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LECTURE VII.

The Fathers objected to by Daillé on account of their obscurity. Value of incidental evidence. Clear testimony of Justin and of Tertullian on the Arian question, and on the Eucharist. Charge of *wilful* obscurity. Occasional reserve accounted for. Frank exposition of the Christian Ritual in the Apologies. Reserve of Clemens Alexandrinus. Plan of his writings; and motive of it. Difficulty of Tertullian. Method of studying him recommended. Testimony of the Fathers to principles distasteful to Daillé. Further objection to their style on account of the change which has taken place in the meaning of words. Corresponding changes in things to be tested by comparison with the Primitive Church. Result of that comparison.

IN the last three Lectures we have seen Daillé contending against the value of the Fathers on the ground of the corruption of their writings. He now opens another battery against them, and argues, that even supposing you have satisfied yourself as to which of these writings are genuine, a further difficulty awaits you in their obscurity. So obscure are they, from various causes, that it is next to impossible to extract from them any meaning which shall suffice to affect or settle modern controversies.¹ And before he proceeds to enumerate the causes of their obscurity, he furnishes us with another instance similar to those I have already produced, of the determined spirit of exaggeration which animates him whilst engaged in this anti-patristic warfare. For fetching a compass he actually sets out with impressing on the minds of his readers the necessity of an accurate knowledge of Greek and Latin in order to understand the Fathers, and gives needlessly, one might think, several examples in the Latin versions of some of those written in the former language, which we possess, both ancient and modern, of the mistakes which have been made from the want of that kind of learning. But this is not all, for he then goes on to enlarge upon the difficulty of mastering those languages. "Who does not know," says he, "what pains it takes to acquire an intimate acquaintance with those two tongues? not only what assiduity, but what powers

¹ Daillé, pp. 120, 121.

of mind are necessary to get possession of them? a tenacious memory, a clear head, unwearied study, ready apprehension, daily and diligent reading, and other qualifications of the same kind, which are but rarely met with?"¹ And all this to prove the obscurity of the Fathers! As if it did not tell equally against all authors whatever, who have written in Greek or Latin! But here, as elsewhere, Daillé likes to launch his subject, as he thinks, to advantage; and holds it politic not to proceed to his arguments till he has created a gentle prejudice against the quarter he is about to assail. The real effect, however, of his tactics surely ought to be, to put us on our guard against the man who adopts them, and who discloses at the very outset the animus, not of a truth-seeker, but of a partisan.

The first of the causes of this obscurity in the Fathers of which he complains is, that they wrote before the controversies with which we are concerned had any existence, and consequently that they could not have written with any reference to them; nay, that the controversies, in which they were themselves actively engaged, would rather have the effect of leading their minds away from ours.² Thus, that all that can be gathered from the Fathers who lived before the Arian question was agitated, on that subject, is incidental, and accordingly beset with darkness—a darkness similar to that which involves their testimony, when applied to the religious disputations of our times.³ But it is this very circumstance, the incidental nature of their evidence, that gives it the value it possesses. Suppose, for illustration's sake, a boundary cause was brought into court, and an ancient witness, who knew nothing whatever of the litigation, or the parties to it, deposed to facts within his own knowledge, which were found incidentally to bear on the case, would not such testimony, however incomplete it might be, weigh with the jury infinitely more than the most perfect tale that could be told by any man that was behind the scenes, who was mixed up with the parties and the proceedings, and had taken a side? Daillé's allusion to the Arian question seems unfortunate: for though expressions which might now be considered incautious with respect to the nature of the Son, are certainly to be met with in the Ante-Nicene Fathers, one or two of which he produces from Justin and Tertullian, yet it seems to me impossible for per-

¹ Daillé, p. 130.

² p. 133.

³ p. 134.

sons of plain understanding to read these Fathers, and not be satisfied that the whole stream of evidence which they present goes to establish the fact, that they had no doubt about the Godhead of the Son; and that though they might not use the very term *συναιδιος*, they did believe Him to be co-eternal with the Father; and though they did not use the very term *ὁμοούσιος*, they did believe Him to be consubstantial with the Father; and that when such incorrect expressions as those I have referred to happen to drop from them, they may be accounted for most satisfactorily, by the inartificial state of theological controversy at that time; the want of those technical terms in which the polemics of later days learned to express themselves, after Councils had tutored them, and successive heresies had rendered the use of an exact nomenclature in dealing with them necessary.

It is inconvenient to enter into many details in proof of this at present, but I state the fixed impression on my own mind; and take which of the Ante-Nicene Fathers you will, the result, I am persuaded, will be what I say. Daillé, for instance, happens to refer to Justin and Tertullian. What if Justin does press the Jew with the argument that “the God who appeared to Moses and the Patriarchs was the Son and not the Father, inasmuch as the Father did not change place, or ascend, or descend.”¹ Or, again, that “No one ever saw the Father and ineffable Lord of all things and of Christ himself; but only saw Him, who according to his will is God, his Son and Angel from ministering to his purposes,”² which are the passages Daillé adduces, and to which I could easily add a few others of the same character. They are the unguarded expressions, I repeat, of a man who wrote before the Arian controversy arose: for, with respect to the co-eternity of the Son, I find Justin speaking of his being “inseparable from God in power,”³ as though the connection was of a kind that was necessary, and must, therefore, have subsisted from everlasting: of his being his only Son *ιδίως*,⁴ *κυρίως*,⁵ peculiarly, properly: of his being co-existent with Him, and begotten of Him before all creatures⁶; of his being Wisdom, mentioned in the 8th

¹ Daillé, p. 134. He refers to Justin Martyr, Dial. § 60. § 127.

² Justin Martyr, Dial. § 127.

³ Ἀχώριστος δυνάμει.—Cohort. § 38.

⁴ Apolog. I. § 23.

⁵ II. § 6.

⁶ Πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ συνῶν καὶ γεννώμενος.—Apolog. II. § 6.

Chapter of Proverbs,¹ of whom it is said, I was set up from everlasting²: of his being the Person whom the Father addressed as another self, when He exclaimed "Let us make man:"³ of his being "the Lord" of the Old Testament, where the Hebrew term answering to it is "Jehovah," the self-existent; as where we read, "The Lord⁴ said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do"⁵; or where we read, "The Lord rained fire from the Lord:"⁶ of his being the Person who spake to Moses in the bush, and appropriated to himself the name "I am that I am,"⁷ the necessarily existent, and therefore the existent from all eternity to all eternity. And with respect to the consubstantiality of the Son, I perceive Justin representing him as having been in intimate union with the Father from everlasting till projected⁸ by Him for the economy of the universe: this process illustrated by the imperfect figure of a word emitted by us in conversation being a part of speech within us, and not detracting from the latter, so as to leave us speechless⁹; and the more complete analogy of one fire lighted from another fire, without detriment or diminution of that from which it proceeded¹⁰—this second illustration one which Justin advances more than once—his reasoning, be it remembered, not directed to prove the consubstantiality of the Son and the Father, but to meet the objection that the substance of the Father must needs be reduced by the severance of the Son, *i. e.* on the supposition that the Son is numerically different from the Father, which is Justin's sentiment; the consubstantiality of the two Persons, therefore, being all the while *presumed* to be indisputable.¹¹ Why, then, cavil about an inadvertent word in an unscholastic age, when you have the coeternity and consubstantiality clearly affirmed in plain and intelligible language, if not in formal terms, on which two propositions the whole Arian question turns?

Again, what if Tertullian talks of the Son being projected by the Father, and "the Father being the whole substance, the Son a derivation and portion of the whole,"¹² which is another of the objectionable passages which Daillé produces—a passage, however, which may be considered neutralised by an-

¹ Prov. viii. 23. ² Dial. § 129. ³ § 62.

⁴ Ὁς ἦν καὶ ἔστιν.—§ 126.

⁵ Gen. xviii. 17.

⁶ Gen. xix. 24; Dial. § 60.

⁷ Dial. § 60.

⁸ Προβληθὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς γέννημα.—§ 62.

⁹ Dial. § 61.

¹⁰ § 128.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. ix.

other in the same treatise, that "though the Son was projected, he was not separated from the Father;"¹ and what if others of the same unguarded kind may be found in him—which I do not deny—still try him by the general and prevailing character of his language on the subject of the Divinity of the Son; and it will be plain, that however inaccurate he might occasionally be in the use of terms, as men of after ages counted inaccuracy, he did himself hold beyond all doubt or dispute, the perfect Godhead of the Son. He calls the Son over and over again *God*²; yet says that nothing which had a beginning can be *God*³; says, therefore, that the Son must have been from everlasting; asserts, indeed, directly that God never was alone, having had the Logos in Him from the first⁴; that the Son was called God because He was of the same substance with God⁵; whilst he elsewhere affirms that what is consubstantial with another is co-equal with it⁶; that He is God of God⁷; that the Son is a new name of the Father⁸—the expression precarious, but most emphatic for my purpose; that He is the Person of God⁹; that the Son is not inferior to the Father.¹⁰ And many other passages I could produce sufficiently expounding the mind of Tertullian on this great question; but these, I think, may suffice to show that however the Arians might flatter themselves they had caught Tertullian tripping in a phrase (he, like his brethren, not accustomed to speak by the card), the whole spirit and character of his teaching is thoroughly against them.

I shall content myself at present with thus suggesting these very few facts to show that the testimony of the Fathers, whatever Daillé may say to the contrary, is available against

¹ *Prolatum dicimus Filium a Patre, sed non separatam.*—Tertullian, *Adv. Praxeam*, c. viii.

² *Hunc ex Deo prolatum didicimus, et prolatione generatum, et idcirco Filium Dei, et Deum dictum ex unitate substantiæ.*—*Apolog. c. xxi. Homo etsi Deus. De Resurrectione Carnis*, c. li. See also *De Patientiâ*, c. xiii. and *Adversus Marcionem*, II. c. xxvii.

³ *Ad Nationes*, II. § 3.

⁴ *Adv. Praxeam*, c. v.

⁵ *Deum dictum ex unitate substantiæ.*—*Apol. c. xxi.*

⁶ *Adv. Hermogenem*, c. xii. *Quis non hanc potius (sc. sophiam) omnium*

fontem et originem commendat, materiam vero materiaram, non sibi subditam, non statu diversam, non motu inquietam, non habitu informem, sed insitam et propriam et compositam et decoram, quali Deus potuit eguisse, sui magis quam alieni egens?—*Adv. Hermogenem*, c. xviii.

⁷ *De Deo Deus.*—*Apol. c. cxi.*

⁸ *Jam enim Filius novum Patris nomen est.*—*De Oratione*, c. iii.

⁹ *Persona autem Dei Christus Dominus.*—*Adv. Marcion. V. c. xi.*

¹⁰ *Non minori se tradidit omnia Filio Creator.*—*IV. c. xxv.*

the Arian, even of the Fathers who lived before the Arian question was stirred, but I shall reserve the fuller development of this subject till I come to treat of the general influence which the primitive Fathers ought to have on our exposition of Scripture. Meanwhile I have taken the two cases of Justin and Tertullian rather than others of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, simply because they are the cases Daillé himself chooses to select,¹ or else others would have answered my end equally well, and from others I could have brought equally strong testimony to prove—not that they understood the language of the schools on this question, for they none of them did, but that they held the orthodox faith, and in language of their own meant to avow it.

In like manner, then, with regard to subjects of more modern controversy—(the nature of the Eucharist is the one which Daillé here touches on)—we may use the testimony of the Fathers, though not delivered with all the exactness employed by more recent disputants—not the less valuable, however, for being inartificial, but the more so—the impressions of men who lived before human ingenuity had been applied to splitting hairs in theology, and who spake as they believed themselves to have been taught by Christ and his Apostles in the sincerity and simplicity of their hearts. The particulars of that testimony on the question of the Eucharist I shall also defer, foreseeing a better opportunity of entering at large into it hereafter. The character of it you will sufficiently remember from the little which I said of it in my last Lecture to make it no matter of surprise to you that Daillé having the bias of a foreign Protestant upon him, should depreciate the authority of the Fathers, and magnify the difficulty of getting at their sense.²

The next cause of the obscurity of the Fathers, which Daillé alleges, is not accidental but *wilful*; a studious intention on their part to conceal or only half discover their meaning.³ They did not think it expedient to disclose to ordinary hearers or readers the mysteries of the faith they professed, and especially the Sacraments of the Church. My business, I beg to remind you once more, is with the *primitive* Fathers; and whatever veil those of later ages may have been disposed to throw over these subjects, the *primitive* Fathers (Origen I

¹ Daillé, p. 134.² p. 135.³ p. 137.

have already handled in reference to this subject¹) are free from any such disposition, beyond what common sense and a due regard to time and circumstance dictated. They were certainly not inclined to cast their pearls before swine, that would turn again and rend them:—this very text is used by them in self-defence² on this very point. It was not likely, it was not reasonable, that they should feel themselves called upon to unfold all the arcana of the Gospel either to those (which was one very large class of heathen with whom they had to deal) who, like Theophilus' friend Autolytus, were so absorbed in their own books, and so wholly devoted to the study of profane authors, that they would not give themselves the least pains to investigate the pretensions of the Gospel, or trouble their heads about the matter,³ treating the Christians with the most frigid indifference; nor yet to those, which was a larger class still, who scoffed at them as the dregs of the people⁴—as made up of ignorant and credulous women⁵—as worshippers of the head of an ass, and of other symbols still more offensive⁶—subjecting them to the most heartless derision; nor yet to those who only sought such knowledge in order to take advantage of it, and to denounce them hereafter to an unfriendly magistrate.⁷ To such persons they might well be reserved, but where there was a fair opportunity afforded them for speaking out, they did not refrain from so doing. Witness the language of Justin Martyr to the Emperors in his Apologies: pleading before such a tribunal he seems to hope that his words may not be altogether wasted, and so far from being mysterious about the ways of the Christians, he is frank and communicative. Those Emperors may have heard the nature of their assemblies and their rites misconstrued and calumniated, he therefore tells them in much detail of all the proceedings of the Christians on those occasions; what books were read; what was the character of the sermons heard; what the nature of the prayers put up; even entering into some of the petitions; in what attitude they were offered; in what portion of the Service the minister was accompanied by the people, in what he officiated alone; what were their

¹ Lect. V.

² Clem. Alex. Stromat. I. § xii.

³ Theophilus ad Autolytum, III. § 4.

⁴ Minucius Felix, c. v.

⁵ c. viii.

⁶ c. ix.

⁷ Tertull. ad Uxor. II. c. v. *et seq.*
See also "Reply to the Travels of an Irish Gentleman, &c., by Philalethes Cantabrigiensis," pp. 95, 96.

we have to pick them up, as they happen to transpire, one in this treatise and another in that, as we should have to do at this day in the works of Christian writers, when not expressly engaged in handling such questions. In either case, if anything was lacking to complete the whole, it would be the effect of accidental omission, not of wilful concealment, unless when fear or prudence prompted it.

There is, however, one of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, to whom may be ascribed an intention of speaking on the mysteries of the Gospel under some reserve, with greater show of reason, than can be said of the rest, Clemens Alexandrinus, and accordingly Dailé does produce him in vindication of his remark, quoting a passage from the first book of the *Stromata*. "Some matters I omit purposely, making my selection deliberately, and fearing to write down what I am cautious even in speaking; not, indeed, jealous of communicating what I have to say; for that would be wrong; but apprehensive with respect to my readers, lest that by any means they should be misled and stumble, and lest I should be found, as the proverb hath it, to be putting a sword in the hand of a child;"¹ and after a while Clemens adds, "accordingly this very book will say many things enigmatically; some it will dwell upon; some it will simply announce; it will try to speak a clandestine language, at once displaying, while it conceals, and indicating, whilst it is silent."² There are many other passages in the *Stromata* to the same effect. But let us consider for a moment the object of the writings of Clemens, the plan he pursues in them, and we shall see that it is no wish to hide or mystify the truths of the Gospel, that governs him, but merely a desire to communicate them in a manner which should recommend them, or at any rate not render them abortive. It is an illustration, I think, of Quintilian's,³ that the minds of children are like narrow-necked bottles, and that if you would fill either the one or the other you must pour gently. Such was the view Clemens took of his duties as a teacher, having due regard to the parties who had to learn. His works, as Mr. Evans observes, may be considered of a missionary character, addressed in the first instance to heathens. The three, which have come down to us, rise each upon the

¹ Clem. Alex. *Stromat.* I. § i. p. 324. | ³ De *Institutione Oratoriâ*, I. c. ii.

² *Ibid.* And again see § xii. p. 348. |

other in a series of sequence: an arrangement of them which he himself indicates to us more than once. The *λόγος προτρεπτικός* or *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, is occupied directly with converting the heathen from his idols, and turning him to Christ. The *Pædagogus* instructs the young convert in the homely practical duties which his new faith enjoins on him; the lessons supposed to be given on the way, as the *Pædagogue* is conducting him to a school, where he is to have still higher knowledge (*γνώσις*) imparted to him. And it is the office of his last treatise, the *Stromata*, to render him this Gnostic.

But it is not merely the process of converting a heathen, which is a clue to the works of Clemens, but the process of converting and securing the conversion of a heathen of a high class; a heathen conversant with literature and philosophy; and, as was the character of the Greeks, of a fastidious temperament; a very delicate party to deal with, but the type of a most numerous body. His *Hortatory Address* is full of learning in various branches of it; his appeals to heathen authors in support of the positions he is advancing almost endless; a fact intimating the condition of those for whom he writes. So in his *Pædagogus*, when he applies the principles of the Gospel to the minute details of daily life, and teaches the effects they ought to produce on ordinary habits, it is clear that Clemens is contemplating the same superior rank of people. He prescribes, for instance, restraint on the employment of servants; reproves the excessive multiplication of them; "some to prepare provisions, some to deck the table, some to carve the meat; their services apportioned, some having the department of the palate, cooks, confectioners, makers of cakes, concoctors of honey, manufacturers of syrups; others engaged in cleaning the plate and setting the table in order; others cupbearers,"¹ and so on. Again he prescribes similar restrictions with regard to the fashion of furniture, and reprobates "costly bed-clothes, spangled quilts, embroidered counterpanes, purple hangings, couches with silver feet, bedsteads inlaid with ivory," and much more to the same effect.² The ornaments of the person, which he reviews, seals, rings, shoes, artificial hair, &c., still bespeak that the parties with whom Clemens has to do are of the refined, the wealthy, the luxurious orders;

¹ *Pædagogus*, III. c. iv. p. 268.

² II. c. ix. pp. 216, 217.

a refutation, by the way, of one of Gibbon's sneers. No wonder therefore that when he comes to put the finishing hand to his convert, and represents, as he does in the *Stromata*, his perfect Christian; his new man; his genuine Gnostic; the spiritual character which must be his; his sublime motives¹; his approximation to God²; his empire over his passions and appetites³; his internal devotion⁴; his superiority to persecution, and even to death⁵;—no wonder, I say, that when he contemplated what his heathen converts were, or very lately had been, nursed in the lap of excessive luxury, and enervated by the debasing and sensual influences to which they had been exposed from their tenderest years, and then considered what he was now exhorting them to become, what self-restraint, what strong mortification, what pure and unblemished lives it was now at length time to recommend to them, he should have thought it prudent to come to them very delicately, and should have almost started at the sound of his own steps, as he approached a subject so likely to irritate and alarm them. These feelings, I think, are enough to account for the temper in which the opening of the first book is framed; a temper certainly perplexing at first sight: the long apology it contains for composing books at all; the excessive fastidiousness, not to say timidity, with which Clemens there dwells on the circumspection with which he must express himself. But it was no priestly love of mystification that Clemens was here indulging, as Daillé would hint,⁶ but simply a fear to give offence to very squeamish persons, and so to ruin the great work he had on hand. And possibly if more of this spirit had been shown in our own efforts to Christianize heathendom, our success would have been greater. With this key to the writings of Clemens, I do not think that they would be found so unintelligible as Daillé would represent them to be.⁷

Nor is this consideration to be neglected in estimating the style of Clemens; for the *style* of these primitive writers is another cause of their obscurity according to Daillé.⁸ The learning of Clemens, it seems, destroys his perspicuity. He introduces into his Christian philosophy so many matters alien

¹ *Stromat.* IV. § xxii. pp. 625. 629.

² § xxiii. p. 632; VII. § xvi. pp. 800. 804.

³ VI. § ix. pp. 775. 777.

⁴ § xii. 790, 791.

⁵ IV. § iii. 568; § vii. 567; § ix. 507.

⁶ Daillé, p. 137.

⁷ p. 138.

⁸ p. 130.

from his subject, however ornamental and acceptable to mere scholars, that he constantly gets into the clouds. Perhaps on a perusal of the books of Clemens, without any reference to the plan on which they are composed, we might subscribe to the censure of Daillé. Yet Clemens himself, on more occasions than one, distinctly apologizes for his style, not as though he thought it artificial, but homely. "We have already said that we have taken no care, and bestowed no pains, about our Greek: for this only suffices to lead away the many from the truth: whereas genuine philosophy will not profit the hearers of it by its language, but by its sentiment. And in my opinion he who is solicitous about truth, must not compose his phraseology with art or study, but will simply endeavour to express, as he can, what he means, for the subject-matter itself escapes those who are occupied about the diction, and are only intent upon that."¹ It should seem, therefore, that in introducing his multifarious reading into his works Clemens was regulated by some other principle than that of style, and that his principle probably was the one I have already alluded to, a hope of recommending the Gospel to learned and captious men, through the literature, which was familiar to them; a hope in which Origen, his successor in the same school, participated, who writes to one of his pupils that he would have him apply to the Grecian philosophy as a prelude to revelation, and expresses an opinion, that as the sciences were considered to be tributary to philosophy, so should philosophy be considered tributary to Christianity,² and also appears to have given expression to this theory in the same manner as Clemens, by composing a work, which, like his, had for its title the *Stromata*; the fragments of which (for fragments are all that we have of it) would lead us to think, that as in name, so in substance, it resembled its precursor,³ and probably contributed to secure for its author the character which Eusebius tell us was assigned to him, "even by the Greeks themselves, of being a great philosopher."⁴ Hence Clemens' use of the word philosophy for Christianity, and philosopher for Christian.⁵

¹ *Stromat.* II. § i. p. 429. And compare *Stromat.* VII. § xviii. p. 902.

² Origen, *Epist. ad Gregorium*, Vol. I. p. 30, Bened. Ed.

³ In proof of this compare the fragment from the 6th book of the *Stro-*

mata of Origen, Vol. I. p. 39, on the subject of falsehood, with a very corresponding passage in Clemens, *Stromat.* VII. § ix. p. 863, and § xii. p. 881.

⁴ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* vi. c. 18.

⁵ *Clem. Alex. Stromat.* IV. § viii. p. 500.

Hence his assertion that whilst revelation came primarily from God for man's instruction, philosophy came secondarily, and even primarily to the Greeks, whom the Lord had not yet called, being to them what the law was to the Hebrews, the schoolmaster, which had led unto Christ.¹ Hence his phrase that Plato was the philosopher of the Hebrews²; that he was nothing else than Moses speaking Attic.³ Hence his theory that the Grecian philosophy had abstracted and detached for itself a shred from the theology of the everlasting Word.⁴ Hence his repeated endeavours to represent Abraham as a *natural* philosopher, a character which was eventually sublimed into a lover of God.⁵ Hence his inclination to approximate heathen, Jew and Christian; it was one and the self-same God, who was known by the Greeks *ἔθνικῶς*, by the Jews *Ἰουδαϊκῶς*, by the Christians *καινῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς*.⁶ Hence his declaration in favour of an eclectic philosophy, *i. e.* a philosophy made up of all portions of *truth* which are found in all sects.⁷ Hence his doctrine that all true philosophy that ever was in the world, traces up to Christ the primæval teacher, later philosophers referring their knowledge to Zeno, Aristotle, Epicurus, Socrates; they in their turn referring theirs to Pythagoras, Pherecydes, Thales; the masters of these again having been the Egyptians, Indians, Babylonians: the scale thus ascending to the original parents of mankind: they again not gathering their knowledge from the angels, for the two parties had no organs adapted to mutual communication, and God is above all; but imbibing all their ideas from the fountal source, the everlasting Son.⁸ Hence again his discovery of Christian allegories in heathen fables. "Sail past her song," says he, meaning the song of the Sirens, whose story he was now telling with Homer, quoting his verses, and adapting them to his purpose—"Sail past her song—it works death—only desire it and you have conquered death—and binding yourself to the mast (*τῷ ξύλῳ*, the mast in the case of Ulysses, the Cross in the case of Christians) you shall be delivered

¹ Clem. Alex. Stromat. I. § v. p. 331.

² Ὁ ἐξ Ἑβραίων φιλόσοφος.—I. § i. p. 321.

³ Τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀρ-
τικίζων;—I. § xxii. p. 411.

⁴ I. § xiii. p. 349.

⁵ Ἀντὶ φυσιολόγου σοφὸς καὶ φιλό-
θεος γενόμενος.—V. § i. p. 648; and VI.
§ x. p. 780.

⁶ VI. § v. p. 761.

⁷ I. § xiv. p. 351.

⁸ VI. § vii. p. 769.

from all corruption.”¹ Hence his searching for testimonies in the writings of the heathens even to the evangelical virtues of faith, hope, and charity²; and his tracing the terms *ἀναγέννησις* and *λόγος* to a heathen nomenclature.³ In short, whatever avenue seems to him likely, either directly or indirectly, to tempt an educated and refined heathen to Christ he avails himself of, avowedly and without scruple, and in a degree which often verges upon impropriety, if it does not pass the line.

This feature of the style of Clemens admits of being developed almost to any extent; but let what I have said suffice to show that when Clemens indulges it, he does so not capriciously, and out of ostentation merely, but upon a principle, a principle which pervades his whole work; and that attention to this principle being constantly maintained, his own hope will be realised, viz. “that the seeds of truth which he has scattered here and there, escaping the notice of jackdaws, who might pick them up and devour them, were they more conspicuous and obtrusive, may fall in with a good and intelligent husbandman, and by him be turned to account, and be productive of a harvest.”⁴ In other words, we may reasonably expect, that, provided with the clue I have said, we shall not find in the style of Clemens that obscurity which Daillé imputes to it.

The style of Tertullian he falls foul of in the same way—Tertullian and Clemens being the only two of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, whom he taxes by name and at any length with this defect. So many novel words does Tertullian use, so many legal ones, there is in him so much subtlety, so much acuteness, that he requires most sagacious readers to understand him; no learning, no attention being too great for such a task. I should not have thought it necessary to notice this part of Daillé’s treatise, as it brings no other charge against these Fathers than that they are sometimes hard to construe, did I not feel that he still exaggerates; and that his exaggerations have an object which we shall eventually detect. Moreover, I am not unwilling to prevent those who might give credit to all his remarks from being scared out of reading an author re-

¹ Cohort. ad Gentes, § xii. p. 91.

² Stromat. V. § ii. p. 652.

³ V. § ii. pp. 653, 654.

⁴ Stromat. I. § xii. p. 348.

presented by him as so difficult. Let them take courage. Difficult he, no doubt, is ; though some of his treatises far more so than others ; that difficulty often arising, as Daillé says, from his use of strange words ; more often from his use of common words in a strange sense, or in a strange grammatical construction. Nor is it his nomenclature only, it might be added, that is in fault. The indistinctness with which he frequently expresses himself is a further hindrance ; his phrase so indefinite, or so equivocal, that nothing but the general drift of his argument fixes it ; his use of abstract terms, his affectation, his refinement, his great love of the ironical and sarcastic, a weapon which he often wields in such a way that it cannot always be discovered at once whether he is in jest or in earnest ; in short, the utter want of simplicity that pervades him—all this, no doubt, renders him an author far from easy. But it is surprising how many or all of these difficulties disappear after you have made yourself familiar with his manner ; nothing illustrates him so much as himself ; and so true to himself is he, so peculiar, so idiosyncratic, that after you have read one or two of his tracts, and your feelings warm to him, as they infallibly will, for he is a most powerful and striking writer, you wonder at the obstacles you once found in him, and the progress you make in him now : his strange words or strange expressions being often repeated, repeated of course in different combinations with the context, enable you to get at their meaning before long ; and his ambiguous sentences, when brought into comparison with one another, acquire a more distinct and definite value. If you note down extraordinary terms or combinations as they occur, the chances are you will find something in the further course of your reading of the author which will explain them ; and thus you will be making a glossary for yourselves, or at least be enlarging and rendering more complete that at the end of Priorius' edition of Rigaltius, which, though very useful, is very far from perfect. You will perceive, too, in dealing with this writer more than with most others, that a passage which has been insuperable to-day will give out its meaning to you to-morrow ; your thoughts happening in the latter case to fall in with your subject better ; just as you catch a pattern on silk in one light, and lose it in every other. It is advisable, therefore, in reading Tertullian to note down your interpretation of every passage that at all

perplexes you at the moment ; for of this you may be sure, that if when your mind is heated with this author you do not hit off his meaning readily and without an effort, on laying him aside for a year and lighting on the same, you will not have a chance of understanding it, and will be sorry you did not secure your interpretation when you had it ; for, as craftsmen say, *your hand must be in* to make anything of a work like this.

On the whole, what I would have you conclude from these practical hints is this, that Tertullian is difficult, but not so difficult as he is reputed to be, or as he seems to be at first sight, or on a casual opening of a page of him ; that, in general, he is to be mastered by making him his own interpreter ; and that Daillé must not alarm you. He had an object beyond the obvious one, in dwelling upon the obscurity of the style of the Fathers, which presently peeps out ; and on that account I have spoken more at length on the case of Tertullian, which was, perhaps, the strongest he could produce. For he applies this argument of obscurity of style to weaken what seems to be so evidently the testimony of the Fathers to the great dignity of the Eucharist ; to the solemn claims of Episcopacy ; and in general to what are called high-church views on other controverted points.¹ They spoke, he would have you believe, on these topics in that characteristic style of theirs which he had been condemning ; a style capable of being greatly misapprehended ; hazy and rhetorical ; much allowance therefore to be made for it, and their seeming sense modified.² Possibly there may be some ground for this remark afforded by inflated expressions in the Post-Nicene Fathers ; and it is quite clear from the whole tenor of Daillé's book that his mind was under a strong Post-Nicene influence : his examples and almost all the defects he attributes to the Fathers speedily settling to that period. But these high-church doctrines (as it is now the fashion ignorantly to call them) which Daillé would thus qualify, are often advanced by the Ante-Nicene Fathers in terms so simple and incidental, that even where their style on the whole may be called figurative, they cannot be mistaken ; and besides the same are taught by those among them who have no rhetoric in them at all.

¹ Daillé, p. 143.

² *Ibid.*

Irenæus, for instance, is a mere controversialist, and does not deal in flowers of speech : yet we find these notions, of which I am speaking, put forward by him without misgiving. You perceive him, for example, expressing himself on the Eucharist, in the language, not precise in its meaning certainly, but still in the language of sacrifice¹ ; and testifying to portions of its ritual, such as Daillé would not approve of—an invocation or *ἐπίκλησις* on the elements,² and a mixed chalice³ : and on Episcopacy in terms which Daillé would object to no less ; representing Bishops as receiving the office of government from the Apostles⁴ ; as the Apostles' successors and vicars⁵ ; as proceeding from them in an unbroken line ; as being in number one and only one at a time in one Church, even in so great a Church as Rome⁶ ; as accompanied by Presbyters when they gave Paul his meeting at Miletus,⁷ though the text in the Acts says elders only, making no distinction between the two orders. You hear him teaching the necessity of cleaving to this Church, this Episcopal Church, for he knew no other⁸ ; of the sin of secession from it ; the cases of Nadab and Abihu, of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, parallel to theirs, who do secede⁹ ; and much more to the same effect. So that it is impossible, so long as words are allowed to have any meaning at all, to lower these Fathers to the sense to which Daillé would reduce them.

The last cause of obscurity under the head of style of which Daillé takes notice, and it is with great naïveté that he does so, is that the changes which have taken place in the institutions of the Church as well as of States since the days of the Fathers, have given the phraseology of the early centuries quite another meaning from that which it used to have. What, he exclaims, is become of the ancient discipline, of the canons, of the mystical ceremonies of Baptism and the Eucharist, of the rites of Ordination ? All these matters are defunct and passed away.¹⁰ A new age has called for new customs. But the writings of the ancients are replete with these subjects ; how difficult, therefore, to determine their meaning now. Then the very terms of former times circulate in quite another

¹ Irenæus, IV. c. xviii. § 1.² I. c. xiii. § 2.⁴ III. c. iii. § 1.³ Ibid.⁵ Ibid.⁶ Ibid.⁸ III. c. xxiv.¹⁰ Daillé, p. 149.⁷ III. c. xiv. § 2.⁹ IV. c. xxvi. § 2.

sense. We talk still of Pope, Patriarch, Mass, Oblation, Station, Procession, Indulgence, &c., but no longer attach to them the same ideas as they of old. Just as under the Roman Emperors, the titles of the magistrates remained the same as under the Republic, but their offices were altogether different. If we meet with the word Pope in an old writer, as a designation of the Bishop of Rome, our thoughts forthwith pass to the pomp and circumstance of the modern sovereign Pontiff, his running footmen, his body guard, and so on¹; but this is not the train of thought that old writers dreamed of awakening by the use of the term. Hence further obscurity! But to what does this argument amount? That because the Church has gradually swerved from the institutions and rules, which prevailed in it soon after the times of our blessed Lord and the Apostles, we are not to endeavour to bring them back to those purer times by a reference to the old standard and a correction of the aberrations, which it indicates; but rather throw the standard away as antiquated, as no longer intelligible or easily read. Surely if the term Pope, *e. g.* is used by the primitive Fathers, as it is, indiscriminately for the Bishop of Rome, or for other Bishops, and represents a personage very different in his pretensions from him who has borne the same name in later times, we should not charge the original term with obscurity on that account, but draw the wholesome inference, that the Bishop of Rome is no longer what he once was in the least corrupt period of the Church; and take courage that our Reformed Church has not swerved from primitive usage in establishing towards him the relations she has! That he had exalted himself too highly, and was in some sort to be abased! As, on the other hand, if the discipline, the canons, the Sacraments, the rite of Orders, as observed in the modern Church, have all sunk very greatly below the mark which they attained unto in the Primitive Church, we must not complain of the meaning attached to these uses and ordinances of old being very different from that attached to them now, and affect not to understand what the ancient writers say of them; but confess that the age has become less devotional; that there is less reverence for God's ordinances now than there was in the days of Tertullian and Cyprian. That,

¹ Daillé, p. 140.

in short, these holy things have been humbled too greatly and must be exalted. And instead of putting the Fathers aside, as Daille would recommend, not unnaturally, and telling people that they are so full of perplexities that it is not worth their while to examine them, we shall cherish them as affording a testimony plain enough to those who are not wilfully blind to it, which is equally unpropitious to the Papist and the Puritan, and which, on the whole, is calculated to satisfy us, that the Reformed Church of England is very much nearer to the Primitive than either of them.