power outside of the individual, something supernatural which came upon man leading him to express thoughts and ideas of which himself he was incapable.¹

At first this power was called the Spirit of Yahweh (רוח יהוה) but was later merged into and became practically identical with Yahweh Himself, or rather Yahweh Himself considered as acting, creating and vivifying. In later Judaism this power of the Spirit seemed to fade into insignificance. As J. Lebreton remarks:

The Talmud bewails the absence of five of Israel's treasures from the second temple:- the heavenly fire, the ark of the covenant, the Urim and Thummim, the holy oil and the Holy Spirit.²

But even during the post-exilic times of dogmatism and legalism when prophetic ecstasy was low, a band of enthusiasts known as the Apocalyptists prophesied of brighter days in the future when the Messiah would appear. The belief that a special endowment of the Holy Spirit would accompany the coming of the Messiah finds eloquent expression in the writings of the Old Testament and in Apocalyptic literature.

The same Spirit which inspired the prophets of old would dwell in the Messiah in full and abundant measure.³

¹ Neh. ix. 30; 1 Sam. x. 10; xi 6; xix 23.

² S.J. Lebreton (English translation of Algar Thorold), History of the Dogma of the Trinity, Vol. 1, pp. 116-117

³ Enoch xix. 3; cf. lxii, 3; lxi, 11; Ps. Sol. xvii, 42; Isa. xi, 2; xliv, 3.

In other passages, which may not be free from later Christian interpolations, it is stated that the Messiah would also have power to bestow the Spirit upon his followers: "He shall pour out the Spirit of grace upon you;"⁴ "Through His Messiah He shall make them know His Holy Spirit."⁵ In the records of the New Testament it is claimed that these promises of a new spiritual era were fulfilled in the lives of Jesus Christ and his followers.

The Gospel history begins with a revival of the mighty working of the Spirit such as had not been witnessed since the days of Nehemiah. The record of the Messiah's birth is that He was conceived of the Spirit,⁶ and during all His life and ministry He claims to have been led and guided by the Spirit. However, the Messiah of the New Testament taught that after His departure there would be a still greater manifestation of the Spirit's power.

Scholars find great difficulty in deciding how much of what is included in the Canonical Gospels is the original teaching of Christ and how much is a reading back of later experience and reflection,⁷ but there seems little question that Christ frequently directed the minds of His disciples to the greater outpouring of

⁴ Test. Jud., xxiv, 2,3.

⁵ Zadok. Fragn., ii, 10; cf. Test. Benj., ix, 4; Adam and Eve xlii, 5.

⁶ Luke 1, 35; Matthew i, 18, 20.

⁷ As Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake remarked; "It is again and again not a question of 'getting to first-hand documents,' but of getting behind second-hand ones and considering the probable nature of their sources." Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1, Vol. 1, p. 287.

the Spirit which should come after His death and resurrection.

Strachan comments thus:

It would be strange if the earlier disciples were able to speak of the Pentecostal happening (Act ii, 15-21) as the coming of the Spirit and to connect it closely with the risen and ascended Jesus as Him by whom it was poured forth (Acts ii, 33) unless there had been something in the teaching of Jesus Himself to prepare them for the use of this term.⁸

Strachan rightly reasons from the important place given to the Spirit in the Johannine teaching that there must have been a stronger tradition of actual teaching by Jesus on the subject than is apparent in the Synoptic Gospels.⁹

Before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the record says; "The Spirit was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified."¹⁰ So wrote one who had experienced fifty years of the Spirit's influence and power in the post-Pentecostal period, when he compared such power before and after the out-pouring.

Before His ascension Jesus promised His disciples that He would not leave them alone, but would come to them again.¹¹ There are different views as to what He meant by this coming. Some refer these words to Christ's second advent, others to His appearance to

⁸ R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, its significance and environment, p. 287; cf. M. Goguel, La notion johannique de l'Esprit et ses antécédents historiques, p. 99.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 187-288.

¹⁰ John vii, 39.

¹¹ John xiv, 9, 18.

His disciples after the resurrection, and still others to the work of the Spirit.¹² The early Church evidently interpreted this coming in the light of Pentecost as is seen by a study of the early records of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Two distinguishing features of the Christian Church, as set forth in these records, are an unqualified belief in the resurrection of Christ and a profound recognition of the possession of the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts reveals the Spirit's presence and the experiences recorded therein demonstrate to all believers and to the world the proof of Christ's resurrection and His promise to send the Spirit with unlimited power.

The book opens with an account of the special outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. On this occasion the glossolalia was interpreted, by many at least, as being a miraculous gift of languages, with which the disciples were endowed. These disciples received an overwhelming consciousness of the power of God, and it seemed to carry them beyond themselves. They believed that the last days spoken of by Joel the prophet had come, and that the gift of the Spirit was no longer limited to

¹² Cf. G.B. Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, pp. 218 f.

the specially favoured few but was to be given to young and old.¹³ Peter, who before had been wavering and impetuous, became firm and powerful. The heavenly Spirit had taken possession of him, and in his speech and life a new strength was manifested. Many in the early Church had similar experiences. They believed that Christ had now ascended to the right hand of the throne of God, and had kept His promise in sending down the Paraclete. The Church from now on entered a new era, a time in which the Holy Spirit's power in all its fullness was at the disposal of every believer. The actions of the first Christian community were directed by the Holy Spirit; it was He who influenced their decisions, who chose His own missionaries and sent them forth.¹⁴

Saint Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, was subject to extraordinary spiritual experiences. When he defended his position as an Apostle, he enumerated the visions and revelations he had received from the Lord.¹⁵ So overcome was he at the time of his visions that he did not know "whether he was in the body or out of the body." He claims to have been caught up to Paradise, and to have heard unspeakable words, which were not lawful for a man to utter. In his discussion of glossolalia he stated that he was in possession of this gift beyond any others: "I speak with tongues more than they all."¹⁶

¹³ Joel ii, 28.

¹⁴ Acts xiii, cf. J. Lebreton, op. cit., p. 283.

¹⁵ 11 Corinthians xii, 1-4. Verse 7 suggests that Saint Paul is speaking of himself.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians xiv. 18.

There are many other evidences in Saint Paul's writings that the apostle considered himself the recipient of direct revelations from the Deity and that truths were revealed to him which could not have come through his human understanding and intellectual training. His extraordinary conversion on the way to Damascus was marked by visual and auditory phenomena. His ecstatic experience recorded in 1 Corinthians xii, left him physically handicapped. His first journey to Europe came in response to a vision from the Spirit.¹⁷ He claims that his Gospel came not by man but by revelation from God.¹⁸

There is, however, another side of Saint Paul's life and teaching which must not be overlooked. Although he was possessed of all these extraordinary and much coveted gifts of the Spirit, he desires his converts to know that such phenomena as glossolalia and ecstatic vision were not the experiences upon which he set the highest value. Glossolalia, as so frequently occurs, had run into wild confusion at Corinth, and Saint Paul had to lay down certain rules and regulations to govern this gift. Speaking of prophecy, the Apostle further states that "the Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."¹⁹ No doubt this more balanced view of spiritual gifts did much to influence second century Christian thought on the manifestation of the Spirit.

¹⁷ Acts xvi, 9.

¹⁸ Galatians i, 12.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians xiv, 32.

Nevertheless from a comprehensive study of the Apostle's writings, it is impossible entirely to eliminate ecstasy, trance or even glossolalia from his account of the gifts of the Spirit.

The Gospel according to Saint John is essentially a Gospel of the Spirit. It opens by declaring that spiritual life is generated by the Spirit of God, and does not come from the flesh: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."²⁰ In the latter part of the Gospel the relation of the Spirit to the Church is set forth. The Spirit is here designated by the name of the Paraclete. Saint John declared that the Paraclete would come in all His fullness when Christ returned to His father. According to the fourth Gospel, Christ seems to accept the equality of the Spirit with Himself when He calls him another Paraclete.²¹ Swete observes:

The Paraclete of the future Church was not a new Spirit but the Divine Spirit itself, invested with a new mission, sent by the Father in the name of Jesus as Jesus Himself came in the name of His Father and not in His own.²²

This other advocate was to take up the work which was laid down by Christ, and would remain with the Church of God for ever.²³

Christ's mission and teaching was little understood by the world, but the Spirit was to enlarge this heavenly knowledge

²⁰ John iii, 6, 7.

²¹ John xiv, 16.

²² H.B. Swete, op. cit., p. 153.

²³ John xiv, 16.

and reveal to men the true purpose of the death of the Son of God. The Spirit which was promised to the disciples before the death of Christ would be bestowed upon them in abundant measure after His resurrection. The Apostolic Church claimed to be in possession of this fullness of the Spirit.

Had the Montanists with their belief in present spiritual manifestations found themselves in the Apostolic Church, they would have been much more in accord with the Church of that time than they were with the Church of the second century.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

There is a decided difference between the writings of the New Testament and those which follow, as Harnack has pointed out:

The mode of thought here (i.e. in Post Apostolic writings) is so thoroughly determined by the Hellenic spirit that we seem to have entered a new world when we pass from the Synoptists, Paul and John, to Clement, Barnabas, Justin and Valentinus.²⁴

In New Testament times the Jewish doctrine of the Holy Spirit had been adapted to explain the charismatic gifts in the Church. In the writings of the immediate successors of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit, while still recognised, stands unrelated to any organic theology.

In the next group of writers, the Greek Apologists, the Logos doctrine occupied the most prominent place. Thus the idea of the

²⁴ A. Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. 1, p. 48, note 1.

Holy Spirit fell into the background when the leadership of Christianity passed from Jewish to Gentile hands. Justin states but once that "it is possible to see among us men and women who possess gifts from the Spirit of God."²⁵ Otherwise, the Spirit is mainly represented by him as the author of Old Testament prophecy. The Spirit is thus described by Justin over sixty times, and several times in a similar way by Athenagoras²⁶ and Theophilus. As Rees has remarked:

The Greek Apologists' system of thought does not admit a doctrine of the Spirit. As in Philo and in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, the whole field of religious thought and experience is covered by God and the Logos.²⁸

Justin, like Philo, identified the Spirit with the Logos: "It is wrong, therefore, to understand the Spirit and the power of God as anything other than the Word (Logos)."

Justin states further that "the Prophets are inspired by no other than the Divine Word (Logos)."²⁹

The result was that in the system of Christian thought, when the philosophy of Alexandria predominated, the Spirit always remained an attendant shadow or a corollary of the Logos.

This is brought out later by Athanasius, who taught that creation, redemption, and regeneration are effect^{ed} wholly and

²⁵ Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., lxxxviii.

²⁶ Athenag., Leg., vii, 1; ix, 1.

²⁷ Theo., Ad. Autol., 1, xiv; 11, ix, xxxiii; 111, xvii.

²⁸ Rees, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 105.

²⁹ Justin, Apol., 1, xxxiii,

solely by the Logos. He set forth the plan of salvation without taking any account at all of the Holy Spirit, and also attributed to the Logos so special a function of the Spirit as the miraculous conception.³⁰

Although there was a trend during the second century away from the belief in present spiritual manifestations, there were certain outstanding leaders of Christian thought who yet continued to hold to the former idea that the Holy Spirit was operative in the hearts of individuals.

Ignatius claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and to speak as the Spirit gave him utterance.³¹ Hermas taught that God makes known His will not by reasoning nor by idle speculation but by the Holy Ghost, speaking through the prophet and using him as an instrument.³²

In the Didache there is a grave warning given to those who would dare to treat the prophet with contempt:

Every prophet who speaketh in the Spirit ye shall neither try nor judge, for every sin shall be forgiven but that sin shall not be forgiven.³³

Whatever the date³⁴ assigned to the Didache, it is of value in that it furnishes an insight into primitive Christian mentality.

³⁰ Athanasius, De Incarnatione, viii, 3.

³¹ Ign., Ad Phil., vii, 2.

³² Hermas, Sim., ix, i, 1.

³³ Didache, xi, 7.

³⁴ F.E.Vokes, Riddle of the Didache, p. 61; cf.

R.F. Conolly, Journal of Theological Studies, XXXV (April and July, 1934), 113-146, 225-248; B.H. Streeter, J.T.S. XXVII (October 1936), 369-374; J.M. Creed, J.T.S. XXXIX (October, 1938), 377-380. For a full discussion of the date of the Didache see references in James Vernon Bartlett (Cecil John Cadoux, editor), Church Life and Church Order during the first four centuries. pp. 56 ff.

Vokes' arguments³⁵ in favour of the Didache being a Montanist document are inconclusive. All that can be said is that the honour bestowed upon the prophet in the Didache found a parallel among the Montanists.

About the middle of the century the Montanists began to teach that the Holy Spirit or the Paraclete dwelt in their prophets and spoke through them in a manner not experienced by any before that time. The Montanist writer of the preface to the Passion of Perpetua,³⁶ believed that the most recent manifestations of the Holy Spirit would be the greatest and claimed that the New Prophecy was a fulfilment of the words of Joel quoted in the book of Acts: "And it shall come to pass in the last days," saith God, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."³⁷

It was claimed that Perpetua was so completely under the power of the Spirit and in a state of ecstasy that she seemed to feel no pain, even when tossed by an infuriated cow obtained for the purpose in order to match her sex.³⁸ The writer of the Passion closes his

³⁵ Vokes, op. cit., pp. 129-135, 216.

³⁶ J. Rendel Harris and S. Gifford, The Acts of the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas, for arguments as to Tertullian's authorship.

³⁷ Acts ii, 17, 18; cf. Joel ii, 28, 29.

³⁸ A.J. Mason, Historic Martyrs of the Primitive Church, p. 103.

preface with an earnest appeal to all to read these modern examples of faith which, he declares, are not inferior to those of ancient days, in order that such fresh acts of power may witness to them that the one and selfsame Holy Spirit is working at the present hour.

The great Montanist, Tertullian, wrote upholding the New Prophecy and the enthusiasm which was manifested by its members. It is unfortunate that Tertullian's work on ecstasy has been lost. This was a defence of Montanism in six books. Tertullian's great theme was that the Holy Spirit was still teaching in the Church, and that this Spirit was the Paraclete promised by Jesus. As an example of the Spirit's manifestations, he stated that while he was preaching the Holy Spirit descended upon a woman in the audience and she received spiritual revelations. This sister claimed to hold conversation with angels and, at times, with the Lord.³⁹ Tertullian taught that the New Prophecy was not really new, but was a continuation of the working of the Holy Spirit which began in New Testament times:

"The Paraclete brings in nothing new, He simply states clearly what He has already hinted, and claims what He has kept in abeyance." ⁴⁰ Tertullian continues speaking of the Paraclete: "He should be regarded as the restorer rather than the originator."⁴¹ Yet Tertullian and the Montanists taught that there would be growth and progress when the Spirit would descend in all His fullness:

³⁹ Tert., De Anima, ix.

⁴⁰ Tert., De Monog., iii.

⁴¹ Ibid., iv.

"The Lord sent the Paraclete that the discipline of life might be brought to perfection step by step, since human imperfection could not receive all at once."⁴²

Irenaeus gives a very prominent place to the Holy Spirit in his Rule of Faith, where he states:

The third point in the rule of our faith is the Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied, and the Fathers learnt the things of God and the righteous were guided into the way of righteousness, and Who, at the end of the ages, poured Himself out after a new fashion on mankind over the whole earth, renewing men for God.⁴³

Rendel Harris⁴⁴ has expressed the view that Irenaeus had leanings towards Montanism, but there seems no definite proof of this.

He did, however, give details of the working of the Holy Spirit in advance of other Christian writers of the second century. He declared that the Paraclete was sent to fit men for God and to bring them into union and fellowship with Him.⁴⁵ The Spirit is that by which we partake of Christ and the Ladder by which we ascend to God.⁴⁶ Without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved since we ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father. Irenaeus asserted that the Spirit must work

⁴² Tertullian, De Virg. Vel., i.

⁴³ Irenaeus (English translation from the Armenian by J. Armitage Robinson), The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, p. 74.

⁴⁴ Rendel Harris, Study of Codex Bezae, p. 194, note:

"We may limit the Montanism of Irenaeus to the earlier years of his life."

⁴⁵ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., lll, xxii, 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., lll, xxiv, 1.

through the Church, and here, of course, he disagreed with the Montanists since he was confident that the Catholic Church had the Spirit. Writing to the Gnostics, he admonished them to get into the Church: "For where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and all grace, for this Spirit is truth."⁴⁷

III THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Towards the end of the second century the Catholic Church still recognized the validity of the prophetic function, but assigned to the prophetic class a subordinate position to that of the official ministry.

Catholic theology during this time defined the Spirit's sphere by the three-fold rule of canon, creed and episcopate, and the Church soon came to be recognized as the sole possessor of the gifts of the Spirit.

Already in the writings attributed to Ignatius the idea of the one Catholic Church⁴⁸ was being developed. He taught that spiritual gifts should come through the regular orthodox channel and not from direct communion of the believers with the Holy Spirit. Ignatius used his influence to exalt the bishop to a position of supreme authority. He holds that the unity of the Church is

⁴⁷ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., III, xxiv.

⁴⁸ Ign., Ad Smyrna, viii, 2. The expression "Catholic Church" appears first in Ignatius: *ὅπου ἂν φανῆ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἦτω, ὡσπερ ὅπου ἂν ᾖ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.*

The word "Catholic" was not frequently employed till the time of Cyprian; cf. Allen, Christian Institutions, p. 127.

centred in the bishop. The bishop is the highest authority for doctrine and is commissioned by Jesus Christ, just as Jesus was commissioned by the Father and was of one mind with Him; thus the bishop must be looked up to as the Lord Himself.⁴⁹ All the functions of the Church are subject to his oversight, nothing can take place apart from him, neither baptism nor the celebration of the Lord's Supper.⁵⁰ The command to be in subjection to the bishop applies without exception to every member of the Church, including presbyters and deacons.⁵¹ If the Church goes forward in obedience to the bishops she will be protected from all attacks of hostile heretics. It is to be hoped that these latter will one day repent, return to the unity of the Church, and submit themselves to the bishops.⁵²

Spiritual life, Ignatius taught, was imparted to the believer as he partakes of the Lord's Supper at the hands of the duly appointed priest. Ignatius further states: "Do nothing without the bishop."⁵³ This teaching was not as yet universal.. Zahn and Harnack maintain that while at this time the Monarchical episcopate in the strict sense existed at Antioch with Ignatius as bishop, it must not be assumed that this was followed everywhere.⁵⁴

49 Ign., Ad Magn., vi, i; Ad Trall., iii, 1-2.

50 Ign., Ad Pol., v, 2; Ad Eph., iii, 2; vi, i; Ad Magn., iii, 2; Smyrna, viii, 1-2.

51 Ign., Ad Eph., iv, 1; Ad Magn., iii, 1; Ad. Trall., xii, 2; Ad Magn., ii.

52 Ign., Ad Magn., vii; Ad Trall., vii; 1-2.

53 Ign., Ad Eph., xxx, 2.

54 A. Harnack, Constitution, p. 86.

The Shepherd of Hermas shows that the change in the leadership of the Church was not affected without a struggle. It is clear through his pages that the ordained priests were gaining the ascendancy.⁵⁵

In the Didache the apostle and prophet and inspired teacher still have a dignified standing, and yet careful provision is also made for the more professional officials, as the following reveals:

Now appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not avaricious, upright and proved; for they are to render you the service of the prophets and teachers. . . . They are to be honoured of you, together with the prophets and teachers.⁵⁶

At this time the function of the apostles, prophets and teachers must have devolved to an increasing extent on the bishops (and deacons); this, indeed, was only natural, since they had to officiate at the solemn assembly of the community, which more and more became an assembly for worship. A great deal of the high estimation in which the prophets had been held, was necessarily transferred to the bishops. This is made clear in the Didache.

Irenaeus taught that the Church guaranteed the continuity of the Apostolic inheritance and that there had been an order of bishops passed on by succession from the time of the apostles. When writing against the Gnostics Irenaeus speaks of the "Tradition which originates from the apostles, and which is preserved by means

⁵⁵ Hermas, Vision 111, ix, 2-9.

⁵⁶ Didache, xv, 1-2.

of the successions of presbyters in the churches."⁵⁷

In the following book Irenaeus says that the true Church is "the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which the Apostles have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us."⁵⁸ According to the teaching of Irenaeus the charismata of the Spirit were objectively attached to the dignity of the bishop.⁵⁹

In the writings of Irenaeus is to be seen the transition from a community held together by a common faith to that of a hierarchial institution.⁶⁰ The following statement by Harnack sums

⁵⁷ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., iii, ii, 2: "Cum autem ad eam iterum traditionem, quae est ab apostolis, quae per successiones presbyterorum in ecclesiis custoditur."

⁵⁸ Ibid., IV, xxxiii, 8: "Character corporis Christi secundum successiones episcoporum, quibus apostoli eam quae in unoquoque loco est ecclesiam tradiderunt, quae pervenit usque ad nos."

⁵⁹ Ibid., V, xx, i: "Omnes enim ii valde posteriores sunt quam episcopi, quibus apostoli tradiderunt ecclesias," cf. Ibid., IV, xxvi, 5: "Ubi igitur charismata domini posita sunt, ibi discere oportet veritatem, apud quos est ae quae est ab apostolis ecclesiae successio."

⁶⁰ Ibid., IV, xxxiii, 8: "Antiquus ecclesiae status in universo mundo et ecclesiae status in universo mundo et character corporis Christi secundum successiones episcoporum."

up the change which was taking place:

The old idea that God bestows His Spirit on the Church which is therefore the Holy Church, was ever more and more transformed into the new notion that the bishops receive this Spirit and that it appears in their official authority.⁶¹

Irenaeus believed that the Holy Spirit and truth are to be found only in the Church, and those who do not belong to the Church defraud themselves of all spiritual life; "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church."⁶²

Tertullian in his early writings upheld the same ideal of the Church as did Irenaeus, and it was with difficulty that he later changed his opinion.⁶³ As he became more strict in discipline and saw the tendency on the part of some to treat offenders more leniently, Tertullian began to criticise the conduct and the power of the Bishops. He definitely questioned the protestas apostolorum of Callistus and reminded him that the true Church was "ecclesia spiritus, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum."⁶⁴

The rights which Callistus claimed as belonging to the Apostolic office can be gleaned from Hippolytus.⁶⁵

The introduction to the Philosophumena, however, shows that Hippolytus himself did not differ from his opponent in claiming

⁶¹

Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. 11, p. 69, note 1.

⁶² Iren, Adv. Haer., 111, xxiv, 1; "Ubi enim ecclesia ibi et spiritus Dei, et ubi spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia."

⁶³ Tertullian, De Praescript., xxxii.

⁶⁴ Tertullian, De Pud., xxi.

⁶⁵ Hippolytus, Philos., IX, ii, vi, vii.

that the bishops were the true successors of the apostles and had received their charismata. Discipline as well as doctrine now found its centre in the bishops, and it was argued that they had succeeded not only to the seats which the apostles had filled but also to the powers which the apostles had possessed.

Clement of Alexandria, in writing against heretics deplored their endeavours to "cut asunder into many sects" the "one true and really ancient Church," in which the just according to God's purpose were enrolled, and which was the sole possessor of the true doctrine.⁶⁶

This teaching was followed by Origen: "Nemo tibi persuadeat, nemo semetipsum decipiat: extra ecclesiam nemo salvatur."⁶⁷

Cyprian, in imitation of the idea of a political empire with one ideal head, speaks of the Catholic Church as the one institution of salvation outside of which there is no redemption.⁶⁸ He also likens the Church to a Mother⁶⁹ and admonishes all to return to this Mother from which they have gone forth. Cyprian illustrates the unity of the Church by the seamless robe of Christ and declares that no one can possess the garment of Christ who tries to divide the Church of Christ.⁷⁰ He stresses the thought that the episcopate must set the example of unity and the Church will follow.⁷¹

The significance of the bishop for the Church at this time was recognized even by a heathen judge as is shown by his language to bishop Achatius. After addressing the bishop as a shield and

⁶⁶ Clem., Strom., VII. xvii.

⁶⁷ Origen, De Princip. IV, ii, 2.

⁶⁸ Cyprian, Ep., lxxii.

⁶⁹ Ibid., xliii.

⁷⁰ Cyprian, De Unit., 7.

⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

succourer of the region of Antioch, the judge says: "If you return to the old gods, all the people will follow you, for they hang on your decision."⁷²

The Montanists clashed with the Church in that they sought to vindicate the function and the authority of the prophetic class against the official ministry. As has been seen, by the time of Cyprian, the Church believed that the Spirit was the special endowment of the episcopate, manifesting itself through the utterances of bishops assembled in councils. This official ministry which took the place of the apostles, prophets and teachers, was defective in that it tied the Holy Spirit to certain offices in the Church, rather than following the New Testament plan of allowing the Spirit to "divide to every man severally as he will."⁷³

As soon as the episcopal and monarchical constitution was declared to be Apostolic, and the attribute of successor of the apostles was conferred on the bishop, all those outside the recognized Church were considered to be separated from Christ and salvation since they necessarily lacked the Spirit. The Montanists continued to lay claim to the possession of the Spirit, and began to criticise the Church for its lack of spiritual zeal. Not only did they seem arrogant and self-righteous in the scorn which they heaped upon the Church and its ministry but they also appeared as

⁷² Ruinart, Acta Mart., p. 201.

⁷³ 1 Cor. xii, 11.

disturbers of the new organization, and were thus looked upon as schismatics. The supreme power for the Montanists was vested in the Paraclete whom Christ had promised in the Gospel according to Saint John.

Such claims of spiritual possession at a time when the Church was passing through a period of transition could not but excite antagonis.

CHAPTER IX

SOME LATER DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH
COMPARED WITH THE TEACHINGS OF MONTANISM

Not in one principle only, but in its whole system, Montanism is a remarkable anticipation or presage of developments which soon began to show themselves in the Church, though they were not perfected for centuries after.¹

It is the purpose of this chapter to call attention to some of the more outstanding developments in the later history of the Church which seem to reflect the teachings and practices of the Montanists. These similarities can only be pointed out, as it is impossible to determine to what extent they were directly influenced by Montanism.

At first the Montanists had no desire to separate from the Church. They had much in common with the orthodox of their time. There was hardly one of their beliefs which was not held by the writers of the New Testament and also second century Christian writers of accepted orthodoxy. The heresies attributed to them by later writers were mainly concerning questions which had not yet been settled by the Church Councils.

¹ J. H. Newman, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, pp. 350-351.

It is interesting to note that many of the teachings of the Montanists which were at first rejected by the Church were unanimously accepted when they were discussed about two centuries later.

The outstanding tenets of Montanism were reviewed in chapters four to six; their appearance in the later history of the Church will here be traced.

Marriage. The attitude of the early Montanists towards marriage was considered extreme, but there seems no verification for Apollonius's statement² that Montanus taught λύσεις γάμων. This prevailed among the Marcionites of the second century who would not admit a married person to baptism unless he consented to a divorce.³ It is certainly contrary to Tertullian's teaching, who defended one marriage as honourable and holy.⁴ It is true that second marriages were condemned by the Montanists and virginity was highly esteemed among them. Both of these tendencies, however, are manifest in the Church from early times. Athenagoras states that to marry was indeed not a sin, but it was a confession of weakness; to marry a second time was almost to lapse from grace.⁵

² Eusebius, H.E., V, xviii, 2.

³ Tertullian, Adv. Marc., I, xxix; V, vii.

⁴ Ibid., I, xxix.

⁵ Athenagoras, Legat., xxiii; cf. Edwin Hatch, Organisation of the early Christian Churches, p. 43.

The Apostolic Church Order already declares that it is desirable for the bishop to be unmarried (Κελεύει εἶναι ἀγύνατος) though married bishops were by no means rare as late as the third century. Even at this date it was a cause of offence if one of the higher clergy took the step of getting married. From the fourth century onward the Church became increasingly exacting on the subject of second marriages. Jerome speaks in most scathing language of a widow who married;⁶ and he declares that the twice married should be regarded as scortati.⁷

The Council of Laodicea subjected those who married a second time to public penance,⁸ while that of Eliberis imposed a five years' excommunication on a widow who had attempted to condone fornication by marriage.⁹ Candidates for higher orders in the Church, and from the fifth century those for sub-diaconate also, were required to take a vow of celibacy. Those in minor orders were still permitted to marry, but not for the second time.¹⁰

Secular legislation confirmed these regulations in so far as it forbade married men, or men who had children, to be made

⁶ Jerome, Epist. Ad Furiam: "Canem revertentem ad vomitum, aut suam lotam ad volatabrum luti."

⁷ Jerome, Contra Jovinianum, i, 8.

⁸ Conc. Laodic., Can. i.

⁹ Conc. Elib., Can. viii.

¹⁰ Fifth Synod of Carthage.

bishops, and even went so far as to declare the marriages of those in major orders void and their children illegitimate.

The Council of Trent reaffirmed this law.¹¹

It would be difficult to determine whether this rigid attitude toward marriage was definitely traceable to the teachings of the Montanists, since similar views were held by Athenagoras,¹² Theophilus,¹³ Irenaeus¹⁴ and Clement of Alexandria.¹⁵ However, it would seem fair to assume that these later Church decisions were influenced by the great Montanist, Tertullian.

Ecstasy. One of the main criticisms levelled against the Montanists by later writers was the fact of their ecstatic prophesying. There is no doubt that there was a strong element of ecstasy in the Apostolic Church, and the prophets both in the Old and New Testaments sometimes received visions when they were "out of themselves". However, there is constant danger of such ecstatic movements degenerating, as seems to have been the case at Corinth.¹⁶ Possibly certain psychopathic individuals associated themselves with later Montanism and by their wild fanaticism brought ecstasy into disrepute. At any

¹¹ A complete account of the literature of the subject will be found in de Roskovany, Coelibatus et Breviarium.

¹² Athenagoras, Legat., xxxiii.

¹³ Theophilus, Ad Autolyc., III, xv.

¹⁴ Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., III, xvii, 2.

¹⁵ Clement, Strom., III, xii.

¹⁶ I Cor., xii - xiv.

rate it is true to say that after the early Montanist Crisis there was a distinct tendency in the Church to look upon ecstasy simply as the heathen μυρτεΐδα. The historian Alcibiades makes this point in his treatise against the Montanists, that a true prophet does not speak in ecstasy.¹⁷ From the third century onward many writers agreed that authentic prophecy was exempt from all furore, and that the prophet did not abdicate his proper reason.¹⁸ Epiphanius laid down as a canon and criterion of true prophecy that it must be conscious and intelligent.¹⁹ Lactantius said that the perfect accord of Christian prophets proved their equilibrium of Spirit.²⁰ Saint Jerome goes so far as to reject the idea of ecstasy in the Old Testament.²¹

¹⁷ Eusebius, H. E., V, xvii, 2: μὴ δεῖν προφήτην ἐν ἔκστασει λαλεῖν.

¹⁸ Origen, Homily on Ezeziel, vi, i: "Neque enim, ut quidam suspicantur, mente excidebant prophetae, et ex necessitate spiritus loquebantur."

¹⁹ Epiphanius, Pan., xlvi, 2: Ὅσα γὰρ οἱ προφῆται εἰρήκασι, καὶ μετὰ συνέσεως παρακολουθοῦντες ἐφθέγγοντο.

²⁰ Lactantius, Inst. Div., I, iv: "In unam sententiam congruens divinatio (Prophetarum) docet non fuisse furiosos. Quis enim mentio emotae, non modo futura praecinere, sed etiam cohaerentia loqui possit?"

²¹ Jerome, Prol. In Is.; Comm. In Ep. Ad Ephes., ii, 3.

Similar expressions are used by the writer of a commentary on Isaiah reputed to be Basil,²² and Saint Chrysostom also holds the view that ecstasy forms no part of genuine prophecy.²³

There were others, however, in the Church who still continued to teach that ecstasy was not a sign of the false prophet, but was often manifest in the true. Justin,²⁴ Athenagoras,²⁵ Clement²⁶ and Macarius²⁷ adopted a view of inspiration similar to that which the Montanists held. Theodore of Mopsuestia states that ecstasy renders more possible the concentration of attention on spiritual mysteries.²⁸ One might refer to the more authoritative Catholics, Ambrose, Didymus and Augustine.

22 -----, Comm. Is., xiii: Δῆλον δὲ ὅτι οὐ κατ' ἔκστασιν ἐλάλουν οἱ προφήται.

23 St. Chrysostom, Exp. In Psalmum, xlv.

24 Justin, Dial. C. Tryph., vii.

25 Athenagoras, Legat., ix.

26 Clement, Strom., VI, xviii.

27 Macarius, Homil., xlvii, 14: πλήκτρον τῆς θείας χάριτος.. ὡς γὰρ διὰ τοῦ αὐλοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα διερχόμενον λαλεῖ, οὕτω διὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ πνευματοφόρων ἀνθρώπων τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐστὶν ὕμνος.

28 Theodore, Comm. In Nahum, i, 1: Ἐκτάσει μὲν οὖν ἅπαντες ὡς εἰκὸς τῶν ἀποφρητοτέρων ἐδέχοντο τὴν γνώσιν, ἐπείπερ ἐνὶ αὐτοῖς ταῖς ἐννοίαις πόρρω πρὸς τῆς παρούσης κατστάσεως γεγονότας, οὕτω εὐνηθῆναι τῇ τῶν δεικνυμένων θεωρίᾳ προσην-ενέχειν μόνῃ.

Ambrose makes ecstasy the normal condition of prophecy,²⁹ while Didymus recognises pneumatic ecstasy.³⁰ Augustine includes ecstasy among the divine charisms and speaks of it as freeing the soul from the bodily senses so that the spirit of man, under the influence of God's Spirit, is lifted up to contemplate divine things.³¹

There is little unanimity today as to the place of ecstasy in the prophetic function. Modern writers are sharply divided on the genuineness of the ecstasy as manifested among the Montanists.

Cremer³² and Bonwetsch³³ maintain that the mode of Montanist prophecy differed from that of the Christian tradition, while Harnack³⁴ and Weinel³⁵ say that this distinction was pure fiction on the part of the Catholics and that the mode of prophecy among the Montanists did not differ from others of the period.

²⁹ Ambrose, De Abrah., ii, 9.

³⁰ Didymus, Fragm. In Actus Apostol., x, 10.

³¹ Augustine, De Diversis Quaestionibus Ad Simplicianum, II, 1, 2: "Cum sit mentis alienatio a sensibus corporis, ut spiritus hominis divino spiritu assumptus capiendis atque intuendis imaginibus vacet."

³² Cremer, Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, 3rd Ed., Leipzig, Vol. VI, p. 749.

³³ Bonwetsch, Geschichte des Montanismus, p. 63 ff.

³⁴ Harnack, "Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel", Texte und Untersuchungen, Vol. I, p. 119 ff.

³⁵ Weinel, Die Wirkungen, p. 94.

The study of the ecstatic manifestations of the Hebrew prophets has likewise aroused a similar controversy. Many scholars of high repute have maintained that the word 'ecstatic' may fairly be applied to the Hebrew prophets; that they were in a sense taken out of themselves, and that they spoke and acted in ways which were not normal to them. Hölischer³⁶ after a careful analysis of the abnormal factors in the prophetic consciousness came to the conclusion that 'ecstasy' was characteristic of the prophets from first to last. In this he has been followed by Gunkel,³⁷ Theodore Robinson³⁸ and Lods.³⁹

On the other hand Robertson Smith rejects the 'ecstatic' view of prophecy and declares that "God speaks to His prophets, not in magical processes or through the visions of poor phrenetics, but by a clear intelligible word addressed to the intellect and the heart. The characteristic of the true prophet is that he retains his consciousness and self-control under revelation."⁴⁰

³⁶ Hölischer, Die Propheten.

³⁷ Gunkel, "The Secret Experiences of the Prophets", Expositor, 9th series, i, 1924, pp. 356-366, 427-435; ii, 1924, pp. 23-32.

³⁸ Theodore Robinson, "The Ecstatic Element in Old Testament Prophecy", Expositor, 8th series, xxi, 1921, pp. 217-238.

³⁹ Lods, Les prophètes d'Israel et les débuts du Judaïsme, pp. 55 ff. (English translation by Hooke, pp. 51 ff.).

⁴⁰ Robertson Smith, The Old Testament in the Jewish Church, p. 289.

Similarly Battenwieser states: "The inspiration of the great literary prophets has nothing in common with the ecstasy of the prophets of the older type."⁴¹ The extremer ecstatic theory has been contested in different ways and to a widely varying extent.

Wheeler Robinson, however, states the correct view thus: "There was an abnormal element in the experience of the Hebrew prophets which marked them out from their fellows."⁴² This does not mean necessarily, however, that every message received and recorded in the Old Testament was given through these abnormal experiences. The problem of inspiration is far too complex in nature and origin to be reduced to any single type. As the author of the book of Hebrews makes clear in his introduction, "God at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers the prophets."⁴³

Guillaume rightly declares: "Probably the most difficult of all Biblical problems is that created by the intermingling of divine revelation with human thought; and those who know most about religious ecstasy will be likely to say least in disparagement of its untoward manifestations."⁴⁴ Ecstasy can be easily feigned and there is very little difference between

⁴¹ Battenwieser, The Prophets of Israel, p. 138.

⁴² Wheeler Robinson, Redemption and Revelation, pp. 143 ff.

⁴³ Hebrews i, 1.

⁴⁴ Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination, p. 292

the outward manifestation of the genuine and the counterfeit in prophecy.

Purgatory. Until the time of the Montanists there were probably none who taught the doctrine of the purification of the soul after death. However, within a very few years after the rise of Montanism this teaching began to take root. Clement of Alexandria spoke of a purifying fire for those who had lived a wicked life.⁴⁵ Origen held that this spiritual fire continued beyond the grave,⁴⁶ and that even Paul and Peter were compelled to pass through it in order to be purified from all sin. Augustine, commenting on a passage from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew,⁴⁷ taught that it was not incredible for purgatorial fire to cleanse away the remnants of sin. Early in the seventh century, Gregory the Great established the doctrine of Purgatory in the Roman Catholic Church.

Thomas Aquinas,⁴⁸ Bonaventura,⁴⁹ Gerson⁵⁰ and other religious leaders of the middle ages asserted that the fire of purgatory was material. Foakes-Jackson seems justified in

⁴⁵ Clement, Paed., iii.

⁴⁶ Origen, Homily on Numbers, xxv, 6: "Vides quomodo purificatione indiget omnis, qui exierit de proeliis vitae hujus.... Multae enim et diversae nos manent purificationibus."

⁴⁷ Matthew xii, 32.

⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, Qu., lxx, 3.

⁴⁹ Bonaventura, Compendium Theologiae, vii, 2.

⁵⁰ Gerson, Sermo, ii.

assuming that the mediaeval doctrine of purgatory is traceable to the Montanists' teaching.⁵¹ Neander also pointed this out while commenting on Tertullian's treatise on the soul:

Every sin, even the least, must be atoned for by a delay of the resurrection, and from this tenet afterwards arose the idea of a purifying punishment, an ignis purgatorius.⁵²

Chiliasm. The objection of the Church to Chiliasm was aroused by its exaggeration among the Montanists. Its first literary opponent in the West was the Roman Presbyter, Caius, who attacked Cerinthus for saying that the marriage feast will last a thousand years.⁵³ The learned Origen condemned Chiliastic views as absurd.⁵⁴ The most formidable assault upon Chiliastic teaching, however, was made by Dionysius of Alexandria in his treatise On the Promises. Dionysius rejected the Apostolic origin of the Apocalypse, which book most strongly supported Chiliastic ideas.

By the middle of the fourth century Chiliastic theories had come to be considered heretical, and a final blow was struck by Augustine, who taught that the millennium was the present reign of Christ which began with the Resurrection. He declared:

⁵¹ F. J. Foakes-Jackson, The History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, p. 178.

⁵² Neander, Planting of Christianity and Antignostikus, Vol. II, p. 470; cf. Tertullian, De Anima, xxxv.

⁵³ Eusebius, H. E., III, xxviii, 2.

⁵⁴ Origen, De Princip., II, xi.

"Even now the Church is the kingdom of Christ even now his saints reign with Him.⁵⁵

Millennarian views were thus discontinued and the unsettling expectation of Christ's immediate return was commonly laid aside by the Church. Gwatkin states:

The failure of Montanism did much to fix on Western Christendom that deist conception of God as a King departed to a far country which empties the world and common life of that which is divine and holy, and restores it but in part, through the mediation of the Church, His representative, and by the ministry of sacraments and works of the law.⁵⁶

However, in the seventeenth century the eschatological spirit began to revive, and the Lutheran Church was influenced in this direction by the Pietist movement. Plymouth Brethren, Irvingites, Mormons and Millerites of the eighteenth century were all Millennarians and many of their successors still exist today.

Women in the Church. "The Acts of the Apostles" suggests in many passages that in the beginning of the Christian Church women played an important part in the organisation, and this is confirmed by the Epistles of Saint Paul.⁵⁷

After the conflict with the Gnostics and Montanists, the active co-operation of women in the public life of the Church was discouraged. Even the figure of Thecla in the Acta Pauli

⁵⁵ Augustine, De Civitate Dei, xx.

⁵⁶ H. M. Gwatkin, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 93.

⁵⁷ Acts xvi; xviii; xxi, 9; Romans xvi; Phil. iv, 3.

written near the end of the second century, to which the isolated supporters of women in the Church appealed, was unable to restore to them the old position.

A remarkable but obscure passage on the diaconate of women is contained in the Apostolic Church Orders: "It is not proper for the women to pray standing, but sitting on the ground... How then can we, in the case of women, now order them services, unless perchance the service of coming to the help of necessitous women?"⁵⁸

Montanism taught the priesthood of all believers, and that the Holy Spirit may come upon any person of any rank and of either sex. Although Tertullian stipulated that women must hold no official position in the Church,⁵⁹ yet among the Montanists there were female bishops and prophetesses.⁶⁰ This practice was frowned upon by the Church. In the third century the Teaching of the Apostles prescribes that widows should not

⁵⁸ Apostolic Church Orders, viii.

⁵⁹ Tertullian, De Virg. Vel., ix.

⁶⁰ Epiphanius, Pan., xlix, 2; Aug., Liber De Haeres, xxvii; cf. Wernsdorf, De Montanistis, p. 54. For the services which women performed in the early Church see Zscharnack, Der Dienst der Frau in den ersten Jahrhunderten der christlichen Kirche; Goltz, Der dienst de Frau in der christlichen Kirche; L. Stöcker, Die Frau in der alten Kirche.

reply to dogmatic questions.⁶¹ Further, a woman must not baptise nor be baptised by a woman.⁶² At this time priestesses were looked upon as essentially pagan. At the Council of Orange,⁶³ 441 A.D. it was decided that deaconesses must not be ordained. The Second Council of Orleans, 553 A.D.⁶⁴ reaffirmed former actions and decided that: "Henceforth because of the weakness of the sex, one will not confer the diaconate on any women." These decisions contributed much to the popularity of the monastic life. Since the "consecrated virgin" was denied any leadership in the Christian community, she felt she had no part in it. These virgins then formed themselves into groups of Monastic orders and forsook the world for the cloisters. Many of these companies of noble women, however, have done much to promote Christianity by founding hospitals and convents, and forwarding education.

Penance. As has been noted in a previous chapter, Tertullian divided sins into two classes. For the first class, described by Tertullian as peccata quotidianae incursionis, the sacrament of penance was appointed and the absolution of the Church might be given. The second class peccata mortalia such

61 Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum, Vol. I, p. 188.

62 Ibid., p. 190.

63 Council of Orange, xxvi.

64 Second Council of Orleans, xviii.

as moechia and fornicatio would probably be forgiven by God, but no ministration of forgiveness by the Church was appointed for them.

In the third century Origen followed this teaching and condemned the absolution of grievous offenders,⁶⁵ especially in the sins which Montanism so inexorably punished.

Cyprian held the same strict views as Tertullian. He bitterly opposed the more lenient principles of Stephen.⁶⁶

As a reaction to this severe doctrine, the Church soon began to adopt a milder view and to draw up a system of penitential rules and regulations to cover all sins.

Jerome followed this more lenient view and enlarged Tertullian's first class to include all sins. He stated that certain external works of penance are required by which the sinner is freed from his guilt and readmitted into the fold by an ecclesiastical body whose priests hear the confession of sin, give absolution, and impose these acts of penance by way of satisfaction to God.

⁶⁵ Origen, De Oratione, xvii: *Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἐαυτοῖς... προφειάς ἀφιέναι.*

⁶⁶ Cyprian, Epist. Ad Antonian, lv: "Et quidem apud antecessores nostros quidam de episcopis istic in provincia nostra dandam pacem moechis non putaverunt, et in totum poenitentiae locum contra adulteria clauserunt; non tamen a co-episcoporum suorum collegio recesserunt aut catholicae ecclesiae unitatem vel duritiae vel censurae suae obstinatione ruperunt, ut quia apud alios adulteris pax dabatur, qui non dabat, de ecclesia separaretur."

Fasting. The Primitive Church took over the practice of fasting from Judaism. The Montanists, however, by their extended and stricter laws regarding this custom, set an example which, whether as a result of their influence or not, became characteristic of later Christianity. In addition to compulsory fasts, personal misfortunes often induced pious Christians to abstain from food in order to obtain the favour of heaven. This in time produced asceticism which made fasting an end in itself rather than a means to an end. The teaching that the other world is gained by escaping from this world soon led to an excessive zeal for martyrdom, a zeal which played a large part in later Christianity, and which had been greatly praised by Tertullian.

The Trinity. Tertullian's work against Praxeas set out the Trinitarian doctrine in a way which was a remarkable foreshadowing of the orthodox position reached at the Council of Nicaea. While it has certain crudities and is in many respects less carefully stated than the later doctrine, still its completeness makes it difficult to realise that Tertullian wrote toward the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries. There was a distinct tendency in the early Church to the Subordination Theory,⁶⁷ which assigned the Son a place under

⁶⁷ Justin, Apol., 1, 13; Origen, Contra Celsum, V.

the Father and the Holy Spirit under the Son. Tertullian's doctrine of the Godhead was a corollary of the Montanist theory of the three stages⁶⁸ of progressive development, and thus neutralised any tendency to subordinate the Third Person of the Godhead, i.e. the Spirit, either in respect of condition (status) or work. This teaching of Tertullian did much to strengthen the cause of Trinitarianism against Monarchian attacks.

Tertullian is distinguished as being the first and only writer of the early Church, prior to Athanasius, who applies the term "Deus" to the Spirit. He declared that the title of God and Lord is suitable to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ He further states that the Holy Spirit is the "Third name in the Godhead." (Tertium nomen divinitatis).⁷⁰

It seems evident that the later sect or a division of the sect of the Montanists actually held heretical views of the Trinity, thus disagreeing with the early Montanists.⁷¹ There

⁶⁸ Tertullian, De Exhort. Castit., x.

⁶⁹ " , Adv. Prax., xiii: "Duos quidem definimus, Patrem et Filium, et jam tres cum Spiritu Sancto Non quasi non et Pater Deus, et Filius Deus, et Spiritus Sanctus Deus, et Deus unusquisque Cacterum, si ex conscientia qua scimus Dei nomen et Domini et Patri et Filio et Spiritui convenire, ... "

⁷⁰ Ibid., xxx.

⁷¹ Basil, Ep., clxxxviii; Theophylact, In Luc., xxiv, 45-55; Council of Laod., viii, Council of Constant., vii.

were at least two Montanist parties who took different sides in the Monarchian controversy.⁷²

Jerome would make the later Montanists Sabellians, bringing the Trinity into the narrow restraint of one person.⁷³ This is confirmed by Socrates,⁷⁴ and Sozomen.⁷⁵ That such statements may have been true of the sect in a second stage, but that they were not true of Montanus himself and of his immediate successors, is proved from the works of Tertullian, especially his treatise against Praxeas, and from the testimony of Epiphanius⁷⁶ and Theodoret.⁷⁷ R. Gregor Smith, enlarging on this states:

But to charge Montanists with heresy, in particular the heresy of Patripassianism, is to make a retrospective invalid judgment. The fact that some Montanists at a later stage of the movement were Patripassians, is irrelevant.⁷⁸

Epiphanius stated clearly that the Montanists agreed with the Catholic doctrine respecting the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

⁷² Hipp., Philos., viii, 19; Ps. Tertullian, Haer., vii; Didymus Alex., De Trin., ii, 15; iii, 18, 23, 38, 41.

⁷³ Jerome, Ep., liv.

⁷⁴ Socrates, Ecclesiastical History, I, xxiii.

⁷⁵ Sozoman, Ecclesiastical History, II, xviii.

⁷⁶ Epiphanius, Panarion, xlvi, 1.

⁷⁷ Theodoret, Her. Fab., III, 2; cf. Bull., Defen. Fid. Nic., II, i, 15.

⁷⁸ R. Gregor Smith, op. cit., p. 129-130.

While the later followers of Montanism did not adhere to the orthodox view of the Trinity, yet this teaching as outlined by the early founders did assist the Church from the fourth century on to formulate its Trinitarian doctrine.

The Prophet. By the time of Cyprian, the bishop, in his capacity as representative of Christ, occupied the supreme position in the Church, and while prophets were still formally acknowledged, yet prophecy as such was relegated to the background. Ambrosiaster⁷⁹ attributed to prophecy merely circumstantial and ephemeral character. Epiphanius concludes: "While in the past prophets were necessary, today one can almost do without them."⁸⁰ Philaster makes it clear that he considered the law and the prophets were to continue only till the time of John the Baptist.⁸¹ More and more it became the ecclesiastical tendency to a dogma of "concensus", and the foundation which had been laid as early as Ignatius was now built upon.⁸²

⁷⁹ Ambrosiaster, In Eph., iv, 11-12: "Apostoli episcopi sunt; prophetae vero explanatores sunt Scripturarum, quamvis inter ipsa primordia fuerint prophetae, sicut Agabus, et quatuor virgines prophetantes, sicut continetur in Actis Apostolorum, propter rudimenta fidei commendanda, nunc autem interpretes prophetae dicuntur."

⁸⁰ Epiphanius, Pan., xlvi.

⁸¹ Philaster, Haer., lxxxviii: "Sunt nonnulli qui prophetias cotidie adserunt et prophetias fieri praedicant, ignorantes legem et prophetas usque ad Ioannem fuisse baptistam, finemque legis et prophetarum in Christi praesentia completum atque consummatum; cf. Matt., xi, 13."

⁸² Ignatius, Ad Philad., vii, 2: *χωρίς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ποιεῖτε.*

The Church still admitted the potentiality of the prophetic gift, but whoever pretended to have this gift must now submit to regular authority.

No doubt the Montanists in their pressing claims for free exercise of the prophetic gift did much to bring the Church to formulate rules and regulations for the prophetic office.

CHAPTER X

LATER REFORM MOVEMENTS
COMPARED WITH EARLY MONTANISM

Montanism had in it the seed from which reform movements could easily spring, but there has been a tendency on the part of some writers to give too much weight to the influence of Montanism on the spiritual revivals throughout the centuries. No doubt many later puritanical movements, however, found in Tertullian and the early Montanists a historic setting for their beliefs.

Novatianism. The distinctive principles of the Novatians had been previously propounded by Tertullian. They claimed to have the same rule of faith as the Church, but Epiphanius singles out certain points in which they differed from Catholicism. They denied repentance after baptism, and repudiated second marriages for the laity as well as clergy.¹ Novatian laid at the basis of his teaching that the visible Church must be pure and holy, and these qualities were the essential conditions of the truly Catholic Church. In the opinion of Novatian, the universal Church carried on by the

¹ Epiphanius, Panarion, Lix.

succession of the bishops, ceased to be the true Church as soon as it became stained and desecrated through fellowship with unworthy men.² The severity of the moral tone of the Novatians, and their rejection of the unlimited power of the keys were akin to the teachings of the Montanists.

The Paulicians. The Paulicians of the seventh century claimed some extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. They condemned not only prelacy, but even the order as well as title of elders or presbyters as savouring of the Mosaic institution.³ The Paulicians protested against the immoralities that were permitted among the clergy and the Churches. Infant baptism they rejected as unscriptural. Their great aim was to restore, as far as possible, the profession of Christianity to all its primitive simplicity.

The Cathari. An echo of the teachings of Montanism is heard again in the Cathari, who denounced what they considered clerical abuses and were grieved over the behaviour of those who were Church leaders. They claimed the Paraclete for their Pope and were hostile to the sacerdotalism and secularity of the Church. They exaggerated the merits of martyrdom, fasting

² Augustus Neander, General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Vol. I., pp. 343-345.

³ Mosheim, Eccl. Hist., III, ix, pt.ii.

and virginity. This movement developed the idea of the "Spirituals" to an unwarranted arrogance. Turberville points out their arrogant statement: "We are the only true Christians, the Catholic Church is but a usurpation, utterly corrupt."⁴ Our records, however, are not complete enough to justify the conclusion that the Cathari represent a revival of Montanism.

Many eminent authorities have inclined to ascribe their origin as much to Manichaeism and Gnostic elements as to those of Montanism.⁵

The Albigenses. The Albigenses⁶ claimed that theirs was the only true Christian Church and that their membership was confined to those who had received the Holy Spirit and were leading pure and sinless lives. The Albigenses reproached the Catholic Church for admitting sinners of all kinds into its fold and for the moral laxity and avarice of its prelates.

The select "Spirituals" known as the "Perfecti" among the Albigenses practised the most rigid asceticism. They fasted for forty days three times a year. They did not marry and were not allowed to possess property. The women who belonged

⁴ A.S. Turberville, Mediaeval Heresy and the Inquisition, p. 31.

⁵ Gieseler, Neander, and Hahn, Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter, Vol. I, pp. 62 ff. support this view with some evidence.

⁶ Edmond Holmes, The Albigensian or Catharist Heresy.

to these "Perfecti" were allowed to administer the consolamentum.

This consolamentum was supposed to be a baptism, not of water, but of the Holy Spirit.

The Waldenses, The idea which possessed Peter Waldo was the necessity of literally following Christ, and the main basis of his movement was the "new law" of Christ which he found in the Gospels.

There are some points of analogy between the Waldenses and the Montanists.

They followed the teaching of De Pudicitia against the plenary power of absolution. They refused obedience to the Pope and prelates and held that the laity, even women, were permitted to preach. These missionaries assumed that they were the successors of the apostles, and maintained that spiritual power is dependent, not on ordination, but on inward life and character, and that the ministrations of sinful priests is invalid. Their simple lay-preaching, backed up by their pure lives and their spirit of kindness, appealed to the people, but it brought them into collision with the officials of the Church.

Joachim. Joachim had a deep aversion to the organization of the Latin Church. He criticised the intrusion of feudalism into sacred things, and he accused the magnates of the Church of simony and corrupt and worldly manners. He thought that

Christ's doctrine was not final, but would be superseded by the reign of the Holy Spirit.⁷

Joachim conceived the idea that the action of the three persons of the Trinity could be distinguished at different stages of the world's history. Just as the events of the Old Testament foreshadowed those of the New, so God the Father was the predominant but not the sole agent in the first age, the Son occupied this leading position in the second age, and the Holy Spirit in the third age. In this coming third age men would be fitted with spiritual understanding of both Testaments, the sacraments would be done away, and faith would be changed into love.

Joachim has many similes for these three ages. He compares them in order to brass, silver and gold; starlight, dawn and full daylight; and water, wine and oil.⁸

This doctrine of development is Montanistic in outline. As has been pointed out Montanists believed that Christianity had its rudimentary principle in Nature, its infancy in the Law, its full maturity only in the dispensation of the Paraclete.⁹

⁷ Ernest Renan, "Joachim Di Flor", Studies in Religious History, p. 214.

⁸ D. L. Douie, The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fratricelli, pp. 23f.

⁹ Tertullian, De Virg Vel., i.

Joachim exerted great influence over the Franciscan "Spirituals" who were consoled by his apocalyptic denunciations of the Papacy.

The initiation of the dispensation of the Spirit was to be the year A. D. 1260, as the Church according to Revelation xii:6 was to remain in the wilderness for a thousand, two hundred and three score days.

The Fratricelli. The Fratricelli¹⁰ an order of the fourteenth century, were groups of "Spiritual" Franciscans who were in revolt against the authority of the Church. Like the Beghards and Beguines of Germany with whom they had much in common, they believed in man as an incarnation of the Holy Spirit. They claimed the present age to be the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, teaching that those who live in a state of perfection and are moved by the Spirit of God, are no longer under any law or ecclesiastical regulation, for where the spirit of the Lord reigns there is perfect liberty.

The Friends of God. During the fourteenth century the belief that the apocalyptic prophecies were soon to be fulfilled was held by a group of the prophetic class known as the "Friends of God". These reformers looked upon the state of ecstasy as

¹⁰ D. S. Muzzey. The Spiritual Franciscans, pp. 41-47.

a supreme divine favour. Like the Montanists in these moments of unspeakable ecstasy, they believed that the Spirit was revealing truths to them of equal authority with the Sacred Scriptures.¹¹ Rufus Jones speaks of these revelations as follows:

"Their writings everywhere imply or assert that God speaks through them in the same way that He spoke through 'His Friends in the Old and New Testament'; in both dispensations the 'counsel' of a Friend of God is 'the counsel of God Himself'.¹²

These "Friends of God" taught that divine judgment was fast approaching and that God would punish the wicked with pestilence, famine and wars.

Tauler, in the sermons of this period, occasionally speaks in apocalyptic imagery. He maintains that great calamities are about to come upon the world and that the end of all things is at hand.

This echoes the thought expressed by Maximilla twelve hundred years before.

Tauler insists on the fact of an "inner Light", and states that these "Friends of God" become endowed by the "divine Light" and are guided as to what they ought to do and that they gain

¹¹ Jundt, Les Amis de Dieu, p. 59.

¹² Rufus Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 258.

from their inner illumination an inward peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.¹³

Like the early Montanists these "Friends of God" were subject to spiritual visions; they passed through great soul-crises; they practised austerities; they experienced ecstasies, and were profoundly conscious of the immediate presence of God.¹⁴

The late fourteenth and early fifteenth century witnessed a great revival of primitive Christianity of the Montanistic type. Most Christian countries had outstanding leaders in these prereformation days: in France there was Gerson; in Italy, Catharine of Siena; in Sweden, Bridget; in England, Walter Hilton, and in Holland, the Brethren of the Common Life, with their great mystic Thomas à Kempis.¹⁵

Thomas stated that the outward work, even of Moses and the prophets is only letter; it cannot impart the Spirit. He maintained that the same Spirit which taught the prophets and holy men of old was now teaching him.¹⁶ Thomas contrasts

¹³ Tauler, Sermon, LII, LXXXIV.

¹⁴ Life of the Blessed Henry Suso, English translation by T. F. Knox; Theologica Germanica, English translation by Susanna Winkworth.

¹⁵ De Montmorency, Thos à Kempis, His Age and Book.

¹⁶ Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ, III, ii.

external religion with that of the Spirit: "Some place their religion in books, some in images, some in pomp and splendour of external worship, but some with illuminated understandings hear what the Holy Spirit speaketh in their hearts."¹⁷

The clericalism which had characterised the Church of the middle ages was now being displaced by the religious freedom of the Spirit which gave birth to the Protestant Reformation.

It is more than a coincidence that a greater re-study of the writings of Tertullian synchronised with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Glover has called attention to this:

Although the Catholic Church left him (Tertullian) unread throughout the middle ages, yet at the Renaissance, he began once more to be studied, and simultaneously there also began the great movement for the purification of the Church and the deepening of Christian life, which were the causes to which he had given himself and his genius.¹⁸

Anabaptists. At the dawn of the Protestant Reformation there arose in many countries small groups of men and women whose great aim was to revive primitive Christianity. These were known as the Anabaptists. They maintained that decisions in spiritual matters did not belong to civic councils, but to the body of spiritual believers who compose the Church and have

¹⁷ Ibid. III,iii.

¹⁸ T.R. Glover, Conflict of Religions, p. 306.

the leading of the Spirit, thus they repudiated any sort of connections of Church and State. They believed that Christ came to dwell in human hearts, as one of their great leaders Balthasar Hübmaier stated: "I believe and trust that the Holy Ghost has come in me and the power of the most high God has, as with Mary (the Virgin), overshadowed my soul, to conceive in me the new man."¹⁹

Hübmaier maintained that the true Church was a spiritual organism, composed of those who have been born from above and live now in the Spirit as the sons of God.

The Anabaptists rejected infant baptism as unscriptural and incompatible with regenerate Church membership. Like the early Montanists, they allowed women equal rights in Church matters and there were many women preachers among them.²⁰

The Anabaptists esteemed the Old and New Testaments highly, but like the Montanists, they valued more highly still the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which leads men to greater light.

They claimed that God the Father reigned under the Law; God the Son under the Gospel, and now God the Father and God the Son are making over the kingdom to the Holy Ghost, Who

¹⁹ Vedder, Balthasar Hübmaier, p. 131

²⁰ Baillie, Anabaptism the True Foundation of Independency, p. 30.

shall be poured out upon all flesh. Here again the three dispensations of the Montanists appear.

Hans Denek. In the early period of his activity Hans Denek so closely resembled in his teaching the Anabaptists that many writers have classed him among their leaders.²¹

In his Nuremberg Confession²² Denek states that without the divine Spirit, a man would neither seek nor find God, for he who seeks Him, in truth already has Him, and without this inner Spirit to guide and direct Him, one cannot find Him, even in the Bible.

Zwickau Prophets. The Zwickau Prophets had much in common with the Anabaptists. Melchior Hofmann was a man of the apocalyptic type, and believed that he was divinely inspired. This leader claimed that the Spirit had revealed to him that the New Jerusalem would come down in the city of Strasbourg, and he set several dates for that descent.²³ It will be remembered that the Montanists had claimed the same event was to take place at Pepuza.

²¹ Rufus Jones, Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, p. 18, n.2.

²² Keller, Hans Denek, ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer, pp. 49-62.

²³ Heath, Anabaptism from its rise at Zwickau to its fall at Münster, Chapter vii.

Henry Nicholas and the Family of Love. The founder of another unique movement in the sixteenth century was Henry Nicholas. He looked upon himself as a prophet of equal standing and inspiration with any in the Scriptures. He assumed that his new sect known as "The House of Love" was the only true Church.²⁴

This "House of Love", according to Nicholas, was God's latest stage of revelation; it was "the New Day of Life", and the beginning of the religion of the Spirit. Nicholas coupled with his belief in the dispensation of the Spirit, the conviction that he was living in the last time.²⁵

Jacob Boehme. Jacob Boehme claimed to be guided by the Spirit of God. While he does not use the figure of the lyre and the plectrum yet his idea of inspiration is very similar to that of the Montanists.

Writing to a friend in 1620 Boehme stated, "I have not dared to write otherwise than was given and indited to me. I have continually written as the Spirit dictated and have not given place to Reason."²⁶ He further adds in another work, "I am as blind a man as ever was, but in the Spirit of God my spirit sees through all."²⁷ He himself always felt that the

24 Henry Nicholas, Evangelium Regni, Chapter xxxiv.

25 Henry Nicholas, First Exhortation, pp. 23 f.

26 Jacob Boehme, Epistle, iii.

27 Jacob Boehme, Aurora, xxii, 47.

book Aurora, or Morning Glow, was dictated to him and that he only passively held the pen which wrote it.

Friends. The rise of the Friends is one of the most noteworthy events in the religious history of England in the seventeenth century. The early days of Quakerism possessed some features resembling Montanism. There was an attempted return to the extremist simplicity of primitive times attended by a great reliance on spiritual teaching and direction.

George Fox and his followers announced as their aim the revival of primitive Christianity and Edward Grubb declares that the title "primitive Christianity" can best be described as "the religion of the Spirit".²⁸

The Friends taught that the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the heart is that by which sin is made manifest and reproved, duty unfolded, and ability given to run with alacrity and joy in the way of God's commandments. Fox believed that one becomes a true disciple not by a bare assent of the understanding to the truths contained in the Bible, nor by any outward rite, but by a real change of the heart and affections, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

From the very first the Friends recognised the spiritual

²⁸ Edward Grubb, What is Quakerism?, p. 16.

equality of the sexes and ministry of women has been greatly blessed among them.

Their leaders believed that the Spirit of God was poured out upon all as it had been in the Old and also in the New Testaments. They claimed to be prophets to their age and they affirmed that God spake through them.

George Fox was convicted under the Blaspheemy Act of August 1650 for claiming to be God. But he makes it clear that his belief was that the Spirit of God was speaking through him. Braithwaite expresses it as follows:-

Fox replies to the more serious charges, as he had done at the quarter sessions, by denying that he had ever made such statements in the sense that George Fox was equal with God, or that George Fox was Christ, but he insisted that the new life, and the spiritual man, is the Lord from heaven and that Christ is one in all His saints.²⁹

Similarly Nayler after having ridden triumphantly into Bristol when asked at his trial whether he was the Son of God or not, answered in the affirmative, but stated further that he had many brethren.

H. G. Wood has pointed out the excesses of language into which ardent devotees might be led. He cites the statement of Margaret Fell of Swarthmore when she writes thus to Fox:

²⁹ William C. Braithwaite, The Beginning of Quakerism, p. 109.

"Our dear father in the Lord ... we thy babes with one consent being gathered together in the power of the Spirit, thou being present with us, our souls doth thirst and languish after thee and doth challenge that right that we have in thee, O thou bread of life, without which bread our souls will starve."³⁰

The Friends were noted for their missionary zeal and suffered scourging, imprisonment, banishment and martyrdom for their faith. Never were persecutions borne in a more heroic spirit of endurance, or in a more Christian spirit of forgiveness. In testimony against war, extravagance, insincerity and vain display, this reform movement had much in common with Montanism at its best.

Pietism. In the next century, the eighteenth, in the great Pietist movement in Germany can be seen a revival of Montanist teachings. Philipp Jakob Spener, the founder, endeavoured to reform the ecclesiastical, religious, and moral life of Germany among both clergy and laity. Against the inert, conventional Christianity and reliance on mere external orthodoxy, he preached unceasingly the necessity of following a personal, vital and practical Christian life.

Spener discredited merely intellectual belief as a means of salvation and maintained that saving faith involves a complete transformation of the whole being by the regenerating

³⁰ H. G. Wood, Living Issues in Religious Thought, p. 154.

power of the Spirit. Pietism brought out with great emphasis the presence and activity of the Spirit as the regenerating and illuminating power in every Christian life.

The influence of this movement was perpetuated in the Moravian Brethren with their headquarters at Herrnhut, where Count Zinzendorf was the strong spiritual leader.

Wesley, Wesley's work was a return to Gospel simplicity, and was marked by considerable spiritual excitement but no specific gifts were claimed. Nevertheless, the idea of individual action being prompted by the influence of the Spirit, exercised consciously over the heart, was so strongly and generally accepted, that men's minds were ready to believe in a general outpouring of the Spirit.

Wesley declared himself to be convinced that the Montanists were real scriptural Christians, and expressed his highest admiration for them, suggesting that he considered Montanus one of the holiest men of the second century.³¹ When writing to Doctor Middleton, Wesley states: "You say fourthly: 'Montanus and his associates were the authors of these trances. They first raised the Spirit of enthusiasm in the church, and acquired great credit by their visions and ecstasies.' Sir, you forget they did not 'raise the spirit', but rather Joel and Saint Peter; according to whose words, the 'young men saw visions'

³¹ Wesley Works, Vol. VI, p. 328.

before Montanus was born."³²

Wesley points out that Montanism was condemned because the formal orthodox churchmen of the second century ridiculed the gifts of the spirit since they themselves did not possess them. It was a somewhat similar situation which Wesley faced in his century.

Swedenborg, Swedenborg's claim to inspiration was similar to that of the Montanists. In the year 1745 he declared that the Lord appeared to him in a strong shining light and dictated to him what he should write. Swedenborg also claims to have seen in vision the New Jerusalem descending from heaven to earth.

Irvingites. The upheaval of the French Revolution had aroused in England a strong tendency to apocalyptic and millenarian thought. Edward Irving foretold the coming of the Lord in the near future. In a long discourse, later printed with enlargements,³³ Irving developed the thought and prophesied that the second coming of the Lord would take place in 1864. Soon a regular "school of the prophets" gathered around Irving, and a union of prayer was formed to pray for a new outpouring

³² Ibid., Vol. X, p. 47.

³³ E. Irving, Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God.

of the Holy Spirit. Irving's assistant, Alexander Scott, expressed the hope that the special charismata of the Primitive Church might once more be bestowed in answer to these supplications. Prophecy and speaking with tongues became prevalent.

The "gifted" persons declared that their organs of speech were made use of by the Spirit of God, and they uttered what was given them, and not the expression of their own numerous ideas.

A. L. Drummond gives Irving's idea of inspiration thus:

He (Irving) believed the inspired person to be a passive instrument of the divine voice; a man's own piety was temporarily deflected, in order that the absolute and perfect holiness of the Deity might communicate uncontaminated messages.³⁴

The Macdonalds of Port Glasgow. Very closely related in doctrine to the Irvingites were the Macdonalds of Port Glasgow.

The gift of tongues was claimed by them and they delivered many prophetic utterances. These strange phenomena attracted much attention throughout the country. A learned solicitor writes of them in the Edinburgh Review thus:

They declare that their organs of speech are made use of by the Spirit of God; and that they utter that which is given to them, and not the expressions of their own conceptions, or their own intention.³⁵

Thomas Erskine was very greatly impressed and at first

³⁴ Andrew Lendale Drummond, Edward Irving and His Circle, p.163.

³⁵ "pretended Miracles", Edinburgh Review, no. 106, June 1831, pp. 181-182.

joined wholeheartedly with this movement. After staying in the Macdonald home for six weeks and studying these prophetic gifts Erskine stated:

After witnessing what I have witnessed among those people, I cannot think of any person decidedly condemning them as impostors, without a feeling of great alarm.³⁶

American Reforms. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were many religious reformers who migrated to America and there continued to preach their views, with the result that the number of reform movements in that country soon became legion. It would not be profitable to enumerate the doctrines or outline the history of many of them. This subject has been treated rather luridly by Ray Strachey.³⁷ However, there are certain Montanistic doctrines held by several of the groups which should be noted. The Mennonites, for example, believe in a present day inspiration, and claim that adult baptism is the only right baptism. They refuse to recognise the authority of Church or state, and hold that the individual conscience is responsible to God alone.

A small community in Chicago known as the "Hellgumists" maintained that the gifts of the Spirit which descended upon

³⁶ Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, from 1800 till 1840, p. 182.

³⁷ Ray Strachey, Group Movements of the Past.

the early Christians had also fallen upon them. Some heard the voice of God, others prophesied, and claimed that God spoke through them.³⁸

Probably the followers of the great prophetic preacher, William Miller, answer better than any other movement to the ideal of ancient Montanism. William Miller spread his belief that the Lord would come in 1843. His followers, the Seventh-day Adventists, recognise that their founder made a mistake in fixing a date, but they still expect the sudden and triumphant ending of this world, and the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven. There is in Adventism a belief that spiritual gifts will one day be seen in the Church in the same abundance as at Pentecost. One of their early founders, a woman by the name of Ellen G. White, they accept as an inspired prophetess. Giving an account of a vision she had in 1848, Ellen G. White declared that there would be in the very near future wars, famines, earthquakes and pestilences, and that Christ was soon to come to earth. Again she says: "While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me."³⁹ This woman has left many books of instruction and counsel which her followers

³⁸ Selma Lagerlöf, Jerusalem, translated by Velma Swanston Howard.

³⁹ E. G. White, Experience and Views, Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1. p. 14.

maintain to be a revelation from God.

To distinguish between the true and false in spiritual manifestations is a difficult and hazardous task. "By their fruits ye shall know them" was the test to be applied as given by Christ. While it is true that some of these movements degenerated into wild fanaticism and certain of their followers became unstrung from an overwrought imagination and an unstable nervous system, yet one must be careful not to condemn the doctrines and standards of a reform movement because of certain individuals who have joined themselves to it. Religious history is replete with reform groups whose founders were undoubtedly noble and true but some of whose followers later became fanatical and frenzied.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Montanist crisis was no isolated phenomenon but the first of a series of such spiritual manifestations which, fraught with good and with evil, have broken forth in the Christian Church.

The Montanists were pre-eminently occupied with speculations as to the approaching end of the world. They believed that the last days spoken of by the Old and New Testament writers had come, and that the prophetic gift which had been promised for these last days had been bestowed upon them.

The Paraclete whom Christ promised to send, the Montanists claimed had come to dwell in their prophets. Thus they placed their prophetic utterances alongside of the sayings of the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament and those of the Apostles recorded in the New. Because of their belief in the progressive nature of all true spiritual development they did not hesitate to claim that these oracles, purporting to be from the Paraclete, were superior to any before uttered.

The influence of Montanism. This pretension of the Montanists to rank the oracles of their prophets beside the

Old Testament and the evangelical documents as a promised supplement, and of a character equally venerable, did much to contribute to the delimitation of the Canon of Scripture and was partly responsible for the final closing of the New Testament Canon.

The Montanist controversy caused the Church to form a more precise conception of the nature of prophecy and its psychological conditions and also to determine its place in the ecclesiastical organization.

The Montanist quarrel had associated with the concept of ecstasy some unfavourable images which tended to make it suspect; and, while the Church after the Montanist crisis did not unanimously condemn ecstatic prophesying, the tendency was to maintain that genuine prophecy excluded all such disorders. The position was taken that any one who pretended to possess prophetic gifts must now submit to regular Church Authority.

Montanism impressed upon the Church the impossibility of contraining the entire body of the Christians to accept ascetic renunciations.

After Montanism, though second marriages were little recommended, yet it must be admitted that Tertullian's ideal

of monogamy never did become obligatory.

It was not only in connection with Montanism that the Church sought to prevent the encroachment of women in religious services, but the claims made by the Montanist prophetesses no doubt posed the problem in the most pressing form.

The failure of Montanism threw some discredit on the belief in the near approach of the end of the world, but to say that the Church condemned all such teaching after Maximilla's eschatological oracle had proved false, is to go too far.

Although the influence of Montanism in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity may not have been very great yet it must be admitted that Tertullian's teaching on this subject was on the side which was later accepted as orthodox.

It would need a review of the whole course of ecclesiastical history to attempt to notice every occasion upon which some isolated note of Montanism has been sounded, bringing division into the Church; but a careful comparison of the teachings of the Montanists with later puritanical groups such as the Paulicians, the Cathari, the Fratricelli and the Irvingites, shows very striking similarities and

could lead to the suggestion that such movements found in Tertullian and the early Montanists a historic setting for their beliefs.

The Orthodoxy of the Montanists. There seems little in the Montanists' teachings with which the Church could quarrel. On the Godhead the early writers assert that the Montanists were orthodox. It should be noted, however, that in the beginning of the third century no official decision had yet been made on the doctrine of the Godhead.

The eschatological sayings of the Montanists were not altogether different from those uttered in the New Testament, and most earnest Christians of the second century did not doubt that Christ's return was very near. Even the Montanists' claims to spiritual possession have a New Testament foundation and are not unknown among second century Christians of reputed orthodoxy.

The Church of their day, like the Church of today, was divided on the question of the genuineness of ecstatic prophesying.

The Montanists' zeal for martyrdom has many parallels among the most venerated of the early Church, and their teachings on fasting and penitential discipline, were

not altogether unlike those of the Catholics of their time.

On the question of marriage, while the Montanists adopted a rather rigid view, yet Athenagoras, Theophilus, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, must be listed as holding very similar ideas.

Conclusion. The Montanist controversy was not strictly over theological questions, the real point of contention arose over the struggle of Montanism to obtain, or rather to retain, an independent religious attitude and activity as against one that was becoming prescribed and uniform. They saw more and more spiritual authority being vested in the bishops, some of whom were growing lax in discipline.

At a time when the organized Church was claiming the right to be the sole custodian of the Spirit the Montanists attempted to preserve or restore the free manifestations of spiritual possession. It is not difficult to see how a continued belief in the prophetic ministry, and in the divine spirit within man, constituting the main guarantee of a pure faith, would be a definite hindrance to the development of the episcopacy of the Catholic Church. Free prophesying was regarded as incompatible with the orderly administration of worship, an incongruity to which

a bishop could not be reconciled.

The doctrine that the union of individuals with the Church, and therefore with Christ, was effected only by obedient dependence on the bishop, did much to provoke the Montanists to adopt a belligerent attitude to the Church. They began to style themselves by the exalted title "spirituals" and all others they classed as "psychics". This attitude was interpreted by the Church as war upon ecclesiastical authority, and was no doubt responsible for much of the reproach which was later heaped upon the movement.

Montanism can be regarded as the first of the many voices of protest that have been raised at intervals throughout the history of the Church against the idea of treating the lay believer as a subordinate part of a collective system; against the mediate approach of each soul to God through the hierarchy as opposed to the immediate enjoyment of divine fellowship and all the spiritual graces implied in the New Testament statement: 'Ye are....a royal priesthood'.

This reaction towards individualism on the part of the Montanists tended to go too far in some respects and the exaggerated enthusiasm and bigotry of certain members of

the movement led to narrowness of outlook and excesses of behaviour which have no doubt coloured later historians' view of Montanism.

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