

# TATIAN : PERFECTION ACCORDING TO THE SAVIOUR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *On an Old Syriac Treatise against Marcion.*

IN the year 1836 there was published by the Armenian convent at St. Lazaro, near Venice, a work which professed to contain writings of St. Ephraim, the great Syrian father. There were four volumes of printed matter, in a language (Armenian) that almost no one among Western scholars of that day could read, so that it is not surprising if the books fell flat on the market. As far as we remember, one solitary voice (it was that of Prof. Lagarde) observed that there was, amongst the newly edited matter, a commentary upon a Gospel Harmony ; yet even he did not follow up the clue ; one would have thought that the suggestion of a fourth century commentary by the greatest of the Syrian doctors upon a Harmony of the Four Gospels would have made patristic students open their eyes wide with wonder and with expectation. Did the monks of St. Lazaro know what they were publishing ? Did they suspect that under the ill-fitting disguise of an Armenian text and commentary there was masquerading the lost text of Tatian, the Gospel Harmonist *par excellence* of the second century ? They were interested in their find, but apparently did not recall what the Syrian fathers could have told them, that Ephraim had commented on the *Diatessaron of Tatian*. So we may assume that it was Ephraim that first attracted them and not Tatian who is the real magnet. While the book was passing through the press a second copy of the same commentary, of the very same age, came to light, written by the hand of the Archbishop Nerses of Lampron, and it is natural to assume that the second

copy, in the handwriting of so famous an ecclesiastic, accentuated the scholarly interest provoked by the first. So the Mechitarist monks, through their greatest living scholar, John Baptist Aucher, prepared a translation of the Armenian text into Latin, a rough translation, by no means Ciceronian, but not on that account to be undervalued by scholars who want to find their way back from the Armenian texts to the underlying Syriac. This translation was made in 1841, five years after the appearance of the *editio princeps*: it was not published and might have remained on the shelves of the convent library in perpetuity if it had not drawn the attention of Dr. Georg Mösinger of Salzburg, who obtained the permission of the convent to publish it in 1876, under the title *Evangelii concordantis expositio*. Then the secret was out and, ever since then, scholars all over the world have been reconstructing the text of Tatian's *Harmony* and estimating its effect upon our New Testament criticism and Gospel origins. All of which is by this time ancient history, and the tale has been told over and over again. We had ourselves something to say on the subject in a little volume on the *Diatessaron of Tatian*, published as far back as 1890, which is long since out of print and out of date: but we are not proposing here and now to re-open the question; our interest lies in another direction; the second of the MSS. from which the Mechitarist fathers printed the commentary of Ephraim upon the Gospel contained more matter ascribed to the same Syrian father, and it is natural to enquire whether there may not be further interesting documents to be obtained from a mine which had already yielded up such rich treasure, and further evidence as to the employment of the Tatianic text by St. Ephraim. Prof. Burkitt alluded to the existence in the Armenian volume of another work ascribed to St. Ephraim under the title of *An Exposition of the Gospel*; it was a work written against Marcion and his teachers and followers; it was clearly a translation from the Syriac, but what was of more importance for Prof. Burkitt, who was engaged in rectifying erroneous views as to the New Testament text employed by Ephraim, it was a text that contained Diatessaron readings. So he remarked as follows in his work on *St. Ephraim's quotations from the Gospel*.<sup>1</sup>

“The verse (John xv. 1) is quoted again in a tract of St. Ephraim

<sup>1</sup> *Texts and Studies*, vii. 11, Cambridge, 1911.

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extant only in Armenian (Ephr. Arm. ii. 292 (? ii. 288)). After quoting Matt. xxi. 33 he goes on : And again in another place He says, *I am the vineyard and ye are the vine.*"

We need not spend time in showing that this is undoubtedly the form in which Tatian read the opening verse of the fifteenth chapter of John ; we are not, however, discussing Tatian and his New Testament text ; we are only pointing out that Prof. Burkitt, with his accustomed keenness for Old Syriac readings, had seen the importance of the tract to which he refers : and when he came to edit the *Separated Gospels* (Evangelion da Mepharrashē) in 1904, he made further reference to the Syriac text involved in the new tract of Ephraim. He expressed himself as follows : " that the tract is a translation from the Syriac seems clear, and some of the quotations present a text such as would be used by a Syriac writer at the end of the fourth century. But the style is not very like St. Ephraim's, and the number of direct quotations from the Scriptures is far larger than we should expect to find in a genuine work of his."<sup>1</sup>

The next scholar to interest himself in the work in question was the late Prof. Preuschen, who published in his *Zeitschrift* in 1911 a translation of the printed Armenian text under the title *Eine altkirchliche antimarcionitische Schrift unter dem Namen Ephraims*.

Preuschen was especially interested in it as a work belonging to the *pro* and *con* of the great Marcionite controversy and he detected near the opening of the treatise an actual extract from what appeared to be a lost work of Marcion's entitled *Pro-evangelion*, which contained a statement as to the greatness and excellence of the Gospel, and the way in which it surpassed human thought, so that there was nothing else to be compared with it.

Apparently this is taken, not from a separate work, preliminary to the Gospel itself, but from the Preface to the Christian Reader, in Marcion's re-edited Gospel of Luke. This preface the writer of the supposed Ephraim tract makes an attack upon, which for unfairness might also be taken as a proof of Ephraimite authorship. He imagines from the title *Pro-Evangelium* that Marcion regards the Gospel as younger than himself, and when he read the Marcionite statement, that there is nought like the Gospel nor to be compared

<sup>1</sup> Burkitt : loc. cit., ii. 189.

with it, he undertook to refute the statement by proving from the parables of Jesus that there were things which were like the Gospel, and to which the Gospel might be compared, and that these things were in the Old Testament which Marcion had displaced, to wit, Wine, Clothes, Pearls, Treasures, etc., as well as in the New Testament which he had reconstructed.

Preuschen was quite clear that the Armenian text was derived by translation from the Syriac, and that it was Old Syriac, but he went one stage further back, and maintained that the Syriac itself was a rendering of a lost Greek original, portions of which he endeavoured to reconstruct. He thought, also, that the tract was composed in the last third of the second century, i.e. between A.D. 165 and A.D. 200. He did not, however, think that the author of the tract had employed the *Diatessaron*.

The next stage in the enquiry was occupied by a Roman Catholic scholar, who undertook to revise the whole of the translation, and to accompany the translation with a critical enquiry. Joseph Schäfers presented the first part of his work as a dissertation for the Doctor's degree at the University of Breslau in 1915; before he could complete his task he died at Mosul in Mesopotamia, of a disease which he had contracted, and the duty of seeing the sheets finally through the press devolved upon his friends. The title of the completed work is as follows:—

*Eine altsyrische Antimarkionitische Erklärung von Parabeln des Herrn und zwei andere altsyrische Abhandlungen zu Texten des Evangeliums, etc.*

Münster i. W. 1917.

The title shows the forward step which Schäfers had taken: there are, apparently, two fresh tracts added to the original anti-Marcionite writing, but they are not really fresh tracts. Schäfers detected in translating the work *de novo* that there was at two points a change in matter and in style. The theme altered and so did the literary artist. So he broke the tract into three where the seams appeared (for it was very loosely jointed together), and published the three parts as three separate tracts, which he marked with Roman numerals, i., ii. and iii., or A, B and C.

It will be seen at a glance that this is a challenge to a suspension of judgment, both as to the date, the authorship and the character of the

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writings. The three parts need not be by one hand, nor of one age, nor occupied with the same theme. We must not confuse the tracts together when we say that the date is second century, nor when we say that we see traces of the use of the *Diatessaron*. Each of the subdivided portions will have to be considered on its own merits.

Our interest is with the second subdivision.

To this Schäfers gives the title :

On Perfect Discipleship  
and  
On Perfect Leadership,  
expounded by the Sayings and Parables of Jesus.

He remarks that it is not a complete tract, but a fragment ; it is undoubtedly of Syriac origin, but it contains no trace of the Syriac Vulgate Version ; on the contrary it has evident relation, as to New Testament text, with the Old Syriac. Accordingly Schäfers puts the lower limit for the time of the composition near the time of the publication of the Syriac Vulgate, but cannot find any indication how much earlier it may be. He is also quite satisfied that the style is not that of Ephraim, nor can it be the work of the same writer who composed the tract against Marcion that precedes it. Is there any possibility of taking the enquiry further than Schäfers has done ? Suppose we accept his general statement that the Armenian text is based upon the Syriac, and also allow that the New Testament text involved is what is called Old Syriac, that is, either the *Diatessaron*, or one of the primitive Syriac versions, can we say anything more as to date and authorship ?

If we look at the titles which Schäfers has assigned to his three subdivided tracts we shall, I think, agree that they are all too long. Take, for instance, the one quoted above for the second tract. That is clearly not an original heading, and it is very long-winded : the other two are better ; for example, we have

Tract i. The anti-Marcionite explanation of the Parables.

This is still too long : it should be more like this,

On the Parables : against Marcion.

For tract iii. we have

On the Second Coming of the Lord  
and  
On the End of the World.

That might pass muster.

But let us see what the actual heading is in the Venice MS. Here we find as follows :

- i. Against Marcion, who says there is nothing like it (sc. the Gospel) ;
- ii. Explanation of the Parables of the Evangelists ;
- iii. On the End of the Second Coming of the Lord.

These are too brief, but the occurrence of a triple title certainly confirms Schäfers belief that we are dealing with three separate tracts. These titles, as we said, are too short. The first is so short as to be unintelligible : the second is abbreviated so as not to convey adequately the intention of the writer ; the third is also shortened unduly.

If we take Schäfers' definition for the second tract, it can easily be simplified : we can say

On Perfection  
according to the Teaching of Jesus ;

but when we write that down, we have almost exactly the title of a lost work of Tatian, which was known as

On Perfection  
according to the Saviour ;

the Greek title, as preserved by Clement of Alexandria being

*περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν Σωτῆρα καταρτισμοῦ.*

We shall, therefore, make the conjecture that we have recovered a part of the lost treatise of Tatian on the subject of Perfection.

If we turn to the passage in Clement of Alexandria to which we have just referred (it will be found in the third volume of the *Stromateis*, at p. 547) we shall find that Clement is disputing Tatian's views on married life, the argument being based upon the passage in 1 Cor. vii. 5, where the Apostle advises abstinence by consent (*ἐκ συμφώνου*), and then a subsequent return to normal conditions (*πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε*).

Now Tatian's *Way of the Perfect Life*, as is well known, involved a strongly developed ascetic element ; there was the abstinence from flesh-meat and from wine, and there was a further sexual abstinence, perhaps equivalent to an actual celibacy. So when Tatian comes to the passage in Corinthians he says some strong things ; if they were meant for an actual commentary, they were not fair to the author. Consent, he says, in abstinence makes for a state of prayer :

participation, then, in an act that is corrupt breaks up the state of intercession. The permission that the Apostle gives is really meant to be a restraint. For if we allow the return to normal life because of Satan or his lacquey Incontinence, he has put us under two masters. Our consent (ἐκ συμφώνου) in abstinence makes us the servants of God : our reversal of consent puts us into bondage to Incontinence and the Devil."

It was not difficult for Clement to put that little matter straight. What is important for us is to notice that the long quotation which Clement makes from Tatian is in the Greek, so that the work on Perfection must have been bi-lingual, if it was also in Syriac as well, and not merely known to Syrian readers in a later translation. It is also clear that, although Tatian expressly bases his teaching on Christ's own, this does not prevent him from quoting and discussing the Apostle Paul. We shall see presently a similar feature in our Armenian tract. A similar reference to St. Paul by Tatian will be found a little lower down in Clement, evidently from the same source. Tatian had maintained that the 'Old Man' to whom we die was the Law, the 'New Man' with whom we live, is the Gospel. Clement agrees with him in part, but will not allow it to be inferred that the Law was the work of another god. In this he seems to charge Tatian with occupying a fundamentally Marcionite position. He is probably not quite fair to Tatian in his inference.

Now let us turn to our Armenian text and see if it corresponds to what we already know of Tatian's treatise.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Armenian Tract on Perfection.*

We have, then, before us an early Christian tract on the Perfection of Discipleship, and we want to know if it can fairly be identified with a similarly entitled tract by Tatian, which we find registered among the lost and missing volumes of the primitive Christian library. When we examine our Armenian text more closely we see, as Schäfers points out, that amongst the changes in style as we pass from the first tract to the second, we have to notice a change in the descriptive title given to Jesus. In the first tract he is, without exception,

spoken of as 'our Lord'; in the second tract we have repeatedly 'the Saviour.' This second and alternative title agrees very well with the name given by Tatian to his book, *Perfection, according to the Saviour*. In one case the title is longer: the Lord is called (p. 318) 'our life-giving Saviour' ('unser lebendigmachender Erlöser'); the term 'life-giver' answers to the Syriac *meḥayana*, and is a regular equivalent for 'Saviour' (σωτήρ). We suspect, then, that we have here a double translation, and that the original was simply *meḥayana*. We notice also that the original must have been Syriac, for the writer plays on the underlying meaning of 'life,' and says that 'Our life-giving Saviour says, He that is near me is near the fire, and he that is far from me is far from the life.'

This is a very interesting passage: it contains a quotation from the lost *Sayings of Jesus*, only known to us hitherto by its occurrence in two passages. One of them is Origen's Commentary on Jeremiah xx. 3, in the form:

'The Saviour Himself says, He that is near me is near the fire; he that is far from me is far from the Kingdom.' The other is in Didymus of Alexandria on Psalm lxxxviii. 8 where the Greek of the passage is found corresponding to the Latin of Origen (Ruffinus).<sup>1</sup> Our Armenian text betrays a knowledge of this form also, for it continues thus:

And we too, we who long after the heavenly gates of the Kingdom, and to be enrolled in the lists of Life.

So we can add this new attestation of the Sayings to our collection. The only other parallel to it is Ignatius' 'Near the sword, near God.'

We have shown, then, that the Armenian tract commonly gives our Lord the title of 'Our Saviour.'

The next point that we notice is that the treatise is definitely occupied with the subject of Perfection as its theme and keynote.

After quoting the passage in Heb. iv. 12f. ('The Word of God is quick and powerful,' etc.) the writer remarks that this form of discipleship which our Lord spoke of, was spoken in reference to *Perfection*; for he that will be perfect must be like that. He then goes on to other passages in the Epistles where the distinction between the 'babes' and the 'perfect' is made in terms of their diet; St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> See Mai., *Bibl. Nov.*, vii. 2, 267.



feeds his young believers at Corinth with milk, but wishes them to go on to 'solid food,' and according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'solid food is for the *perfect*.' We are to be made *perfect* and *solidified*. The perfection of age is the *perfect* and solid nutrition.

When the writer comes to the search for the costly pearl, he tells us that this parable of the merchant which our Lord spoke, he spoke with reference to a *perfect discipleship*: and the same description is given to the quest for the hidden treasure. We are on the pathway of Perfection. There can be no doubt, then, that our tract in its theme coincides with the lost treatise of Tatian, and may possibly be a fragment of the same.

The question may be asked whether the perfection involved is Encratite perfection. Tatian himself is among the heretics on the ground of his Encratism, being condemned as a Vegetarian, and Teetotaller and Celibate, or quasi-Celibate, and for making his peculiar views into matters of discipline, for the perfect at least. But do we see any signs of this reaction of the inward life upon the outward in the Armenian tract? The answer is in the affirmative.

Our tract opens with the evangelical doctrine that the one who would be Christ's disciple must abandon all else and follow him and accept his conditions of life, which, as the writer says, were the same as those of the ancient prophets, and the first apostles. They were separated from the world by their primitive way of life, and by *their eating and drinking*. We also who follow the Lord and the first disciples must separate from the world by our sobriety and our wisdom and our way of dwelling in the world, and by our *eating and drinking*. Three times he repeats the allusion. The abstinence involved is, then, a cardinal doctrine of the writer. It is difficult to see how one could be separate from the world in the matter of food and drink, unless it is either in quantity or quality. Evidently the last is what is intended. Either distinction could be described as Abstinence, but Encratism, more properly so called, means the refraining from the use of flesh and wine (to say nothing of the sexual problem). The writer of our tract, then, was, we suspect, an Encratite.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Conybeare doubts this: he says, 'I cannot discern the true Encratite touch. It preaches incidentally the sparing use of this world's goods, of food and drink, but not repudiation of marriage.' But we shall see presently that the Christian athlete abandons house and home: '*sparing use of food and drink*' seems not quite adequate as an explanation of text.

Putting these various points together, that the writer was a Syrian and an Encratite, and that he wrote on the subject of Perfection as taught by our Lord, we can hardly fail to identify him with Tatian himself.

The identification which we have made raises at once an interesting question in textual criticism. If we are right that this is Tatian's tract, written by him in Syriac in the first instance, and as an Encratite in the latter part of his life, what Syriac text did he employ when quoting the Gospels? Was it his own Harmony? or were there other Syriac Gospels available from which he could quote? If there were such and he quoted them, then the Harmony was made out of those previously existing Syriac Gospels, and not directly from Greek or Latin. It will be seen that these are points of real importance; in the criticism of the New Testament text it has not yet been finally settled whether the Harmony came first in Syriac or the separate Gospels. We may draw attention to what certainly has all the appearance of a loan from the Harmony.

Our tract opens in the following abrupt manner :

And this which our Lord says: Who will be my disciple; so if he does not separate himself from all his possessions, he cannot be my disciple.

Now this is Luke xiv. 33, but with a difference :

So then every one of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be my disciple ;

or, resolving the Semitism,

So then none of you, etc., can be my disciple.

To this the tract has prefixed the words, ' Who will be my disciple,' and a reference to the Arabic Tatian shows the fifteenth chapter ending as follows :

So (let) every one of you (think, *who will be my disciple* ; for) if he does not renounce all his possessions, he cannot be my disciple.

We have bracketed the expansions made by Tatian, in order to clear up the apparently inconsequent Greek (*οὕτως οὖν πᾶς ἐξ ὑμῶν*). And it is this expanded text of Tatian, that is being quoted in our tract (unless it should be held that the expansion had already been made in a previous Syriac version of Luke). We incline to the belief that it is really Tatian.

Here is a confirmation. In the Dutch Harmony from Liège, which is a translation of a lost Latin *Diatessaron* in the earliest form that can be traced, we have (p. 85) the passage from Luke, in the form—

Wie so nin vertyt alles des dat hi heft  
die en mach mijn yongre nit syn ;

and then after an interjected gloss, the words, which appear to belong to the original text,

Dits te verstane van volmakden yongerschap ;

i.e. this is to be understood of *perfect discipleship*.

Here we have again the expression which our Armenian tract uses in the explanation of the parable of the Pearl and of the Treasure. We infer that it was in the Syriac, and as the writer of the tract is using the *Diatessaron* we suggest that the expression comes from the mind of Tatian, as an interpreter of the text. The supposition agrees with what we stated above. Tatian had some explanatory glosses of his own in the *Diatessaron*. The reference to 'Perfect Discipleship' is one of them. The significance of the repeated reference in our tract to that 'Perfect Discipleship' must be remarked : much of the argument of the tract is an expansion of the theme. We suggest that the theme and the expansion are both Tatianic.

The very title of Tatian's work on Perfection (περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν Σωτῆρα καταρτισμόν) shows that it is based on Luke vi. 40 (κατηρτισμένος δὲ πᾶς ἔσται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος).<sup>1</sup>

But here is an example that looks in another direction : our author begins a sentence as follows :

And this which again our Lord said, Strive *thou* to enter through the narrow gate. And this is just what we see, that the gate of the Kingdom is so.

Here, as Schäfers points out, we have a change from the ἀγωνίζεσθε of Luke xiii. 24 to ἀγωνίζου. It is not an accidental change ; it corresponds to a personal enquiry of a single individual ; 'And *some one said* to him, Lord, are the saved few ?' The only authority for

<sup>1</sup> Curiously, Luke vi. 40 is not in the Liège Harmony, though it is found in the two closely related harmonies edited by Bergsma.

the reading ἀγωνίζου appears to be in the Cureton and the Lewis Syriac. If that could be maintained it would be an argument for believing that Tatian was dependent upon an old Syriac rendering. (Or is it Tatian's own reading upon which the old Syriac texts are dependent ?) Nor are there wanting other traces of the dependence of our author upon non-Tatianic Syriac readings : for example, in the parable of the goodly pearl, our author says that it was 'a *good and costly* pearl,' and this double rendering is found both in the Cureton and in the Lewis Syriac of Matt. xiii. 46 and apparently nowhere else. The definition of Perfection as being κατὰ τὸν Σωτῆρα can be illustrated in either of two ways ; to wit, a following of the example of the Saviour, or an obedience to his teaching. In our tract, both are stressed. For example, in the opening sentences, the perfect disciple follows the practice of the old prophets, but these are regarded as exemplars and anticipators of our Saviour, so that imitation of them becomes at once '*Imitatio Christi*.' The writer explains that there must be, also, an imitation of the first disciples. In that case we are 'imitators of our Teacher and our Comrades, his first Disciples.' The writer goes on to say that we are 'to resemble our Teacher, and the Prophets and Apostles upon whom we are builded.'

When he comes to the parables of our Lord, in which the doctrine of perfection is said to be latent, it is the words of the Saviour that are expounded, and the worth of the Saviour that is estimated. He is Himself the Pearl, the Hidden Treasure. We find, not it, but Him. Every aspect of the writer's doctrine is κατὰ τὸν Σωτῆρα : every experience is ὡς ὁ Διδάσκαλος.

But here again the Liège Harmony, which is our best evidence for a Latin Tatian, comes to our aid. It tells us that 'the kingdom of heaven is like the merchantman, who seeks to buy *good* pearls, and when he has found one *good* pearl, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys the *precious* pearl.' The 'good and precious pearl' can be inferred from the text, and with some degree of certainty, we may take it back to Tatian. Was it also in the Diatessaron ? If not, then Tatian is here quoting the Old-Syriac.

For further discussion on these points, the reader may refer to Preuschen and Schäfers.

## CHAPTER III.

*The Text of the Tract on Perfection.*

. . . And this that our Lord says : Who will be my disciple. So if he does not separate himself from all his possessions, he cannot be my disciple. But this also he taught out of the earlier prophets, that they might become their disciples. And they had learnt their mode of life, and their sweet reasonableness, and their thought of poverty and of solitude, which were their instructions in that religion of theirs. They had declared to them as it were a counsel the exemplar of our Saviour, and then He came Himself and perfected their counsels and exemplars, which were really on His account. And so to their hearers their words were established and a seal was set on them, which words were (really) on His account. And so also our Saviour Himself taught ; not out of His own mind, but in correspondence with the will of His Father did He teach, even as He says : ‘ Not that the Son speaks out of His own will, but what He sees and hears of His Father, that He speaks.’ Wherefore let no one suppose that our Lord said anything from Himself. So the similitudes and thoughts relating to Himself, and the figures and the forms of His works, which each of the prophets set in action, were all in regard to Himself ; He came Himself, fulfilled them, and sealed them to their hearers.

Now should we be in dread of His strong and stern Father, as also the Scripture says, ‘ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God ’ (Heb. x. 31). For He personally does, through His Son, whatsoever He will. Wherefore, even as our Saviour Himself and the Prophets and His Apostles separated themselves from this present world through their piety and their sobriety and their spiritual mode of life and their dwelling and their eating and drinking and their glorious words, so also should we be imitators of our Teacher and of our Comrades, his first disciples. For we ourselves will part from this present world, by our piety and our sobriety, and our habitation of the world, and by our eating and drinking and our spiritual course of life ; nor should ye mingle with the affairs and the discourse of this world. For if we by our mode of life and our dwelling and our eating and our drinking and our words are not separate and disjoined from the men who are here, our Lord might just as well have come to the winds and the stones and discoursed to them His noble commands from

His Father, and He should not have been sent to us in person. Or shall we suppose that, when His Father in his good pleasure sets up His dread and powerful Judgement Seat of Glory, he will judge the winds and the stones, and not sit in judgement upon us personally ?

We will accordingly proceed to do whatsoever the Saviour hath bidden us, according to the will of His Father. For God is a Consuming Fire, as saith also the Scripture. But if one approaches (to take on him) the name of discipleship unworthily, he might well cast his eye on Gehazi, the disciple of Elisha, for he approached in name but never really fulfilled it. For he surrendered the heavenly possessions, and lusted after earthly possessions : so he was rejected and clad in leprosy. Or again, he might cast an eye on Judas, who was one of the twelve Apostles of our Saviour ; for he, too, lusted after the things of this world, and he was rejected, and his name erased from the tale of life.

We, then, will have dread of the present world and its goods, lest we also be rejected, and fall from the stage on which we stand, as they also were rejected. For envy and avarice and all the passions of this world are opposed to discipleship and resist it. And in sooth they have overset the wise and the strong giants, and he drives many out of the Kingdom in that day. For those 'passions' are the armour of Satan, wherewith he wars against us ; wherefore our Lord despoiled him and took away his armour and gave it us, saying withal to us, 'If any man will serve Me, let him follow Me.' Wherefore we follow Him and become imitators of His manner of life, and draw it on to us like a coat of mail ; for our Saviour knows the art of Satan's hypocrisy, how he disorders and confuses men who have become believers ; for some he utterly deceives with bait of goods and gear and many other things, to destroy them withal ; and whiles he sees one that has put on his coat of mail, and he fights against him and the sense of the Scripture, that he may wreck his vow, and undo him, and whiles he shoves him out of the lists of the teaching. Wherefore our Lord had pity on us, when He said that we should observe His Commandments, and that then the grace of His compassion should reach us, to set us free from the Evil One. For by the observation of His Commandments we shall be set free from Satan, who fights against us in varied forms : and tenderly doth the Holy Spirit care for us as He did for the Prophets.

Now let us resemble our Teacher and the Prophets and Apostles upon whom we are builded, those who have put on the armour of their Lord and have overcome Satan. For as the blessed Paul says, 'I want you, brethren, to be imitators of me,' that is according to his saying 'I have not coveted gold or silver nor delicate apparel, but I loved to work with my own hands, and to eat and to give also to them that are weak and needy'; so he too showed us the path of life that we ought to walk in. And like the Apostles again, who deposited in the midst whatever was their special possession and there was no one among them that was poor, for all were equal through their living and their loving. But if we do not hear Paul and do not obey our Saviour, we cannot be imitators of Prophets and Apostles. Let us no longer tread under foot the words of the Holy Scripture through our weakness. For the words of God are, 'Yea is yea and nay is nay'; as Paul also said, 'Alive is the Word of God and sharper than any two-edged sword, to cut, to pierce through, even to the division of souls and bodies, of joints and thighs, and is judge of the thoughts and intents of the hearts, neither is there any creature that is hidden before Him, but everything is open before Him, for we shall stand naked, every one of us, in His presence, to render Him our account.'

This form of discipleship of which our Lord spake, he spake it of perfection; for he that will be perfect shall be like that.

And then, as St. Paul says: 'As babes in Christ I gave you milk to drink, and I gave you not strong meat, for ye are yet carnal. Ye could not receive it, as long as ye are carnal.' And again he says: 'Strong meat is for the perfect, those whose taste is practised, to distinguish good and evil.' And truly it is just as he says: 'As babes in Christ I gave you milk to drink,' for as the child first sucks milk, and nourished thereby becomes little by little capable of nutrition through savoury food, and begins to distinguish good and bad, sweet and bitter, and then goes forward to eat a meal of bread and other kickshaws like a man, and forgets its childhood and its meal of milk, sucked in babyhood, on account of its growing strength and on account of its meats, because it has become perfect in the measure of the nature which God has set sure for him; so we learn the earlier writing (sc. the Old Testament), as a sort of milk, and we are brought up thereon, and then gradually our faith and the service of our Lord

become strong in us, and then we begin to understand, to distinguish the good from the bad and the sweet from the bitter. And as our faith in its energy becomes strong in us, thereon our mind, with our captive will, urges us on towards the Perfecting of the Truth of the Gospel ; yea, that is itself the strong meat, as also the Apostle says, ' Strong meat is for the Perfect.' Wherefore it was Truth that that Apostle said, ' As babes in Christ I gave you milk to drink.' For first we did drink like milk the instruction of the teaching : and when we became perfect and strong in it, then, led onward, we approach to the prescriptions of the Gospel ; and this is the Perfection of Age, a Perfect and Strong Meat.

And again as to the saying of our Lord : ' Strive to enter by the narrow door.' And this is precisely what we see, that the door of the Kingdom is so. He who longingly desires to be enlisted and to register himself in the muster roll of warriors here in the world, keeps this point before his mind, that he must go forth from home and relationship, to remove into other neighbourhoods and to throw himself into the strife of deadly battle. Like the warrior he must first learn to clean and to polish his armour, and he learns military matters while he is by himself, before the time of the struggle arrives. But when that time comes he throws himself into the company of warlike enthusiastic men ; and nought else beholds he but the glitter of weapons and the flashing of the sword, and the on-rush of the horsemen, and the twang of the bow ; there nought else does he hear, but only the clang of the stricken lyre, and the blare of the trumpets, the urgency of the flutes, the whirr of the sword, and the onward call of the bugles. And there is one that shrinks from blood, and another when he hears the sound of fearsome cries, becomes weak, exhausted, and limp from his own terror, and here another who is heartened and prevails, and through him his comrades, his war-mates, are heartened also, and many another lifts his eyes to see the sword before him and the sword behind him, and within himself he says, If I go slack and weak in this battle, the sword in front will kill me, and if I turn my back my own friends will smite my flank ; so let me manly die ; and he uplifts his eyes to Heaven, and he cries to God in prayer, and throws himself manfully into the strife. Verily this is what our life-giving Saviour has said : ' He who is near me is near the fire ; and he who is far from me is far from the life.' And so we too that have a lust for the



heavenly gates of the Kingdom, and to be inscribed in the enrolments of life with the Warriors, the Prophets, the Apostles, we must learn in advance the military matters, the rules and laws of our Lord, and daily drill ourselves in them, and purify ourselves like a clean armour, and be made firm in our heart, and then we put those rules on like a fine armour, and so we become mighty to stand against the war's battle when we have thus put it on.

But if we do not wear this armour, when war comes, or persecution, or any other form of hostility arises against us (for the struggle in our war is for every day, and the armour of the Faith is what we possess), and if Satan approaches any of us to make war upon him, many a one becomes apostate through fear, and lacks the armour of the Faith ; but another hears the sound of the trumpet that stimulates him, and he is encouraged and strengthened to take stand against 'the enemy' ; and many lie asleep and do not watch ; and here is one that is in covenant<sup>1</sup> with God, but does not stand firm, for he regards the erroneous teachers, mere nonentities, as though they were servants of God. And all these have been written down in the muster-roll of the warriors for the Gospel call, but they have been conquered by Satan. Just as the Apostle said, 'our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and against the ruler of the world of this darkness under the heaven, and with the spirits of error.' And just as a warrior, on military service, longs to pass from his insignificance to the greatness of renown, through his battlings and the toils of his heroic deeds, and his eager mind, and to stand in his ready service before the king, and from him to receive great presents and fame and honour and worth, and goes up, now promoted, to his own rank and stands forthwith in the royal court, and lives splendidly and joyously in a noble house, so also we have been called in insignificance and we attain to glory through the conflict of our strivings, and the war of our heroisms, and through our obedience, and we come to stand before the Heavenly King, and to receive from Him great presents, renown and honour and glory, and being raised in rank we are promoted in grade to the Prophets and Apostles, and we become great and exalted and stand before the Heavenly King, and we live in delight in the House Beautiful with the Celestials.

<sup>1</sup> One of the *Bnai Qyama*, or Sons of the Covenant.

And this again which our Lord has said: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchantman, seeking costly pearls: and he found one costly and precious pearl, went, sold all his possessions and bought it at a price.' This again He has spoken with regard to the Perfect Discipleship; for He is Himself the pearl and we are the merchants who have found Him. And just as a costly pearl maketh the heart gay, and bears aloft the mind and soul and spirit of him who possesses it, and makes him fair and beauteous, and he is uplift in his mind, so is it with ourselves. When we gain the pearl of our Lord, that is, His Commandments, gay and glad is our Soul and Spirit and our Heart is delighted within us, and fair we are and beauteous we become in ourselves through the pearl that is within us. And just as a costly and precious pearl is not left carelessly, and laid casually in the treasury of the Kingdom, but is packed away and stamped with many seals, and for greater protection laid in a special case, so also is our pearl, wrapped and stamped and sealed with many seals, and is laid away in our hearts in ward with great care; and there it lies under watch and ward in Hearts and Souls and Spirits as the religion of our Lord.

And again, that which our Lord has said, that 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man, who has found a treasure in a field. For joy he went and sold all that He had, and bought it'; this too has he said again in regard to Perfect Discipleship: for He is Himself the Treasure which His Father has appointed for us. But just as a treasure, if we find such, was not first buried in that very hour when 'we' found it, but has already been long stored away, and he who found it found it as God willed; on that account the treasure is our Saviour, and not as somewhat recent have we found Him, as the Marcionites say, but His father had long since stored Him away and laid Him by but did not reveal Him to that generation, that turned their eyes to Him and expected Him, but revealed Him to us in this present age of ours. On that account He is compared with a treasure and a pearl, and we with His finders according to the will of our Creator.

And just as in the case of a treasure it is found not to consist of a single costly and beautiful piece, but many jewels and valuables are found therein, so that, if one should discover it, the finder is amazed in mind, and full of uneasiness hastens, and mingles anxiety and fear

with his heart's joy, and with fixed eye gazing this way and that way, and then raises his eyes to Heaven, and small need has he of food and drink, for the care and toil and the very sleeplessness of joy, because he has found something greater than himself ; so also has our Saviour, who revealed to us His Father, opened to us the gladsome treasure of His mouth, and it was not a single prize, nor a single jewel that escaped, but many prizes and many treasures. And if we sit down and ponder the glories and treasures of His Father, our heart is wonderstruck, beside itself in glad amaze, while anxiety and fear are mingled therewith for the prize that we have found ; and with toil and sleepless care we are day and night concerned with our treasure, and we feel neither hunger nor thirst and our eyes are evermore raised to Heaven.

And this again which our Lord has said : 'If any one of you is invited to a wedding or banquet, do not go and sit down in the foremost place : perchance there may come and enter one of the invited guests, a more honourable man than thyself, and he who has bidden you both may come and say, "Get up, make room for this man," and thou must betake thyself with shame to a lower place : but when they invite you, go and sit you down in a lower place : and then He who invited you will say, "Friend, move up and sit there," and there will be honour to thee from all that sit at the table. For everyone that exalts himself will be abased, and he that humbleth himself will be exalted.' And he said this word because He observed that they sought out the first places. And this word is exactly fulfilled in respect of the Church. For our Lord is the Lord of the guests, and we are the invited, invited to the banquet, and the same is so fulfilled.

But just as a man when he invites his guests, first invites them by word, and thereupon they come and reach the banquet, so also has our Saviour done, he has first invited us by the word and thereon we come to the banquet.

And our Lord observed and saw that at the banquet they sought the first place : this is fulfilled among ourselves ; for we busy ourselves to-day to be chief guide ; but we do not busy ourselves to do the works that are worthy of presidency. And they are to-day despised in our eyes, who humble themselves on earth : as our Lord has said, 'He that exalteth himself will be abased, and he that will

humble himself will be exalted.' Verily, therefore, they recline themselves in the first place, for that they have humbled themselves, and have observed the precepts of their Lord !

Those whom our Lord observed and saw, that they intruded and sought the first places at the banquet are (symbolically) those who busy themselves to push themselves to the front, to stand at the head of the community. And they chose this for their own person's sake, and in no respect were their thoughts in righteousness ; their choice was their own persons. But this is the Divine Selection, when thou shalt observe and preoccupy thyself over His commandments and thy works shall shine among men, not as if thou wouldst have any man know of the 'good' works that thou doest, but God only : as if thy works do not allow thee to be hidden, as the good works of our Saviour did not allow him to be hidden, and similarly the Prophets and the Apostles. The Presidency, then, belongs to those whose works, before they could reach the first rank, shone amongst men, and God was glorified in them.

If such an one becomes Head and Leader through his capacity and his good works, so that he wakes up many, and many men are healed through him, so that they return to God and live · then the Leader stands 'rightly' at the head of the people. And such an one is like to a physician ; for the physician heals wounds through his medicine, and the other heals through a medicine, to wit, the word of the Living God, the broken in heart and the oppressed in soul.

And like as a physician who sees the wound, and knows by his lore what is the necessary medicine therefor, so also a wise physician of the Church knows from the Holy Scriptures, if he sees that the heart of anyone is broken and his spirit oppressed, what is the necessary medicine for him, to heal him, through comfort, of the pains of his soul. Like Moses, who became the leader, and with uprightness did lead, and became shepherd and well did pasture, and became physician, and with wholesomeness did heal the people of Jacob : such a Leader is proper to the office of leadership.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Some Concluding Reflections.*

We must now review briefly the foregoing enquiry into the possible or probable recovery of a portion of a lost Christian work of the first age, and we may conveniently do this under three heads, the Document, the Theme and the Author.

With regard to the Document, we followed Schäfers in dissecting it out from a supposed Ephraim tract, on the ground of internal chasms and discontinuity : but it is necessary to go slowly at this point. Suppose, for example, that the chasms were due to the selections of a transcriber, who did not wish to copy the whole of a document ; we should, then, be obliged to turn from the external evidence of the chasms, and examine the internal continuity and harmony of the writings themselves. Thus, if Schäfers divides his whole text into three parts, say A B C, we ought to be able to detect not only the gulf between A and B, but also the inner variation of style between them ; and so for B and C. And it is the more necessary to do this, because if we put A and C side by side, there is something to be said for a belief in a common authorship.

For example, in section A (p. 309) we have an illustration taken from the case of a woman and her mirror. We are told that when such a woman wants to assure herself of her good looks, she does not consult her gossips on the point, but she takes her mirror and looks therein, and she knows that if she is pleased with the prospect her bridegroom will also be pleased with it. If, however, she finds a spot or wrinkle or any impurity, she smooths the wrinkle and rubs off the impurity. The explanation is that the Holy Writ is such a mirror to us when we take it in hand ; it contains the saving instructions of our Lord. The more we look into the mirror the more we know how to make ourselves lovely and loveable by the removal of spot and wrinkle. The reader of this passage will be at once reminded of the beautiful thirteenth *Ode of Solomon*, which tells us that the Lord is our mirror, and that we are to wipe the dirt from off our face, as well as of the passage in 2 Cor. iii. 18, where the believer beholds in a mirror the

Divine Glory, a passage to which actual reference is made by our author.<sup>1</sup>

The main point to notice in a very vivid parable is that the looking-glass is no longer the Lord but the Lord's teaching. Now let us turn to tract C of Schäfers (p. 338) and we find again that we are to *take up the mirror of the Scripture* and see ourselves therein, and remove thereby any impurity that may be detected.

The natural suggestion is that the two passages in A and C respectively are by the same hand. Returning to the first passage quoted we see that the author continues parabolizing with regard to the beautiful Bride and her Bridegroom, and tells us of their final union and his joy over her, and then, says he, *she becomes the lady over all his possessions and the participant in all his honour.*

Now turn to the second passage, and observe how the author is working out the same thought ; he tells of the Bride's expectancy and of her longing for the daybreak in which she will see her Lord ; and then he observes that she becomes *the lady of all her husband's treasures, great and small.*

These coincidences show that A and C come from the same hand. If this conclusion cannot be avoided, then in view of the fact that A and C are just as discontinuous as A and B, we must keep before our minds the possibility that the three sub-divisions, though evidently from separate works, may after all be due to a single author. For why should the transcriber leave the author A, copy a short tract of B, and then come back to A again ? The dissection which Schäfers pointed out may be the anatomy of a single person. And certainly all the three divisions of the book have a common Syriac origin, are earlier than Ephraim, and show dependence either upon Tatian's *Diatessaron*, or upon the separate Old Syriac Gospels.

We turn next to the style and theme of the second of our sub-divisions to which we have ventured to attach the name of Tatian. Everyone will recognize that there is an originality and a force about the writer, which point him out as different from the conventional writers and commentators of the Church. For instance, both in A and in B, he is the earliest commentator upon the parables of our Lord, and one of the freshest. Or take his picture of the Happy

<sup>1</sup> We may also compare Eph. v. 27 for the 'spots and wrinkles.'

Warrior preparing himself for battle, by careful training and warlike zeal. The passage might almost be thought rhetorical,<sup>1</sup> if it were not that the writer is so much in earnest. There is almost a summary of it in a famous passage of Macarius the Great (Hom. xviii. 11).<sup>1</sup> 'Sometimes, like a champion clad in royal armour, these also, fortifying themselves with the armour of the Spirit, go forth against their invisible enemies, and tread them under their feet.' There is the Happy Warrior again: Is it possible that Macarius stands in succession with the writer of our fragment? for he also is one of the writers on the subject of Perfection. It has only recently come out that, instead of being a pillar of the orthodox Church, he belonged to the sect (if sect it really was) of the Messalians, or Prayermen, who were widespread in Eastern lands, and probably a survival of an early Christian movement.<sup>2</sup>

Here is an instance of the parallelism to which we refer, and perhaps of more than parallelism. Our author, when he tells of the joy that the happy finder has over his treasure, tells us that his joy is mixed with anxiety and fear; but does not specify the exact ground of the terror.

If we turn to Macarius, twenty-seventh Homily, we shall find him discussing the difference between the Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament and the Saints under the New; the former did not know the Passion of the Lord, nor that there was a baptism with the Holy Spirit and Fire: the latter are enriched with the reception of the Paraclete, but they hold their wealth with fear and trembling. For, '*just as one who possesses treasures, or who travels to places that are robber-ridden, joys indeed over the wealth that he possesses, but is under fear lest the brigands rifle him,*' etc.

Here we have an explanation of the Anxious Fear of the Happy Finder. He is afraid of the brigands, to wit, his spiritual enemies.

So there may be something more than concurrence in the teaching

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Conybeare thinks it is altogether rhetorical; he says 'the *purpureus pannus* about military service is an absolute *locus communis* in such literature. . . . It is a bit of Salvation Army rhetoric': but *vide infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Two curious errors are current with regard to Macarius: one that of my friend, Dr. Whitley, who, in Hastings' *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics* states that the Messalians hail from Marseilles (Massilia): the other that of the theologians who are proposing to decanonize Macarius, and who do not know that they may burn their fingers in taking off the halo of a saint.

of our author and Macarius. They may be in the Apostolic succession of the seekers after Perfection ; for we must not forget that Christianity may be defined as Penitence that is heading towards Perfection, Penitence in the sense of the nearness of the Kingdom, Perfection because the Lord has said, ' Ye shall be perfect, because I am perfect,' and the disciple must aspire to be as his Lord. This is what our author is trying to say, Perfect discipleship as indicated in the teaching of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

So much for the theme ; and this brings us back again to the question of the author. Was he really Tatian or perhaps some other Enkratite, or some early ascetic or monk, who has bid the world farewell in an external similitude, and carried it with him into his retreat. He would have to be a very early monk ; but it is not to be denied that Enkratism itself is a kind of Monachism, an attempt to take Christ literally and spiritually at once ; but it will not easily be maintained that the tract which we have been discussing came out of a monk's cell. But let us imagine whether it perhaps may be the work of some other Enkratite of renown, who had a style of his own in which to describe an experience of his own. Might it, for example, be Cassian who is sometimes compared with Tatian by the Church writers and their transcribers ? Our chief authority for Cassian is Clement of Alexandria, who almost always, quoting Cassian, says that Tatian has the same opinion. So he was Enkratite, and if we may believe the tradition of Clement, he was a second-century writer, who had for his themes, *Self-control* (or *Continence*) and *Self-mutilation*. Of these the first is the general definition of holiness (*Enkrátēia*) ; the second is a special definition, with reference to our Lord's most difficult teaching with regard to sexual abstinence. Cassian, then, might very well have been a teacher of the kind whom we have unearthed in Armenian. His name appears to have been Julius Cassianus, and he is said by Clement to quote from the Gospel according to the

<sup>1</sup> The great religious revivals all head this way : take for an example the first hymn in the first Methodist Hymn Book :

' This is the triumph of the Just  
Who e'er on Thee their spirits stay  
Shall find the God in whom they trust ;  
*Perfection is their shining way.*'



Egyptians : to judge by his name he is not an Oriental, and by his gospel, he is not a Mesopotamian.

It is, therefore, lawful to doubt whether he had anything to do with Syria, or with the Syriac Gospels, or with the Harmony of Tatian. So we fall back upon his contemporary (almost his double), for whom we have the evidence in Syria and in Syriac, and we suggest that the fragment before us is from the pen of Tatian the Assyrian. We may add to the argument the letters Q.E.D. provided the capital letters are not offensively large in their dimension, and are followed in smaller type by Q.E.R.E.

It may, perhaps, be asked whether it is likely that Tatian, in quoting from the Scriptures of the New Testament, should have used his own recently made and lately harmonized Gospel. Would it not be more natural to assume that the use of the *Diatessaron*, if proved, implies that it had become an Authorized Version, and does not such an Authorized Version, even in the East, acquire its credentials by the lapse of time ?

Certainly there can be no doubt that the Syrian Churches read their Gospel through the medium of Tatian : we do not yet know for certain whether they read anything else in the first period of their ecclesiastical existence ; so that, as far as Syrian Churches go, there is a presumption in favour of Tatianic quotations at a very early date ; and if we concede this for the Churches we can hardly refuse to allow it for their own great and unapproachable Reviser of the New Testament.

I admit that there is a further difficulty in regard to Tatian's *Tract on Perfection*, that we do not know certainly whether it was first written in Greek or in Syriac, and this might seem to some to disable the use of that very Syriac book, the *Diatessaron*. But this is only the same difficulty over again, to wit, the limitation of our knowledge. We do not yet know whether the *Diatessaron* was ever published in Greek. The uncertainty that we find ourselves facing is in the nature of the case : it is the reaction from our ignorance ; but it does not require us to assume that Tatian could not quote his own work (on which he must have spent such multitudinous care) in one language or in another. We may, however, suggest that it is probable that the *Tract on Perfection*, with its highly evolved Encratism, belongs to the later stages of the writer's life.

But, it may be said, Tatian was a heretic, and in the tract before us he speaks of the Christian Church as if he belonged to it; for instance, he deplors the lust of power in would-be leaders of the Church, and advises us that the Perfection of Jesus not only requires us to be free from the love of money, but also from the greed of place. Could a heretic talk that way? Is it not the mark of a true heretic that he is a disappointed person, who has aimed at episcopal honours and found himself thwarted? Are not the early lists of heretics charged and surcharged with such vaulting ambitions that have met their first doom even in this life? If Epiphanius says he was a heretic, could Tatian have been a saint? No doubt it is easy to ask such questions. They arise out of the projections of the later judgments of the Church upon the canvas of its earlier history. We have really no warrant for supposing that in the sub-Apostolic age the decisions of later Church councils were anticipated. Whether Tatian wrote our tract or not, we have no reason for assuming that Encratism was always and from the beginning outside the territorial limits of salvability. It would be more correct to say that Tatian was, in the latter part of his life, the head of the Eastern Church in Syria and its chief Doctor. There is no need to make a heretic of him before the time. If he was one, let the tares grow with the wheat till the fourth century! Then let the Catholic Church disown his person and the monks carry on his teaching.<sup>1</sup>

It will have been noticed that our author is definitely not in agreement with the views of Marcion.<sup>2</sup> He is careful to explain that, if Jesus is a recently acquired treasure, He is not one that was recently buried. There the Marcionites are at sea in their opinions about the Son of the Stranger who abruptly descended into a Galilean Synagogue in the days of Tiberius Cæsar. Clement of Alexandria, however, in a passage which we quoted above, certainly from the treatise on Per-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Conybeare observes that 'Tatian and his sect, if he can be said to have formed one (and Duchesne remarks that Encratism never was a sect, but a spirit diffused through all Christian circles), talked much of Perfection but not more than scores of the Fathers.'

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Conybeare suggests that anti-Marcionism, and not Encratite Perfection is the real meaning of the tract: 'the figures and forms (τύποι) which each of the prophets set in action were all in regard to Christ himself, which is what Marcion denied. . . . The very perfection he insists on is led up to by the earlier writings as a sort of milk.'

fection, suggests that Tatian, by making an antithesis between Law and Gospel, had implied that the Old Testament was the code of another god than the New Testament. It is interesting to observe, and the careful reader will verify it for himself, that the writer of our tract does take up a kind of half-way position between the Marcionite Canon and that of the Catholic Church. It is part of his doctrine of Perfection according to Jesus, to be anti-Judaic, and to regard the Old Testament as milk for babes. Yet he never abandons the Prophets, whom he groups with the Apostles as standing on the foundation of the Church. At the same time the pearl and the treasure are not for the Jews. We are the Finders, and it is implied that the others are the Losers, in the sense of being non-finders. Thus the writer's position is intermediate between Marcion and the Orthodox. He quotes the prophets for their ethics of the simple life, for the life itself he goes to the teachings of Jesus. It is easy to see that when he put Gospel above Law that he was exposing himself to a charge of Marcionism : but the attack could not be maintained. It was a misunderstanding of the actual case. Perfection according to Jesus did not mean, for our writer, the denial of the antecedents of the Church.

We may also say that it would be an injustice to the writer to suppose that he had created a new law of perfection by the way of meats and drinks, and ascetic habits. Nothing can be clearer than that he is one of the company who interpret, in Jesus' own sense, the words of Jesus about the inwardness of the Kingdom. He is a mystic and has the Kingdom within him. His treasure is sealed in the hidden receptacle of an obedient and believing heart ; his priceless pearl is no external bedizenment, but an inner experience, guarded with trembling, even when its owner is most elate with joy :

Joy past all speech, of glory full,  
But stored where none may know ;  
Like manna hid in dewy heaven,  
Or pearls in ocean low.

But, as John Bunyan would say, of such confessions and experiences, 'The Philistines understand me not.' They only study them under the heading of 'Varieties of Religious Experience.'

Now let us return to the 'purple patch,' as Mr. Conybeare calls it, on military service, and ask whether the author of our tract had been in the army. The description of military training which is given

in our tract is so vivid that it provoked the exclamation from my friend Mr. L. W. Grensted, to whom I read it, that 'the man must have been in the army.' This was certainly a new light on the history of the writer. Is there any ground for this suspicion of military discipline or experience in his case or in the case of Tatian? We turn to Tatian's *Discourse to the Greeks*, and we find in c. 11 the statement, 'I have no will to rule, no desire to wealth, military office (τὴν στρατηγίαν) I have abjured (παρήτημαι),' where the change in the tense shows we have to do with an actual experience and not merely an anti-militarist sentiment. May we conclude that Tatian had been in the army and had come out of it? That would be a new fact in his history, brought to light by our tract and its internal criticism. The matter is so important that it deserves a more careful consideration. Mr. Conybeare thinks the perfect tense of the verb does not carry the experimental meaning. 'I do not,' he says, 'infer that the writer had been in the army (as Mr. Grensted did), and, if he had, he need not be Tatian. I take στρατηγίαν παρήτημαι as I do βασιλείαν οὐ θέλω. He was never Emperor, nor dreamed of being, and στρατηγίαν παρήτημαι is the same sort of rhetorical hyperbole. I don't think the perfect implies that he had actually served in the army. It is, as you say, a strong present.' The objections here made are of considerable weight. To resolve them we may examine the passage more closely and more at length. Tatian continues the declaration given above with the following words:

'I hate uncleanness (πορνείαν μεμίσηκα); I do not engage in seafaring to satisfy my avarice; I am not in the arena to gain crowns, I have rid myself of Doxomania (δοξομανίας ἀπήλλαγμα), and as for death, I despise it.' The question is whether this is mere rhetoric, the perfect tenses being literary variations, and, if we please, intensive forms of the current present tenses. The first of these is in debate. The second is uncertain. It may only mean 'I have (always) hated uncleanness,' in which case it differs little from an intensive present.

We come now to the statement that 'I have rid myself of δοξομανία'; what is Doxomania, and does the writer merely rid himself of it in a theoretical way, as one might rid oneself of temptation or passion? The queer word is used contemptuously of the strife of opinion amongst the philosophers; Tatian uses it again of philosophic conceit in c. 19, where he says that we are to despise death,

not after the philosophic swagger of Anaxarchus, who invited his persecutors to pound his sack, i.e. the body in which he lived. Now we know from this parallel and elsewhere what Tatian meant when he said, 'I have rid myself of *Doxomania*.' He means that he has given up philosophy. Is that rhetoric or is it history? There can be no doubt as to the answer. The whole argument of Tatian with the Greeks turns on the fact that he was once in the philosophers' schools himself. 'I was born in Assyria,' he says, 'and my first education was in your learning';

παιδευθεὶς πρῶτον τὰ ὑμέτερα, c. 42.

'We bade farewell to the wisdom that is with you (Greeks)' c. 1.

Then it is a historical statement that he is making, and the perfect tense is in order; the use of a present tense in our translation is unthinkable. And if this be so, we must interpret the abjuration of military office in a similar sense. It is history, not rhetoric.

Perhaps the matter may become a little clearer on a closer investigation of the passage in Tatian. Why are all these disclaimers introduced, whether theoretical or practical? Tatian has been discussing the frailties and metamorphoses of the Olympians, and then he proceeds to ask how it is possible for him to accept a belief in Genesis according to fixed Fate, when the predestination is in the hands of such worthless characters. He is meeting the objections of the Stoic, who has explained to him that Zeus and the rest are various forms of the same fundamental idea; that Zeus is Fate and Fate is Zeus. From this point of view, if one aspired to rule, Zeus is our patron, if one goes to war we have Ares for our friend, and so on. 'But,' says Tatian, 'I don't want to rule and have no need of Zeus: I am not wishful for wealth (πλοῦτος), and so can dispense with Pluto; military rule I have abjured, and have no appeal to Ares; as for sensual love I detest the very thought of it, and its patron Aphrodite; I am under no necessity of taking long sea-voyages for gain, so do not need to invoke Poseidon; I never enter the arena to win garlands, nor frequent the Pythian games over which Apollo presides; I have rid myself of vainglory (what god or goddess was he thinking of here? is it Hermes?) and I have no fear of death or disease, which relieves me of the necessity of calling in the aid of Asklepios.' So he dispenses with the thought of the Fate into which the Stoics had resolved their Olympians. We cannot reduce this vivid protest to philosophi-

cal rhetoric; there is personal experience mixed with it. The superiority to the fear of death must surely be a spiritual experience: so must the rejection of the vainglory of life: and if this be so I do not see why we should refuse to see the same trait of personal experience in the abandonment of military honours.

We can now go back to our tract, and say that if its glowing sketch of military life is taken from real experience (and it is certainly very vivid, too vivid for mere rhetoric), then we have before us the possibility that we have caught Tatian as a military man in two different stages of evolution—first as a conscript, and next as a deserter.

We have made some reference in the foregoing pages to Mr. Conybeare's criticisms, as that the tract is not as old as the second century, that its description of military service is a 'purple patch' of rhetoric, which can easily be paralleled in monastic writing, and that the composition is from the hands of some early ascetic. Any criticisms from so close a student of early Church history and literature as Mr. Conybeare must have much weight with those who have worked in the same field as himself; and it would be rash to say that we have taken all the force out of his objections. At least we hope that we have stated them fairly, and in his own language.

Something similar comes to me from my friend Professor Vernon Bartlet, who thinks the tract belongs to the latter part of the third century, that it is monastic in origin, and that it belongs to the Mesopotamian area, say to Edessa as a centre. It is monastic, because of the tendency which the writer shows to 'specialize the notion of true discipleship down to a celibate and unworldly type (as distinct from "believers" in the common Catholic sense)'. Dr. Bartlet draws the parallel with those 'Sons of the Covenant,' of whom Aphraates speaks, to whom Professor Burkitt drew attention some years since,<sup>1</sup> and whom he supposed to be the real Eastern Church, as distinct from its unbaptized rank and file. There is still something perplexing about these Bnai Qyama: Dom. Connolly claimed them as monks, of a Western type, but without bringing forward satisfactory evidence that monachism had been imported from Egypt or Palestine into

<sup>1</sup> See also his recent paper before the British Academy on the *Early Syriac Lectionary System* (*Proc. B. Ac.*, xi. 1923): 'The Sons of the Covenant were different from the monks: they were ascetics, living a thome or in small groups, vowed to strict continence and a retired life.'

Mesopotamia in the days anterior to the writings of Aphraates. Dr. Bartlet inclines towards the position of Connolly, but with some reserve, and he sees in the ascetics of our tract the same monastic groupings as we find at the end of the third century in the Eastern Church. From this point of view the military service of our tract, described with so much vigour, is the conflict of the ascetic with his spiritual enemies ; the covenants and vows to which allusion has been made are the monastic obligations, poverty, chastity, etc. : the 'lists' of life are the catalogues of postulants, etc. There is a good deal to be said for this point of view, and the objections have some parallels with those of Mr. Conybeare. What is doubtful is the status given to monastic life in the third century : it seems clear that the background of monasticism outside the regular life of the Church must be asceticism inside the same. That is, Enkratism is the seed-bed of Monachism. But what is this but an admission that the *Bnai Qyama*, of whom we have found the traces, are the Enkratites themselves, with a Semitic name instead of a Greek appellation.

We could then concede some of Dr. Bartlet's points, and still maintain that our tract, being Enkratite, need not be depressed to the third century in order to find points of contact with Monachism. It might just as well be referred to the second century and so to the time of Tatian himself. There is, however, one point which Bartlet makes that has to be met. The ascetics of our tract speak of their imitation of Christ and the prophets, and one of the features in their imitation is their 'solitude.' That is, at first sight, monastic enough : but have we any reason to suppose that Enkratism of the first period had sent its adherents into the wilderness ? The answer to this difficulty appears to lie in the statement that the solitary mode of life was a part of the *Imitatio Christi*. Then, whatever it involved, it did not make the Enkratite into an Eremite.<sup>1</sup>

We can perhaps make the matter somewhat clearer, by looking a little closer into the conditions under which the *Sons of the Covenant*

<sup>1</sup> Burkitt points out the difference between the *Bnai Qyama* and the regular ascetics, and says of their survival into the time of Rabbula that 'living as they did amongst ordinary human beings, and *not like the Hermits in the desert, or the Cœnobites in a separate society*, it became the duty of bishops like Rabbula to devise rules for the regulation of their course of life.'

lived, and by ascertaining their principle characteristics. To what extent were they ascetics, is a question that has already been referred to, in the foregoing pages. Burkitt's view, that the *Bnai Qyama* were simply the baptized laity of the early Syriac-speaking Church, and that in the earlier stages of that Church's development, no layman was accepted for baptism, unless he was prepared to lead a life of strict continence, and freedom from worldly cares, has been challenged; but the force of the challenge is largely due, to an instinctive ecclesiastical reaction against a view so novel and so unexpected. And we may remember that, as Burkitt pointed out, the same restrictions, or nearly the same, with regard to the sexual relations of Christian people, prevailed amongst the Marcionites also, in the second century.

At the same time we may agree with him, that the rule of life which (Aphrahat) sketches out (for the Sons of the Covenant) is 'quiet, dignified, and temperate, with no special features of observance or asceticism.' Marriage was not altogether abandoned, or forbidden: or rather, it was abandoned in the letter, that it might be found in the spirit. There were *Daughters of the Covenant*, as well as *Sons of the Covenant*, and it seems clear that they did not always live apart, at least in the earliest days of the Syrian Church. It is this question, then, of the spiritual interpretation of marriage, that is the central point in the beliefs and practices of the *Bnai Qyama*. This is true, whether we concede the whole of Dr. Burkitt's case, or whether, with Dom Connolly, we reduce it to mere Monachism of the conventional type.

I think, however, that both Burkitt and Connolly have failed to find an origin for the name which these early believers gave to one another, when they were known as *Bnai Qyama*, or Sons of the Covenant. If they were the rank and file of the Church, the sum total of its baptized laymen, who found for them a title so comprehensive? The answer that we should expect, would be that they are so described in the New Testament itself, and that it is highly improbable that they had no prototype in the sacred writings.

Now there is a passage in the Gospel, which gives us, at once, the clue to the origin of the mysterious *Bnai Qyama*; a passage mysterious in itself, and difficult of explanation, and on that account, commonly left unexplained.

If we turn to Luke xx. 34-36, we have our Lord's reply to the question of the Sadducees, with regard to the woman with seven



husbands. He tells them that marriage is for the Sons of this world, but that those who are counted worthy to attain to the world to come, and to the resurrection of the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die any more, for they rank with angels, they are Sons of God and Sons of the Resurrection. Thus Jesus taught that there was a community of celibate persons, who were Sons of the Life to come. Now in Syriac, there is only a terminal to distinguish these *Sons of the Resurrection* or *Bnai Qyamtha* from the *Sons of the Covenant* or *Bnai Qyama*, over whom we have been perplexing ourselves. And when we see the similarity of names, coincident with similarity in the doctrine, and find that they were both anti-sexual, we come to the conclusion that they were the same people ; and that instead of reading *Bnai Qyamtha* in the first Syriac Gospel, we may read *Bnai Qyama*, and may define them, in Jesus' own terms, as abstinents from marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of God. They took their title from the Gospel itself.

It is even possible (a point which Syriac lexicographers must settle) that the sharp distinction between Qyama (Covenant) and Qyamtha (Resurrection) belongs to a later development of the literature, and that originally, the two words from the same root meant the same thing. If that cannot be maintained, then one of the pair is a primitive variation of the other. Those who bore the title would, had they been Greeks, have been called Encratites ; being Syrians, they took the title of *Sons of the Covenant* (or *Sons of the Resurrection*). The argument is not affected by the objection, that these early believers appear to have misunderstood Jesus, by applying to the present life what he had said with regard to the non-sexuality of the Life to come, or Resurrection Life. It is a common ascetic misreading of our Lord's teaching, but all monastics are in the habit of calling their spiritual isolation by the name of the Angelic Life, and we may admit the same characteristic to have been a mark of the Bnai Qyama.

This does not, as we have said, affect our identification of the *Sons of the Covenant* and the *Sons of the Resurrection*. What does result, is proof of the antiquity of the term Bnai Qyama, and the impossibility of its having arisen amongst monastic Orders. Aphrahat, in his sixth discourse, which was addressed definitely to the Sons of the Covenant and the Daughters of the Covenant, not only defines

them evangelically as practising the Angelic Life, but shows signs of an actual acquaintance with the most striking passage in the tract that lies before us. Suppose we translate a few sentences :

He who is trained in athletics, let him keep himself from this world ;  
 He who wishes to take the crown as a victor, let him run in the race ;  
 He who wishes to go down into the stadium to the conflict, let him go  
     into training against his adversary ;  
 He who wishes to go down into the war, let him take to him the armour  
     for the conflict, and let him polish it constantly ;  
 He who will take on the Angelic Life (lit. likeness) let him become a  
     stranger to men.

If we compare these sentences, with the description in our tract, of the warrior preparing himself in advance for the conflict, and polishing his armour assiduously, we can hardly avoid the conclusion, that Aphrahat was familiar with our text, and used it, naturally enough, when writing to the *Bnai Qyama*. So the document is earlier than the days of Aphrahat, and belonged to the standard literature of the Eastern Church, along with the Biblical texts which Aphrahat quotes so freely in the same connection.<sup>1</sup>

This is not the only case in which Aphrahat shows dependence upon our tract. In his fourteenth discourse, he tells us that Jesus is 'the good pearl, and we are the merchants who, to acquire it, have sold our possessions, and He is the treasure in the field which when we found, we rejoiced and purchased it.' We have only to compare the words of our author : 'He found one costly and precious pearl, went, sold all his possessions, and bought it at a price ; this again He has spoken with regard to perfect discipleship, for He is Himself the pearl, and we are the merchants who have found Him. . . . Like a man who has found a treasure in a field, for joy he went and sold all that he had. He is Himself the Treasure which the Father has appointed for us.' Aphrahat has practically transcribed the comments of our author on Our Lord's parables.

Something of the same kind may be noted in his tenth discourse, which is concerned with the Christian ministry. Aphrahat explains how the good shepherds of ancient days were called from their flocks

<sup>1</sup> A further discussion of the influence of Encratism on the Biblical text will be found in an interesting article by Dr. Plooij in the *Zeitschrift f. N. T. Wissenschaft*, Bd. 22, 1923, entitled *Eine enkratitische Glosse im Diatessaron*.

to the larger service of the people of God : ' Moses,' says he, ' was a shepherd, and so was David and Amos. All these were shepherds who shepherded the flock and guided them well.' With this we compare the closing sentences of our fragment : ' Moses became the leader and with uprightness did lead, and became shepherd and well did pasture,' etc.

When our writer warns those who take on the name of discipleship unworthily, he quotes two examples by way of deterrent, Gehazi and Judas Iscariot. Of these he says :

Gehazi, the disciple of Elisha, approached [discipleship] in name, but never really fulfilled it. For he surrendered the heavenly possessions, and coveted the earthly possessions ; so he was rejected, and clad in leprosy.

Compare this with Aphrahat i., col. 629 (*Discourse* xiv.).

And Gehazi, too, the disciple of Elisha, his covetousness clad him in leprosy.

The expression ' clad in leprosy ' comes from 2 Kings v. 27 in the Syriac version. The two passages quoted are evidently related. Our text goes on to say that :

Judas, one of the twelve Apostles of our Saviour, he too coveted the things of the world, and he was rejected, and his name erased from the tale of life.

Aphrahat continues :

Covetousness has slain many and deprived them of life. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, his covetousness was not satisfied with thieving, until he took the price of him that was the Precious One, and by his covetousness he was separated from the disciples, his companions.

The coincidence in the theme and in the treatment of it in these two cases, shows that Aphrahat is familiar with the text of our author.

He makes a similar conjunction between Gehazi and Judas in i. col. 292 :

Elisha cursed his disciple Gehazi : Our Saviour cursed (sic!) his disciple Judas.

and again in i. col. 690, 691.

By coveteousness of Naaman's money which Gehazi received he and his progeny were clad in leprosy for ever. . . By coveteousness of his theft, Judas became the traitor of the King Messiah.

Our tract tells us of the warrior ready for battle, that

he hears the sound of the trumpet that stimulates him, and is encouraged and strengthened to take stand against the enemy.

with which we may compare Aphrahat, i. 341 (*Discourse*, vii.)

O ye who are called to the conflict, hear the sound of the trumpet and be encouraged.

It will be agreed that the discovery of the close acquaintance of Aphrahat with our Armenian tract, makes a great change in the criticism of the same, from the standpoint of chronology. Aphrahat belongs to the early part of the fourth century ; he lived far away from the intellectual and controversial life of the Church : he did not even know of the existence of the Nicene Council, in his Persian retreat ; his library was so scant that it is not easy to identify from his writings any non-Biblical literature, and for the Gospels, he is supposed to have been limited to Tatian. Yet he appears to know the tract on Perfection almost by heart, if we may judge from the foregoing parallels. Is it likely that the matter which he is incorporating comes from the end of the third century, as has been suggested ? or that the author of the tract was, to the East Syrian Church, a person of intellectual or spiritual insignificance ? It seems to us, there can be only one answer. If the writer was not Tatian himself, he must have been almost a contemporary, and a person of precisely similar religious and ethical outlook.

But why should we multiply personalities ? It surely is not Bardaisan or Marcion that is being quoted.

We now proceed to enquire whether Ephraim, who is the next after Aphrahat in the history of the Syrian Church shows any acquaintance with our tract. For example, Ephraim has the very same collocation of the two faithless disciples : he tells us that ' two dark disciples these were, to two shining teachers, Gehazi to Elisha and Judas to Christ ' [Eph. (R.E.), Opp. iii. p. 622]. Again, in the *Commentary on the Diatessaron* (Mös. p. 91) he says : " Do not possess gold, lest Judas should be found among you, and that which deprived Achan of life, and clothed Gehazi with leprosy, and led astray the whole of the people in the desert." And here is something still more striking. He has a series of ' Hymns on the Pearl of the

Faith,' and in the third of these he refers to our Lord's parable of the goodly pearl and says :

Let us see by means of the worldly pearl, the heavenly pearl. It is in a case (purse) and also under seal, inside the treasury. Within the door there are other doors with their bolts and keys : Thy pearl, it is very high [Eph. (R.E.), Opp. iii. p. 155].

If we compare this with the curious account in our tract of the way that the pearl is preserved, we shall see so many parallelisms as to leave little doubt that Ephraim also was acquainted with the writer, a knowledge forming another testimony to the antiquity of the book.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps these proofs of the dependence of the earliest Syrian fathers upon our tract will be sufficient to convince my friends, Bartlet and Conybeare, that we are not dealing with a third-century product. Meanwhile my thanks to them both for their criticisms and an especial acknowledgment of the help which Mr. Conybeare has given me in the translation of the Armenian text.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The antiquity of the interpretation which our writer makes of the Finding and Guarding of the Pearl may be seen by a later development which is based upon it. In a Crawford Coptic fragment of the sixth century *Rylands Copt. MSS.* No. 72), Mary becomes the Pearl, and Joseph the Merchant, who renounces all worldly possessions to acquire her. And the same explanation with an even closer approximation of our text will be found in the new volume of Coptic texts from the Freër collection (p. 361), where it is said, "Blessed art thou, Joseph, innocent old man, for thou wast allotted this Treasury, sealed and of Pearls." Evidently this is derived from our tract, with its spiritual interpretation abandoned for an allegory of the Nativity.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Conybeare tells me that he is now satisfied that the tract belongs to the second century.