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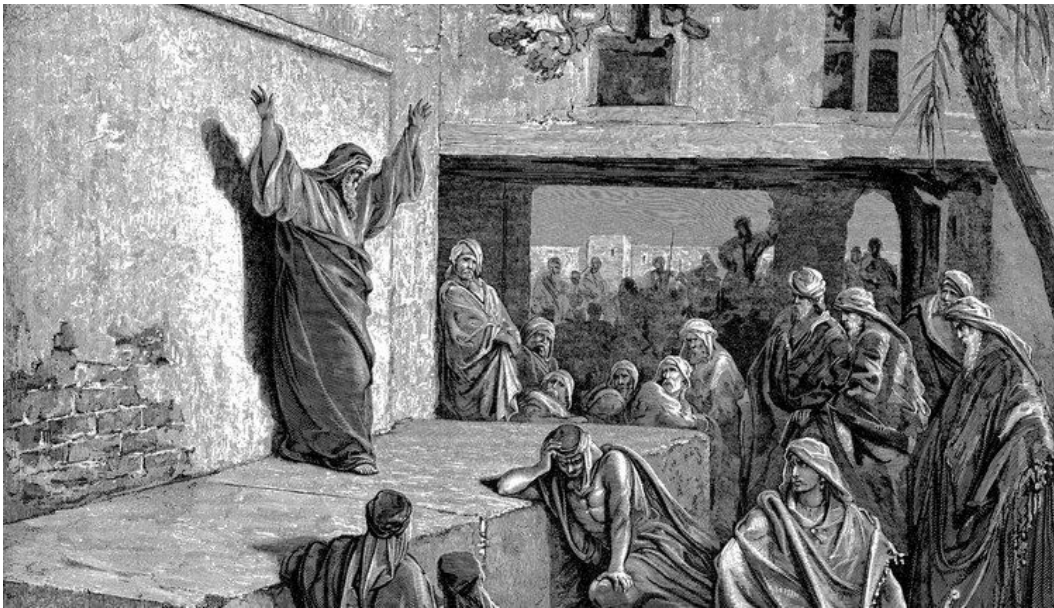
MONTANISM  
AND  
THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
A STUDY IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE SECOND  
CENTURY.

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BOOK I. *History of Montanus and his followers.*

BOOK II. *The Tenets of Montanism.*

BOOK III. *The Influence of Montanism upon the Church.*



BOOK I.  
THE HISTORY OF MONTANISM.

More than a century ago, Mosheim declared that the chronology of Montanism was a matter of such extreme obscurity that he could only claim a fair measure of probability for the view he adopted. The reason lies in the wide diversity, one might fairly say the absolutely contradictory character, of the evidence furnished by the earliest ecclesiastical historians. The chief of these, Eusebius and Epiphanius, furnish statements which hardly any ingenuity can reconcile; and the conclusions of modern writers have been consequently derived from the preference they have given to one or the other of the two historians. Eusebius (in his annals) gives us the year A. D. 172, with the mention that the first manifestations in Asia Minor took place in the proconsulate of Gratus, and (in another place) that thirteen years of peace followed the death of Maximilla. Unfortunately, as will be seen, these two last data afford little help. Epiphanius presents no less than three statements. In the first place, he gives the "93rd year after the Ascension of our Lord," having previously fixed this as the 18th year of Tiberius. This gives us A.D. 135; but in another place he mentions the 19th year of Antoninus Pius, thus postponing the beginning of the heresy until A.D. 157. His third statement is that, from the date of Maximilla's death to the date of his writing, a period of 290 years had elapsed. Now the given year (the 12th of Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian) must be not later than A.D. 390, which would carry the beginnings of Montanism into the first century. The *Chronicon Paschale* gives the year 182. In Tertullian's writings we have no help towards the discovery of the date of commencement, but two remarkable statements with regard to the subsequent history of Montanism are found, to which we shall refer later on. It is not necessary to enumerate all the various conjectures which modern writers have made or followed; the first one which attempted a reconciliation of the statements of Epiphanius, due to Petavius, may be briefly stated. He assumed that the historian "meant Antoninus the Philosopher," thus arriving at the year 179. But Pearson, in his *Minor Works*, has exposed the weakness of the assumption.

Looking upon the general character of the evidence, as furnished by Eusebius and Epiphanius, there can hardly be a doubt that the former has far higher claims to credence. But the absolute impossibility of supposing that a sect which only (according to his view) began to exist in Phrygia in 172, should in five years' time have reached the situation which elicited the letter of the Gallic Confessors (universally fixed at A.D. 177), makes it necessary to see whether his

witnesses really support his conclusion. Let us look at the statements of the Anonymous writer, and the quotations from Apollonius and Serapion, all of whom were most probably contemporaries, or at any rate of the next generation. The Anonymous wrote “more than thirteen years after the death of Maximilla.” But this prophetess appears to have survived her companions, from several passages in Epiphanius, therefore the beginning of the prophesyings is thrown back to an earlier date, to which we are helped by the additional statement, that “it was forty years” (at the time that Apollonius wrote) “from the first public appearance of Montanus.” And we know, moreover, that this writer was a contemporary of Commodus (cap. 18). Put these facts together. It may be fairly concluded :—

(1) That the Anonymous wrote at least 54 years, and perhaps more, after the origin of Montanism.

(2) That he wrote at the beginning of the reign of Commodus, if not under Marcus Aurelius.

Now Miltiades is quoted by Eusebius as mentioning that (contrary to a prediction of Maximilla) “thirteen years have elapsed, and perfect peace prevails.” Can this give us a clue? Baratier declares that it does. Taking this for granted, the solution is not far off. Miltiades wrote in the year 193, and the death of Maximilla is thus placed in 179, subsequent to the decease of Montanus and Priscilla. Apollonius had written during their lifetime, in other words, not later than A. D. 178. Now we know that 40 years had elapsed from the beginning of the manifestations, which brings us to the year 138 as the date of origin. But it is probable that Maximilla survived Montanus some years, and at least possible that Apollonius did not write immediately after his death. Therefore we are justified in taking 175 as a likely date for Priscilla’s decease, and 165 or 166 as that of Apollonius’ writing. This brings the origin of all back to the year 126, which may agree with Epiphanius’s account of the 93 years after the Ascension, although some calculate this differently. I confess that I cannot follow Baratier in his rather arbitrary emendations of the other statements in Epiphanius, nor do I think them necessary for the adoption of his conclusions. All that remains is to fix the interval between the first origin and the establishment of a distinct party, the natural confusion between which is probably the chief cause of obscurity. Baratier gives 10 years for this purpose, and concludes :—“So we may delay the establishment of the Heresy until the year 136, or the 19th of Hadrian’s reign. And thus we can reconcile Epiphanius’s accounts among themselves, and to our own.”

Without adopting every step of this ingenious reasoning, there can be no doubt that it obviates some (if not all) of the great difficulties which attend the usual Eusebian calculation. It also harmonizes with the statement of “Praedestinatus” that Soter, bishop of Rome, wrote against the Montanists. Now the period of Soter’s episcopate is usually reckoned at 167—175, or (as by Vater in his *Tabellen*,) at 161—171. In either case it is quite impossible to suppose that a

sect which only had its first beginnings in an obscure Phrygian village in the year 172, could in the following year (the latest possible for Soter), have been deemed formidable enough at Rome to elicit an episcopal manifesto. But by the adoption of a much earlier date, this difficulty vanishes. And, as we shall see later, a very important statement of Tertullian's on the attitude of the Roman See towards Montanism, is also satisfactorily explained.

Leaving to a later section our attempt to solve the remaining problems connected with the chronology of the Montanist party, we turn to the second difficulty which meets us at the threshold. This is the extreme diversity of names by which the Montanists are described, and the obvious risk of confounding together descriptions of what might be essentially different objects. The most common designation of the sect applied by ancient writers is that of Phrygians or Cataphrygians, derived from the province where Montanis began his teachings, while all modern writers have preferred to connect the sect with the name of its founder. But the same writers speak of other parties, (whom they variously describe as Quintillianists, Priscillianists, Pepuziani, Tascodrugitae, Artotyritae,) in terms which strengthen a suspicion that these were either names of subsections of the same sect, if not arbitrary nicknames for the party itself. The subdivision into two parties, the Proculists and the Aeschinists, as asserted by the author of the Appendix to Tertullian's *Praescr. adv. Haereticos*, will be best treated of in our later investigations, and the catalogue of titles may be concluded by the mention of the noble designation which, according to Tertullian, was sometimes applied as a reproach, but always received as an honour,—that of Spirituales.

## MONTANUS

All that can be declared with certainty about Montanus is *that he existed*, that he was originally an inhabitant of Ardaban in Mysia (near the Phrygian frontier), and that about the year A.D. 130 he began to teach a new revelation, and to lay claim to prophetic powers, if not (as his opponents declared) asserting himself to be the Paraclete himself. That he was born of heathen parents, and that he received the office of a presbyter, or even of a bishop, are rumours upon which it is now impossible to decide.

He attached to himself a large number of disciples, including several women of high social position, and the opinions he promulgated spread not only through Asia Minor, but obtained acceptance at Rome and at Carthage. He is asserted by some to have left writings, but the sentences quoted have far more the appearance of oral tradition. He has been even claimed as a joint-author of the Sibylline Oracles. His opponents declared that he was mad, that he led a disgraceful life, and that he finally committed suicide "after the manner of Judas." Long after his death, when the ecclesiastical opposition had finally developed

into active persecution, an Asiatic bishop is said to have exhumed the remains of Montanus, and to have burnt them. All that can be deemed historically certain, I repeat, is that this personage began a religious movement, the full bearing of which he may not have conceived himself, but in which his share is undeniable.

Of the immediate followers of Montanus in Asia Minor, by far the most notable are the two women, Maximilla and Priscilla, or as she is sometimes called, Prisca. There is hardly a single mention of the leader in which they do not appear, not only as his companions, but as sharers in his alleged spiritual gifts. They are described as having forsaken their husbands and families, and the usual charges of immorality and of final suicide are brought against them. Maximilla seems to have occupied a prominent place of authority among the Montanists, and her prophetic utterances are quoted as well by Tertullian as by the hostile historians in a way which proves that she was one of the recognized organs of spiritual instruction. If we are to accept the statements of Epiphanius, the Quintilla to whom we have already referred was originally a Montanist prophetess, but finally formed a separate sect of Quintillianists, which has been more than once confounded with the main body itself. But a reference to the first chapter of Tertullian's treatise on Baptism, directed against this very Quintilla, will show that this cannot have been the case. Of the other women whose visions were received as a Divine revelation, the only names that have come down to us are those of the martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, whose adherence to Montanism, (notwithstanding the well-meant efforts of Orsi and other Roman Catholic writers,) is now generally acknowledged. Among the men prominent in the party, Themiso, Theodotus, Alexander, Alcibiades, Aeschines, Proclus (or Proculus), Lucius, and (according to some modern writers,) Athenagoras. The first-named wrote a "general epistle" to advocate the principles of the New Prophecy. Theodotus, who is not to be confounded with any one of the three other heretics of the same name, is briefly mentioned by Eusebius. Of Alexander and Alcibiades we have no information other than a record of their names in the same work. Aeschines and Proclus are noted by the Pseudo-Tertullian as the respective leaders of the two branches into which Montanism broke up in the Third Century, and the latter is also said to have engaged in a controversy with the presbyter Caius at Rome. Bishop Pacian mentions Blastus as one of the sect, as well as Lucius Carinus. Athenagoras has been included by some on account of his peculiar views on Inspiration; but this and similar questions of internal evidence must be reserved for treatment in the following book.

The plan of this essay does not admit of an examination into the causes for the rapid spread of Montanism in Asia Minor. These will be investigated when we deal with the general historical "position" of the party, after having analysed its distinctive tenets. No satisfactory evidence is to be found either in Eusebius or Epiphanius, as to the incidents of this progress. The latter in one place, it is true, asserts that the city of Thyatira was infected with the heresy as early as A.D. 126, a statement which (as we have shown) it is impossible to reconcile with any

consistent theory. A more probable account is found in the anonymous writer so largely quoted by Eusebius. He relates that, owing to the alarming spread of the new opinions, many assemblies of the faithful were convened in order to decide on measures of repression, and that these synods invariably condemned the Montanists. The *Libellus Synodicus* alludes to one council held at Hierapolis by Apollinaris, (the bishop of the town,) and twenty-six other prelates, which fulminated anathemas against Montanus and Maximilla. Also that a “holy and special synod” was held by the Bishop Sotas and twelve others at Anchialus, on the Black Sea, which council also condemned the Montanists. But these statements have to contend with the difficulty of being reconciled with others supported by far higher authority. If Montanism had been thus summarily condemned, how can we account for the fact that Rome was willing to recognize its orthodoxy not many years later? Or how can we suppose that the confessors of Gaul would have pleaded so earnestly in the face of a solemn decision of the Asiatic Church? These synods are supposed to have been held before A.D. 150, that is, not long after Montanism began to attract the attention of the Church, although twenty years after the first formation at Pepuza. But this seems to be contradicted by a statement in the *Libellus*, to the effect that the Synod of Hierapolis condemned “Theodotus the tanner” at the same time. Now it is certain that this Theodotus was excommunicated by Victor, Bishop of Rome, near the end of the Second Century, and the only way out of the difficulty is in the supposition, (offered by Hefele,) that the compiler of the *Libellus* confounded one Theodotus with another. The further events connected with Asia Minor, such as the decision of the Laodicean Council, will be treated of under the head of the decline of Montanism.

### ***Montanist at Rome***

In the middle of the Second Century, Rome had already become the intellectual centre of Christendom. Perhaps no historical event had so much importance in shaping the earlier stages of Catholicism as the removal of the head-quarters from Jerusalem to the capital of the Empire. All who wished to influence the Church, or to contribute towards the solution of the pending controversies, hastened thither: Valentinus the Gnostic, Justin the Apologist, Hegesippus the Historian, Polycarp the representative of Asiatic orthodoxy, Praxeas the Monarchian, Proclus the Montanist. If the last-named is to be considered the first who proclaimed the New Prophecy at Rome, there can be little doubt that he found the ground prepared for him indirectly by the writings of a remarkable predecessor. The Visions of the “Shepherd” must have been the popular book, for more than a generation, among the secondary Hagiographa. As Ritschl observes : “The real object of these writings is the elevation of the moral code (Sittenstrenge),” and it is difficult to understand the reason why

Tertullian speaks of “that apocryphal shepherd of adulterers.” Now, we are enabled to infer that it was during the episcopacy of Anicetus that Montanism first appeared at Rome. The evidence is not strong, but it is just sufficient to lend consistency to the view, and very little more can be ever hoped for when one is dealing with the period in question. Our historical points of contact are :—

(a) The statement of Praedestinatus that Soter wrote against Montanism.

(b) The knowledge (derived from Eusebius) that Eleutherus was so unfavourable to the same party as to call forth the letter of the Gallic martyrs; confirmed by—

(c) Tertullian’s account of the coming of Praxeas to Rome, and his breaking off the amnesty by (doubtless among other objections) reminding “the Bishop” (? Victor) that his predecessors had censured the Montanists.

Let us consider (b) and (c) more closely. Eusebius relates that the Confessors of Lyons and Vienne (churches which it appears had been founded by Phrygian evangelization) “sent letters both to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, and also to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome, advocating peace among the churches.” This missive was carried by Irenaeus, then a presbyter; and knowing the high respect entertained for the authority of confessors, we have no difficulty in believing, especially with the following confirmation, that this embassy was successful in its endeavour.

One or two writers, however, have pointed out, and with reason, that this statement is by no means so clear as Schwegler and Ritschl believe, and some have even declined to regard the Gallic epistle as in any way favourable to Montanism. But, apart from the fact that Eusebius’s suppression of the letter itself speaks plainly as to the character of its contents—for he would surely have quoted any rebuke to the Montanists “in extenso”—the word *ἀδελφοίς* when applied to the same in the other letter (describing the torments of the martyrs), all these details fairly support the theory in question. That Irenaeus should have regarded Montanism at first with far more favourable eyes than later, will not surprise those who study the very slight allusions to the New Prophets in his book against Gnosticism, and we can only suppose that he supported the petition with his already not inconsiderable influence. The date of this mission is now universally fixed at A.D. 177.

Our next piece of evidence is derived from Tertullian, and is of such vast importance in the history of Montanism that it needs to be transcribed: “For after the Bishop of Rome had acknowledged the prophetic gifts of Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla, and in consequence of the acknowledgment, had bestowed his peace on the churches of Asia and Phrygia, he” (Praxeas, already mentioned as having brought his heresy from Asia to Rome), “by importunately urging false accusations against the prophets themselves and their churches, and insisting on the authority of the bishop’s predecessors in the see, compelled him to recall the

pacific letter which he had issued, as well as to desist from his purpose of acknowledging the [said] gifts. By this, Praxeas did a twofold service for the devil at Rome; he drove away prophecy, and he brought in heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and he crucified the Father. Praxeas tares had been moreover sown, and had produced their fruit here also, while many were asleep in their simplicity of doctrine. We indeed, on our part, subsequently withdrew from the carnally-minded on our acknowledgment and maintenance of the Paraclete.” Who was this Bishop of Rome? Although many singular guesses may be found in the different histories and monographs, the later and more critical writers are divided between two names only, Eleutherus and Victor. It must be premised that the imperfect chronology of the Roman bishops in the 2nd century defies any pretence at complete accuracy, and in the following statement of the argument on both sides,

I adopt the dates commonly accepted in general works of reference. It is clear that, in order to explain Tertullian’s “*praecessores*,” Anicetus and Soter are inadmissible. For Eleutherus the chief ground is the probability that the intercession of the Gallic confessors and of Irenaeus had the effect of making peace, and obtaining recognition for the Montanistic *charisma*. Only as there is not a scrap of confirmatory evidence, the supporters are bound to urge other reasons drawn from what is known of Victor’s character. “His hostile attitude towards Jewish Christianity,” says Schwegler, “and his overbearing conduct to the Asiatic Church, are well known. This might agree well with the final condemnation of Montanism, but not with a previous desire for reconciliation.” But this would depend, as the same writer admits, on the question whether the Montanists of Rome had retained the Asiatic rule for keeping Easter, or had adopted that of the Western Church. Praedestinatus says distinctly “*unum Pascha nobiscum*,” and Schwegler has no resource but to reject his evidence as untrustworthy. It is true that the evidence on this point is very conflicting, and that Socrates, Sozomen, and the Pseudo-Chrysostom assert that the Montanists held to the Asiatic rule. But there is another aspect of the question, to which very little attention seems to have been paid. By examining the records of the Monarchian heresy, always identified with Praxeas, we find no small grounds for supposing that Victor must have been this bishop. For instance, the author of the Appendix to Tertullian’s *Praescriptio* says : “But after all these things, one Praxeas introduced a heresy, which Victorinus was careful to corroborate.” Who was Victorinus? Many high authorities, such as Fabricius in his comments on Philaster, and, in our own times, Oehler, believe that this name is simply a mistake for that of Victor. But in neither case can we suppose that the intervention of Praxeas caused a complete breach and excommunication. We know, for instance, that the Montanist Proclus conducted a controversy with the presbyter Caius, the latter being placed by Eusebius in the period of Zephyrinus. And this bishop was probably the “*pontifex maximus*” and “*episcopus episcoporum*,” whose claims to absolve all crimes incurred the severity of



Tertullian's satire. In fact, the Montanists during the remainder of Victor's reign may be reasonably supposed to have remained in an ambiguous position, disowned and yet not formally and officially condemned : as with the Jansenists in France between the "Paix de l'Eglise" in 1668, and the renewal of persecution in 1702. The time was not yet ripe for declaring those men heretics who opposed the growing encroachments of ecclesiastical machinery, and the consequent "quenching of the Spirit." But this result, which will be further discussed in another chapter, was inevitable. At the beginning of the third century, the Montanists at Rome were completely isolated from the rest of the Church. A few generations later they became the mark for unanimous hatred and contempt.

### ***Montanism in Africa***

After Montanism had been rejected at Rome, it took fresh root, in Africa. This is not the place to speak of the many causes which combined to fit the nature and proclivities of the national temperament for the new opinions; we can judge of the effects upon the surest and completest evidence. To the great champion of the New Prophecy at Carthage the next section is devoted. His contemporaries, the martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, the account of whose sufferings constitutes one of the most interesting portions of Christian history, are now generally considered to have been undoubtedly attached to the same party; and I confess that I cannot understand the possibility of any other conclusion. They have visions, and they expect them; they convey a mild but unmistakable reproof to their bishop; they even seem to recognize that peculiarity of ritual which several witnesses ascribed to Montanism, viz. the offering of cheese. The date of their martyrdom has now, thanks to the labours of Uhlhorn, been fixed with tolerable certainty in the year A.D. 203, though he himself, with commendable caution, prefers to allow a possibility of a rather later date. On the episodes of the martyrdom itself, deeply pathetic as they are, the limits and object of this essay forbid me to enter; but there are several incidents in the preliminary narrative which cast light on the situation of the Carthaginian Church, and on the extent of the Montanistic progress. In the 11th chapter, the martyr Saturus relates a vision, in which he was carried, together with Perpetua, into heaven. There they found their bishop, Optatus, and the presbyter Aspasius, apparently in sadness. These at once fell at the feet of Perpetua and her companion, and besought them to restore peace. The future martyrs, though disclaiming this authority, yet began to console them; and angels, coming in, exhorted Optatus to "correct his flock." Now it is known that Optatus was Bishop of Carthage. Aspasius is called "doctor" as well as "presbyter," from being probably the teacher of catechumens. That the dissension was upon the subject of Montanism appears the only reasonable conclusion. The "*corrige plebem tuam*" must certainly have referred to the question of discipline, always foremost in the

relations of the Montanists to the church-rulers. And finally the simile employed by the angels, "*quasi de circo redeuntes et de factionibus certantes*," can only be explained as an oblique condemnation of the amusements which laxer Christians enjoyed or excused, but which the Montanists invariably denounced as mortally sinful.

## TERTULLIAN

Our knowledge of this great man's life is almost solely derived from a meagre sketch left by Jerome, and from allusions in his own works. We infer with certainty that his literary activity took place in the reigns of Severus and Caracalla, (A.D. 193—216,) but we can only conjecture that he was born about the middle of the Second Century, and survived until 220 or 230. Jerome tells us that he was a native of Carthage, and the son of a proconsular centurion, and it is impossible not to recognize in the writings which have come down to us the evident traces of legal as well as rhetorical education. Eusebius informs us that Tertullian was thoroughly acquainted with the Roman Law, and we may suppose that he practised as an advocate on reaching manhood. But the bent of his mind towards religious speculation seems to have found an early vent in a treatise on the state of marriage, and such a nature was not likely to watch without deep interest, nor without ultimate choice of side, the then widening gulf between the Montanists and the hierarchy at Rome. It seems probable that he was born a heathen, and in his early life may not have been free from the moral corruption of the time and place. But when the time of conversion came, it was deep and decisive. The fierce, stern African character made valiant soldiers, if not always discreet teachers, in the service of God. Its intellectual bent was far removed indeed from the dreamy, Oriental musings upon the origin of the world : but it welcomed the ardent hopes of Christ's speedy coming; it revelled in the austerities which at once diminished the terrors of persecution and opened visions of the future reward; it was prepared to acknowledge the religion of the New Prophets as the pure, unadulterated Gospel, and their utterances as the voice of the Spirit. Tertullian was always combating; first with the heathen, next against the "carnal-christians," lastly against heretics. The scanty fragments of report as to his life may be briefly reviewed here: that he became, after his conversion, a presbyter in the Christian Church, is asserted by Jerome expressly, and is contradicted nowhere. His decided acceptance of Montanism, and consequent separation from the Church about the year 203, decided the remaining course of his life. A visit to Rome (perhaps more than one), as to the period or duration of which even conjecture is wasted, alone marks what may have been externally a very uneventful life. His writings, however, with but a few exceptions, are ours; and from them it now remains to extract such preliminary knowledge as may enable us to quote them rightly.

Most of the names of the adversaries of the Montanists have been already mentioned in the course of the preceding narrative. In fact, concerning the “Anonymous” writer, Apollonius, Serapion, Apollinaris, Zoticus, and Sotas, nothing is known in addition to the brief facts stated. Praxeas also is only known by an outline of his heresy, and by the incidents recorded by Tertullian. Two remain, however, concerning whom something is to be said. Miltiades, who is called scornfully “the sophist of the Churches” by Tertullian, is known to have written a book against the Montanistic Prophecies. The presbyter Caius is known to us, through Eusebius, as (a) writing against the Montanist Proculus; (b) denying (probably in the same work,) the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; (c) describing the works of Cerinthus in a manner which led some to suppose that he included the Apocalypse among them. This last feature induced Storr and Eichhorn to class Caius with the strange and little-understood party,—the *Alogi*, which we shall describe later. In what way the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews became a subject of controversy between Catholic and Montanist, I confess, I am utterly unable to conjecture.

#### EXCURSUS UPON THE ALOGIAN HERESY

Mindful of Hug’s caustic, and perhaps not ill-deserved comment, I shall compress these remarks into the briefest compass.

NAMES. We have already seen how easily names of heresies were invented or varied. The Tascodrugitae, for instance, are also called Ascodrogitae, Ascodrutae, Ascodrupitae, Ascitae.

LOCALITY AND DURATION. According to Epiphanius, Asia Minor, especially Lydia. He mentions the city of Thyatira. This heresy cannot be dated before the end of the Second Century, nor is there any trace after the middle of the Third. Epiphanius declares that 112 years had elapsed since the sect had disappeared. Now it is known that he wrote his history of heresies in the twelfth year of Valentinian’s reign, *i. e.* about A.D. 375 or 376. This places the end of the *Alogi* about A.D. 263. But we cannot be certain.

OPINIONS. According to Epiphanius, the rejection of the Logos doctrine, and in general of St John’s writings, particularly the Apocalypse. No doubt Epiphanius’s *Alogi*, Irenaeus’s rejectors of prophecy, and the sect described by Dionysius of Alexandria are identical. The last-named, as we have seen before, ascribes the origin of the error to Cerinthus; although, strangely enough, the later heretics chose to accuse him of having forged writings which he certainly did not accept. The Apocalypse was rejected as possessing no internal claims to reception.

There seems every probability that Praxeas was a member of this party. As Schwegler has pointed out, “he came from Asia Minor, opposed the Logos doctrine, does not allude to the Holy Spirit, and opposes the Montanists bitterly”. Of Epiphanius’ statement that Theodotus the tanner was an *Alogian*, we can only say that it labours under much antecedent improbability, as we know that the so-called Thecodotians appealed to the Gospel of John in their attempt to prove the sole humanity of Christ’s nature.

### *Decisions of Councils*

In a former section we saw that certain synods were held in Asia Minor, about the years 150—160, which resulted in the local condemnation of the Montanists; such anathemas, however, not preventing the saintly Confessors of Lyons from openly advocating the aspersed cause. The next trace of a synod dealing with the question is found in the famous Epistle of Firmilian to Cyprian. In it he says : “Since some doubted as to the efficacy of the baptism of those who receive the new prophets, but nevertheless acknowledge the equality of Father and Son with us, we have diligently examined the question, and have determined that no baptism beyond the limits of the Church is to be received. In ascertaining the exact period to which this Synod belongs, we are aided by two points in his narrative. Firstly the phrases, “we assembled at Iconium,” “we examined the question,” etc. etc., show us that Firmilian himself took part as a bishop in the conferences. And, as Hefele has pointed out, the use of “*jam pridem*” supports the inference that the Synod took place in the first years of Firmilian’s prelacy, and consequently in the years A.D. 230—235. We find that, during the controversies on the same question which were raging in the years 255, 256, between Stephen of Rome and Cyprian, two or three Synods were held, and the Roman Bishop declared the Montanistic baptism to be valid. It is well known that the Council of Nicaea passed over the Montanists in silence, thus confirming, tacitly at least, this decision of Stephen; while the Paulianists (*i.e.* followers of Paul of Samosata) were ordered to be re-baptized upon admission. But the last link was broken in the Synod which met at Laodicea in the latter part of the Fourth Century, held at the time of a truce in the Arian campaign, which accounts for the predominant reference to questions of discipline. The 8th Canon enacts:— “That those who return from the heresy of the so-called Phrygians, even if they belonged to its clergy, and were the most distinguished, yet must be carefully catechized, and baptized by the bishops and presbyters of the Church.” Now in the former Canon (§ 7), it was expressly stated that the Novatianists and Quartodecimans needed no re-baptism. This final condemnation was once more endorsed by the Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople (A.D. 381), the 7th Canon of which includes this provision :— “The Montanists or Phrygians, and the Sabellians, we receive as we do Pagans, namely, the first day we make them

Christians, the second catechumens, the third day we exorcise them by breathing thrice into their face and ears, and make them continue a good while in the Church and hear the Scriptures, and afterwards we baptize them." Such was the epitaph on the tomb of the New Prophets!

Augustin is the only writer who furnishes us with any tidings concerning the later fortunes of the African Montanists. It is true that elements of Montanistic ethical severity transfused themselves into other sects, and that the blunders of ecclesiastical annalists confuse together frequently manifestations of a very dissimilar character, such as Donatism. Augustin's account conveys to us the impression that a separate sect of Tertullianists had been formed; but this notion is so utterly contrary to what we know of the Catholic spirit pervading that teacher's writings, that we must conclude that a later generation adopted the title. Still there is one witness, Praedestinatus, who would place this schism in Tertullian's own life-time, and the same writer in another place mentions that Tertullian, in later life, attempted a reconciliation between his own opinions and those of the Church. The natural process of decomposition would take its course as soon as the last links of Catholicity were broken. It is possible that, in the middle of the Third Century, two main divisions already existed :—viz.(a) the orthodox Montanists, otherwise Proculists, or (in Africa) Tertullianists, who added nothing to the received faith but a belief in the prophetic gifts, and in the value of ascetic observances; (b) the Aeschinists, who had gradually adopted Sabellian views, just as, in our own times, many Presbyterian congregations in England gradually lapsed into Unitarianism. Montanism was practically dead when its prophets ceased to find successors, though relics of the party are found alluded to in ecclesiastical history as far as the Sixth Century, and in the edicts of Honorius, Theodosius, and Justinian. Having now reviewed the historical facts of Montanism, we turn to an examination of its doctrines.

BOOK II.  
THE TENETS OF MONTANISM.

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

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

"Si Pergama dextra

Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent!"

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

By comparing the bills of indictment in Eusebius, Epiphanius, Philaster, &c. we can limit the former topics as follows:

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

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

On I. Chiefly the treatise *Adversus Praxeam*, but references in the *Praescriptio Haereticorum*.

II. Almost every treatise, especially *De Fuga in Persecutione*, *De Pudicitia*, *De Monogamia*, *Adv. Praxeam*, *De Virg. velandis*, *De Res. Carnis*, *De Jejuniis*, *Adv. Marcionem*, *De Anima*, *De Idololatria*, *De Spectaculis*, *De Cor. Militis*.

III. Chiefly *De Monogamia*, *De Pudicitia*, *De Virg. velandis*, *De Exh. Castitatis*.

IV. Only the *treatise De Baptismo* (which all authorities, as we shall find, consider pre-Montanistic).

V. *De Monogamia*, *De Jejuniis*, *De Virg. velandis*, *De Exh. Castitatis*, *De Pudicitia*, *Ad Uxorem*, *De Fuga in Persecutione*, *De Cultu Feminarum*.

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

We proceed, then, in the first place, to ascertain the general form and character of the opinions in question, upon the plan proposed. Subsequently we shall take each of the sections in turn, attempting to work out more fully not only

the substance of each particular tenet, but its connection with the whole system; concluding with the endeavor to fix the historical position of Montanism in relation not only to the Catholic Church, but to the contemporary phenomena of Gnosticism, and the possible derivation in part from forms of Phrygian worship.

Montanus and his followers claimed to have received a revelation of God, of a nature supplementary to that communicated by Christ and His apostles. Its foundation is to be found in a literal and exclusive acceptance of the promise of the Paraclete, “who will guide you into all truth,” and “show you things to come”. The belief in the superiority of this new revelation is put very clearly by Tertullian. “If Christ abrogated what Moses commanded, because from the beginning it was not so...why should not the Paraclete alter what Paul permitted?” The same order of development is defined in another of Tertullian’s treatises, as (1) the prophetic voice of the Old Testament; (2) the “disciplina Domini;” and (3) the Holy Spirit by (the mouth of) the holy prophetess Prisca. This is also the view reprobated by the opponents of Montanism, who strove to aggravate what they declared heresy by asserting that the prophets claimed to be not merely the mouth-piece, but the very incarnation of the Paraclete. This point will be specially discussed afterwards; at present it will be sufficient to quote three witnesses in support of the former position.

PHILASTER.

“They hold that the full gift (plenitudinem) of the Holy Spirit was not granted by Christ to His Apostles, but to their false prophets, and thus separate themselves from the Catholic Church.”

AUGUSTIN.

“They declare that the promised advent of the Holy Spirit took place in themselves, rather than in the case of the Apostles.”

HIPPOLYTUS.

“They are beguiled by two females whom they consider prophetesses. They pretend that these see certain things by means of the Paraclete in them. They implicitly believe what these utter, and give out that they learnt more from their revelations than from the law, the prophets, and the gospels.”

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

He understands the mysterious *οἰκονομία* of the Trinity, as better instructed by the Paraclete. He declares himself the pupil of no man, but only of the same divine instructor. He accepts the visible coming of the New Jerusalem on the



same authority. The Paraclete counsels martyrdom; finally, the Paraclete teaches those things which the apostles even were not able to understand. And yet there is no revolution organized against the institutions which, in their first form, undoubtedly furnished the fittest media for the agency of the Holy Spirit. The prophetic office, commended so highly by St Paul, and witnessed to by Justin and Irenaeus, this was no innovation. Nor does Tertullian shrink from a criterion of true or false prophetic claim, which he states thus. He had imagined an opponent to moot the very pertinent objection : “It follows that, by this line of argument, anything you please which is novel and burthensome may be ascribed to the Paraclete, even if it have come from the adversary spirit.” “No (replies the Montanist), for the adversary spirit would be apparent from the diversity of his preaching, beginning by adulterating the rule of faith, and so (going on to) adulterating the order of discipline.” Accordingly it is to the practical effects in life of the new teachings that he appeals, just as he and his fellow apologists had appealed to the heathen world in the same way. Thus the spirits might be proved, whether they were of God or not. Nor even does Tertullian admit, as valid against himself, the stern legal rule of Prescription, which he had wielded with such inexorable rigour against heretics. Or rather, he claims its benefit once more! “Paracletus solus antecessor, quia solus post Christum!” Accordingly the last stage is merely a revival of what was truly first, and unites the strength of youth with the dignity of age. Tertullian states the problem of revelation by stages by aid of a splendid image, which will best complete this sketch: “Nothing is without stages of growth; all things await their season...Look how creation itself advances little by little to fructification! First comes the grain, and from the grain arises the shoot, and from the shoot struggles out the shrub; thereafter boughs and leaves gather strength, and the whole that we call a tree expands; then follows the swelling of the bud, and from the bud bursts the flower, and from the flower the fruit opens; that fruit itself, rude for a while, and unshapely, little by little, keeping the straight course of its development, is trained to the mellowness of its flavour. So too righteousness (for the God of righteousness and of creation is the same) was first in a rudimentary state, having a natural fear of God; from that stage it advanced, through the Law and the Prophets, to infancy; from that stage it passed, through the Gospel, to the fervour of youth; now, through the Paraclete, it is settling into maturity. He will be, after Christ, the only one to be called and revered as Master; for He speaks not from Himself, but what is commanded by Christ....They who have received him set truth before custom.” Such was the faith, such the claims, of the New Prophets. The next point in the investigation is the “Form” of these alleged revelations. In pursuance of our plan, let us first cite the following witnesses:—

ANONYMUS.

“So then he [Montanus] was carried away in spirit, and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking, and uttering strange things, and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the Church. .... He excited two others, females, and filled them with the spirit of delusion, so that they also spoke like the former, in a kind of ecstasy, out of all season, and in a manner strange and novel.”

EPIPHANIUS.

“Behold, [—this is the Paraclete speaking through Montanus,] man is as a lyre, and I hover round him as the plectrum; the man sleeps and I watch; behold, it is the Lord who transports the hearts of men, and gives hearts to men.”

MILTIADES.

“But the false prophet is carried away by a vehement ecstasy, accompanied by want of all shame and fear. Beginning, indeed, with a designed ignorance, and terminating, as before said, in involuntary madness. They will never be able to show that any of the Old or New Testament were thus agitated and carried away.”

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

Tertullian expressly admits here the complete passivity of the prophetess: the only element other than the operation of the Spirit being the subject of the prayer or discourse. We can compare other of his statements on the same subject: “The soul receives motion from some other thing when it is swayed (from the

outside, of course, by something else) by prophetic influence or by madness.” Even Adam is supposed to have experienced the same influence and ecstasy, as well as all the prophets; in fact, nothing is more clear than Tertullian’s confidence not only in the genuineness of the condition, but also of its agreement with God’s will and dispensation. It must be added that Tertullian places the Divine origin of all visions and dreams upon an equally lofty foundation:— “But from God, who has promised to pour out the grace of His Holy Spirit upon all flesh, and has ordained that His servants and His handmaids should see visions as well as utter prophecies, must all these visions be regarded as emanating, which may be compared to the actual grace of God, as being honest, holy, prophetic, inspired, instructive, inviting to virtue, the bountiful nature of which causes them to overflow even to the profane, &c.” There was no monopoly claimed for Priscilla or Maximilla. Tertullian mentions in no place having received any such Divine intimations himself, but he frequently records the experiences of others. He relates how “a brother was chastised in a vision, because on the announcement of public rejoicings his servants had decorated his gates.” This is mentioned as “a witness on the authority of God.” The Acts of Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas relate many other instances of the same nature, and they must have been considered of common occurrence.

#### Primitive theory of inspiration

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

I. Did, or did not, the Primitive Church, up to the time of Montanus, admit the gift of prophecy and vision to all its members ?

II. Was the character of this prophetic inspiration recognized as passive, or were the individual faculties active?

The former of these questions hardly needs discussion. It is indisputable that Clement, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus, unanimously affirm their belief in, or even their experience of, the continued distribution of these *charismata*. In fact the earlier opponents of Montanism were too prudent to take issue on the point at all, or else denounced, not the claim of prophetic gift, but its discontinuance. The writer quoted by Eusebius demands :—“If, after Quadratus and Ammia in Philadelphia, the women that followed Montanus succeeded in the gift of prophecy, let them show us what women among them succeeded Montanus and his women. For the apostle shows that the gift of prophecy should be in all the church until the coming of the Lord, but they can by no means show any one at this time, the 14th year from the death of Maximilla.” In a later section we may notice the remarkable change of opinion in the Church on this point; we now turn to the other. What was the theory of Inspiration recognized by writers of the Second Century? Did they reject as

impious the claims of “ecstatic vision,” of complete passivity under spiritual influence?

Athenagoras presented his Apology to the emperors Aurelius and Commodus about A.D. 176, when the manifestations of Montanism were fully known. He describes the inspiration of the Prophets in an often-quoted passage:—“...Moses, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, and the other prophets who, lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute-player breathes into a flute.”

Justin Martyr expresses the same view with equal clearness. He did not consider that inspiration was a mere increase in the productivity of human intelligence, nor did he allow to human faculties any share other than simple reproduction of the truth received. He asserted that the prophets never delivered their own thoughts, but only what they had received by Divine revelation. Like Athenagoras, he compared their state during the period of inspiration by the image of the lyre struck by the plectrum; he denied in fact that they retained any natural consciousness during inspiration: in other words, it was a state of ecstasy. It is clear, then, that Justin and Athenagoras held no other doctrine of inspiration than that which the Montanists asserted, and for asserting have been condemned as heretics by the Church since the Fourth Century.. The defenders of the “Quod semper, quod ubique,” are reduced to lamentable straits in the matter; but, what is more surprising, not a few Protestant theologians have failed or refused to see this change of front. The writer of a modern text-book thus deals with the difficulty. It is true that Athenagoras considers the Prophets of the Old Testament to have uttered their predictions while in a state of ecstasy, thus adopting the sentiments of Philo; but that he held, on any point, the extravagant opinions of Montanus, cannot, I apprehend, be alleged with any justice.” Now assertions of this sort may be safely left to battle with inexorable facts which we have already adduced, and really deserve no refutation. We have seen that the work of Miltiades, itself a mere private treatise, and carrying with it no character of authority, was the very first declaration against the previous universal and orthodox sentiment. Later, in the Third Century (although even here the *catenas* are dubious) and in the Fourth, it is quite true that a vast change had taken place. The once orthodox doctrine of Justin and Athenagoras and Montanus was now branded as a heresy; and that which had been undoubtedly the private *ἀρρεσις* of Miltiades was now the doctrine of the Catholic Church. From this time it is easy to collect a most unanimous list. Epiphanius is perhaps the first to lay down, as a canon and criterion of true prophecy, that it must be conscious and intelligent. This was adopted universally, and no doubt is, theologically, more correct than the opinion which it opposed. But we are concerned here only with the truth of history ; and it would involve the grossest departure from that truth were we to slur over, or attempt to explain away, the remarkable facts which have been the subject of this chapter.

### *Montanism and the Trinity*

Epiphanius commences his account of the Montanists with the following admission:—"They receive the whole of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, and believe the resurrection of the dead: also concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they agree with the holy Catholic Church." Firmilian, at an earlier date, had certified that, "although they receive new prophets, yet they appear to accept the same Father and Son with us." Hippolytus had declared that "they acknowledge God to be the Father and Creator of all things, as the Church does, and what the Gospel testifies respecting Christ." He adds, it is true, somewhat later:—"Some of them belong to the sect of the Noetians, saying that the Father himself is the Son, and that the former has been subjected to suffering and death." This contradictory statement naturally deprives the evidence of Hippolytus of the weight to which its date, and the probable impartiality of the writer, would entitle it. Philaster testifies that the Montanists acknowledge the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the resurrection, as also the Catholic Church.

In Theodoret as well as the author of the Appendix to Tertullian's Prescription, we have a distinct intimation that some of the Montanists had adopted Sabellian views; finally Praedestinatus appears to leave the question open, admitting that charges of dogmatic heresy were alleged, but mentioning the indignant denial by Tertullian. The difficulty of reconciling these different statements is greatly enhanced by the confusion so frequently made between the opinions on prophetic inspiration, and those concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. Some of the later fathers, it is true, accused the Montanists of identifying their founder with the very person of the Paraclete, if not of God the Father; but this tremendous accusation can hardly be compatible with Epiphanius's unqualified statement.

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

according to the Scriptures, and, after He had been raised again by the Father and taken back into Heaven, to be sitting at the right hand of the Father, (and) that He will come to judge the quick and the dead; who sent also from Heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.” Later in the same chapter, there is an amplification of considerable importance with regard to the relation ascribed by Tertullian to the Divine Persons.

After describing the heresy of Praxeas, “which supposes itself to possess the pure truth, in thinking that one cannot believe in one only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame person,” he declares, “that all are of one, by unity of substance; while the mystery of the *οἰκονομία* is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three (Persons)—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three however not in condition (*statu*), but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect (*specie*); yet of one substance and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is One God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” It is impossible here to enter upon the question of how far this “hypostatic” doctrine agrees with the developments of later times, whatever date be assumed for the Athanasian Creed. What I shall attempt to prove will be simply :—

I. That, in the beginning of the third century, no official or (in any sense) universal choice had been made between Monarchianism and the doctrine supported by Tertullian.

II. That, although the influence of Montanism in the development of the Trinitarian doctrine was slight, it was in favour of that side which is now acknowledged to have been orthodox and scriptural.

Tertullian admits freely that the arguments he was bringing forward were by no means universally received. “The simple (whom I will not call unwise and unlearned) are startled at the *οἰκονομία* on the ground that their very creed withdraws them from the world’s plurality of gods to the one only true God, &c.” This was a very natural difficulty. The attempt at a strict separation of Persons in the Divine Trias led to a system of subordination (as we have seen in our review of Justin), according to which the Son was placed under the Father, and the Holy Spirit beneath the Father and the Son, and this, to the popular mind, carried with it an appearance of Tritheism. To guard against the objection, some inclined to soften the language employed; while others, like Origen in a later period, exaggerated the ideas of separation and subordination, so as to lay the foundation for the Arian controversies of a later day. Now Tertullian’s doctrine was a necessary corollary to the Montanistic theory of the three stages, already described, and its effect was to neutralize any tendency to subordinate the Third

Person either in respect of condition (status) or work. The Paraclete was now instructing the *τέλειοι*, as it had not been permitted even to the Apostles after Pentecost to instruct, and this single aspect, constantly pressed upon their hearers by the new prophets, would alone contribute greatly to strengthen the cause of Trinitarianism against Monarchian attacks. It is, as we have before attempted to show, an impossible task to prove that the “Church” had declared itself on one side or another. In the third century it is now well known that, under Kallistus, Monarchianism became predominant for a time, even if that bishop did not favour the grossest excesses of Patripassianism. There was still free play for investigation and conjecture as to the mode of *οἰκονομία*; all that was fixed was the simple assertion of the Three in One, which not even Praxeas attempted to deny. We must now touch, as it were parenthetically, upon a historical point for which, intimately connected as it is with matters of doctrine, no fitting place could be found in the former book. It has been asserted by a recent and very able writer that the Asiatic Montanists were themselves Monarchians, since they are described as attributing their inspiration now to God the Father, at another time to Christ, and elsewhere to the Spirit. It is impossible to deny that, by accepting literally the assertions of Epiphanius, and those of the Pseudo-Tertullian and others concerning a later body of Aeschinists who adopted Noetian or Sabellian opinions, a very symmetrical account can be constructed. But it has one flaw : the person and writings of Tertullian must be practically ignored. Can we suppose that he would have passed over such a fact with a mere gentle reproof (“*imprudentes et idiotae &c.*”), and could he have entered upon the campaign against Praxeas with such confidence? Even the conduct of Praxeas would be inexplicable then. Coming (as we know) from Asia, knowing that—according to this hypothesis, the Montanists there sympathised with him in his views—what motive could he have had to act in hostility to their interests at Rome? History proves that few religious parties can long avoid division: but if Montanism could subsist under conditions such as these, we must seek in vain for a parallel case in all the annals of Christianity.

How, then, do we account for the statements that the Montanists, in later times, held erroneous opinions on the subject of the Trinity? In the first place let us regard this evidence a little more closely. The earliest writers are Hippolytus and Eusebius’s Anonymus. The former of these, as we have seen, declares generally that the Montanists were orthodox (in his sense, most certainly anti-Monarchian), but he qualifies this statement by the remark that some belonged to the sect of the Noetians. The Anonymus is silent on the subject; nor does Eusebius quote any corroborative statement from either Miltiades or Serapion or Apollonius. Epiphanius, we have seen, knows nothing of such heresies, and would be the last man to have concealed or palliated them: in fact we must pass to Theodoret in order to find the next witness. It is most significant, and to me conclusive, that neither Philaster nor Augustin accuses the Montanists of formal heresy on this subject. Theodoret, it is true, confirms the statement of

Hippolytus, and his account was usually copied by later writers. All that seems proved, therefore, is the existence of a popular suspicion against the Montanists as a body, justified possibly by the fact that a small minority did fall away from the original faith. This suspicion gained strength only when Montanism was virtually extinct: for instance, in the fourth century, Socrates declares that some refused the *Omousion* as “partaking somewhat of Montanism and Sabellianism,” which is alone a proof of the second of my two propositions, viz. that the influence of Montanism worked in the direction which (on this point alone) the Church subsequently adopted.

Returning finally to Tertullian for the only statement of Montanistic belief free from obscurity, we may derive the following articles from his writings:—

I. The Son (*Sermo*) and the Spirit (*Sophia*) were substantially existent before the worlds, in the Godhead;

II. But there was no personal and titular separation until the universe was planned, and subsequently when that plan was effected.

III. The occasional ambiguity in his language concerning the Holy Spirit may be ascribed to the variety of senses in which the word “spiritus” is used, often for the Divine Nature in Christ. That he considered It a separate, independent Person, and the source of spiritual knowledge to the faithful, has been sufficiently shown.

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

### *Eschatology*

Among the opinions denounced as heretical by Epiphanius must be included the earnest and precisely formed expectations of a speedy coming of the Lord. condemns them in the first place for reverencing the town of Pepuza, as the very place where the *Parusia* should happen, and for declaring (as he makes the prophetess Maximilla) that after them there should be the end of things. But in addition to these particular notions, it is impossible not to recognize his distaste for the Millenarianism which the Montanists as a body undoubtedly embraced. Tertullian appears to have held those views as strongly before becoming a Montanist as after. His treatise *De Oratione*, which all critics regard as pre-Montanistic, includes a passionate invocation of the Great Change—“the prayer of Christians, the confusion of the nations, the exultation of angels” (cap. 5). In the later, and unquestionably Montanistic work “against Marcion,” he narrates



(with full belief in its truth) the story of a miraculous apparition which was alleged to have appeared in Judea.

This was a city suspended in the air, according to his account the New Jerusalem, destined for the reception of the Saints during their reign of a thousand years on earth, in the course of which period their resurrection would be effected according to their different degrees of merit, and which was to be followed by the conflagration of the world and the general judgment. Although in one place Tertullian declares that he had attempted in his [lost] work, *De Spe Fidelibus*, to spiritualize the utterances of the Prophets with respect to the Millennium, the passage just cited is hardly treated in such a manner, and fully justifies us in including Tertullian as holding the ordinary Montanistic tenet, although he never alludes to Pepuza by name. After the investigations of so many able critics, we need not quote once more the catena of passages which prove that this opinion, although condemned as heretical by the Church from the fourth century onwards, was held by writers whose orthodoxy is unimpugned. When Bishop Kaye gravely declared that “the more judicious and sober-minded Christians would naturally take alarm at the open avowal of tenets, the necessary effect of which must be to render their religion obnoxious to the ruling powers etc.,” he was of course well aware that he was placing Justin Martyr, Papias, and Irenaeus in the category of those who were not “judicious” nor “sober-minded.” If, indeed, I am right in accepting the first-named of these writers as a fair representative of the Church’s views in the second century, the Montanists are indeed the victims of the irony of history. “Cette proposition serait Catholique dans une autre bouche,” said one of Pascal’s Jesuits, “ce n’est que dans M. Arnauld que la Sorbonne l’a condamnée.” As one ponders on this crying injustice, one is tempted almost to conclude with the same writer : “Laissons là leurs differends. Ce sont des disputes de théologiens, et non pas de théologie!”

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

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

totally opposed to that of St Paul, affixed an objective impurity to the various heathen symbols, and built upon this idea a series of stringent regulations.

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

HIPPOLITUS.

“But they introduce new fasts and festivals, and the practice of eating dry things and radishes, pretending that these females have enjoined them”.

JEROME.

“The Montanists keep three Lents in the year.” “Even after Pentecost they keep Lent, on the ground that the bridegroom is taken away.”

APOLLONIUS

“But who is this new teacher? His works and his doctrines sufficiently show it. This is he that taught the dissolutions of marriages, he that imposed laws of fasting.”

These testimonies will be sufficient for our purpose: and we can now turn to Tertullian. He states the question and answers it clearly: “It is on this account that the New Prophecies are rejected: not that Montanus and Maximilla and Priscilla preach another God, nor that they overturn any particular rule of faith or hope, but that they plainly teach more frequent fasting than marrying”. And in a later chapter he exclaims:—“How small is the extent of our restrictions! Two weeks of *xerophagiae* in the year (and not the whole of these, for the Sabbaths and the Lord's days are excepted)—these we offer to God, abstaining from things which we do not reject, but defer.”

Without furnishing a complete abstract of this remarkable treatise, we may summarize its contents as follows. The Christian Church regarded the institution of fasting as Scriptural and binding, but left a large measure of liberty to the individual. Montanist and Catholic started from the same general scheme, but the former (acting on the dictates of the Paraclete,) desired to restrain this liberty, or perhaps rather to mark out rules by which it might be profitably utilized. But the real purpose of the treatise is not so much to defend the rules themselves, which were in reality but little more stringent than the simple “custom” of the Church : it was the underlying principle that he ardently advocates. This principle is chiefly utilitarian in its character: temperance, even want, is the bodily state most conducive to holiness. In the fifth chapter,

Tertullian reviews the history of Israel, and shows that (as in Adam's case) sensual appetite was the chief source of sin. The rejection of manna is their contempt for the heavenly *xerophagia*. Moses and Elijah are instances of the aid which fasting gives to spiritual elevation, as well as Anna in the New Testament. Then Tertullian discusses the advantage of the partial fast on dry meats, and also the institution of "Stations." Little by little the defence of the one system changes into a fierce attack upon the other, "which reigns in wealth and satiety, not making inroads upon such sins as fasts diminish, nor feeling need of such visions as *xerophagiae* extort, nor apprehending such wars of your own as Stations dispel". After a rapid transition once more to the question of prescription against novelty, and claiming true antiquity for his own views, Tertullian concludes with a stirring peroration upon the need of fasts in the present persecution. "Even to encounter beasts, it will be a Christian's duty to practise emaciation!"

### *Marriage*

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

The Montanistic position is defined in the opening words of the treatise *De Monogamia*:—"Heretics do away with marriages; the 'Psychici' accumulate them. The former marry not even once : the latter not only once. What dost thou, Law of the Creator?" And, a few lines further on:—"We admit one marriage, just as we do one God." This is perfectly in harmony with the (pre-Montanistic) treatise *Ad Uxorem*, where he extols in the highest terms the holy union "quod ecclesia conciliat, oblatio confirmat, obsignat benedictio, angeli renuntiant." Here, although a second marriage is not denounced as a crime, as a "decent adultery," it is urgently deprecated as a departure from God's original dispensation. Still, in the second Book, even those cases where a second marriage has been contracted are dealt with, and such persons (assumed to have acted under infirmity) are enjoined to marry only "in the Lord." This portion also deals at length with the dangerous consequences of marriage between Christian and Heathen, not necessarily for the second time. The tone is far more decided and severe in the treatise *De exhortations Castitatis*, culminating in the ninth chapter, where Tertullian concludes that "if we look deeply into his meanings, and interpret

them, second marriage will have to be termed no other than a species of fornication.” But still here the argument is to a great extent utilitarian, based on the spiritual and even temporal advantages of leading a single life after the first widowhood, if not throughout life. This standpoint is utterly abandoned in the final work already named, and the second marriage becomes an evil in itself, only suffered for a time on account of the hardness of men’s hearts, and now forbidden by the Paraclete to His followers. Tertullian revels as usual in a historical review of Biblical history. If Cain’s was the first crime after his parent’s disobedience, Lamech’s double marriage was hardly less culpable. From Abraham’s case, denied as a precedent, he passes to the provisions of the Mosaic law; and here his arbitrary selection of rules to which he ascribes a permanently binding force, and those which he regards as abrogated, can hardly be defended. The teaching of our Lord and of St Paul is then examined, and the utterances favourable to celibacy held forth and insisted on. Finally, those pleas of “infirmity,” so gently reasoned with in the early treatise, are now dissected with indignant scorn. “Such infirmity is equal to a third, and a fourth, and even (perhaps) a seventh marriage; as increasing its strength as often as its weakness; but which will no longer have an apostle’s authority, but of some Hermogenes,—wont to marry more women than he paints.” One question only remains: was Tertullian as sincere and vigorous in his war against the Gnostic heresy which condemned marriage in itself, as against the digamists? Probably he was; but still it was rather the premises of Marcion that he detested than this especial practical conclusion. Celibacy is to the married state not as good to evil, but as the more favoured condition to the less. But then this permitted monogamy is hedged in by such minute restrictions, and the praise bestowed on it is so much outweighed by the enthusiastic exaltation of virginity, that the lesson intended for the hearer cannot be doubted.

Finally, we ask whether on this question any gulf existed between the opinions of Montanism, and those of the primitive Church in the 2nd century. Tertullian everywhere disclaims the slightest departure from the principles of Christianity. How is he confirmed by other writers? Athenagoras declares that “the remaining in virginity and in the state of a eunuch brings nearer to God” and that many of his contemporaries “grow old unmarried, in the hope of living in closer communion with God.” And in the same chapter occurs the completely Montanistic utterance :—“a person should either remain as he was born, or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only a specious adultery.” Theophilus gives evidence to the universal feeling in favor of monogamy; Irenaeus declares repeated marriages to be so many fornications; even Clement of Alexandria deems them distinct marks of Christian imperfection. Our conclusion, then, can only be that Montanism may have pressed to excess the doctrine which it found in the Church, but cannot justly be accused of introducing it.

## *Penance*

In this most important branch of the subject, we are deprived of one portion of the evidence hitherto compared with the rest. For with the exception of a doubtful allusion by a writer quoted in Eusebius's history, there is no reference to be found in any writer except Tertullian to the special opinions entertained by the Montanists upon repentance and the power of the keys. Fortunately his writings include two treatises, one most obviously composed before his adoption of Montanism, the other as unquestionably subsequent to that step. A comparison of these works will be amply sufficient for our purpose.

The first of these is a fitting sequel to the tract *De Baptismo*. The subject is Repentance, that is to say, the means offered by the Church to those who had sinned after baptism. The treatise begins with a general review of Repentance in the abstract, an investigation into its origin, as well as into the laws which regulate it. In the seventh chapter the real matter is reached, and it is approached (as it were) with reluctance. "It is irksome, says Tertullian, " to make mention of a second,—in that case, the last—hope; lest, by treating of a remedy yet in reserve, we seem to be pointing to a yet further space for sinning." This mention of a "last hope" appears certainly to be modified by what follows : "Let no one be less, because God is more good, by repeating his sin as often as he is forgiven. Otherwise he will find, be sure, an end of escaping, when he shall not find one of sinning. We have escaped once: thus far [and no farther] let us commit ourselves to perils, even if we seem likely to escape a second time." This broader and freer view is endorsed by the earnest recommendations which follow :—

"Dread by all means to sin again, but do not shrink from repenting again! Guard yourself from incurring peril, but not from being rescued from it. Let none be ashamed. Repeated sickness must have repeated medicine. ... You have offended, but you can still be reconciled. You have One whom you may satisfy, and Him willing [to accept the satisfaction]." These admirable words, breathing as they do the purest spirit of Christianity, are fitly followed up in the next chapter, where the lessons of the prodigal son, the lost drachma, and the pardon offered to the erring Asiatic Churches, are pointed out and enforced. Next comes the outward means. "It commands [the penitent] to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to cover his body in mourning (*sordibus*), to lay his spirit low in sadness, to exchange for severities the sins he has committed; moreover, to know no food or drink but such as is plain, to groan, to weep and cry unto the Lord their God; to fall at the feet of the presbyters, and kneel to God's dear ones. All this Exomologesis [does] that it may enhance repentance." The treatise concludes with an earnest appeal to sinners to embrace this salutary humiliation.

Now, the first thing that strikes the reader is the diametrically opposed principle (to that of Montanism) which is furnished. Here the absolute necessity

of an outward ceremony is insisted on, and the worthlessness of mere inward resolutions exposed. "But some say that God is satisfied if He be looked up to with the heart and the mind, even if this be not done in act. These dispositions are ever wont to spring from the seed of hypocrites, whose repentance is never sincere." But we saw in the two previous sections the strange inconsistency between the creed of spiritual liberty and the strict neo-Judaic code upon fasts and marriage. The discussion of the cause for this phenomenon we reserve for a later section: it is sufficient to note here that no very wide gulf had to be passed to make these opinions Montanistic. Save only in one point: the limit for post-baptismal repentance was now drawn very close, and at times it seems to be excluded.

The subject of the treatise *De Pudicitia* was an episcopal edict, issued by Zephyrinus, which announced absolution to those adulterers and fornicators who had complied with the requirements of ecclesiastical discipline. "Oh edict," exclaims Tertullian, "which cannot be characterized as a worthy act!" At first, this work hardly seems to desert the stand-point of the former one, for he is undoubtedly right in contrasting the spirit of this edict with "the primary discipline of the Christian name," most rigorous in the case of these sins. But soon the influence of the new opinions shows itself:—"Why then do they grant indulgence, under the name of repentance, to crimes for which they furnish remedies by their law of multinuptialism?" The next chapter is an attempt to refute his own position (previously assumed in the *De Poenitentia*), as to the freedom and unlimited nature of the Divine grace. This culminates in a division of offences into the pardonable and the deadly, not as affecting God's power, but the discretion entrusted to the visible Church. It is a mistake to suppose that Tertullian and the Montanists ever limited the power of the Church in this matter: "You say, the Church has the power of forgiving sins. This I acknowledge and sanction [so much the rather] as I have the Paraclete Himself in the persons of the new prophets, saying: 'The Church has the power to forgive sins ; but I will not do it, lest they err again.'"

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

The second point of importance was the nature of the sins to be included in the category of mortal offences. It appears that some who were ready to treat with the utmost rigour murder and idolatry, were not disposed to regard sins of impurity with equal severity. We can readily understand that the ascetic principles of Montanism would sternly oppose any such exception, if they did not place fornication and adultery in the worst category of all, *i.e.* with premeditated murder. At any rate they were *peccata mortalia*, while those guilty of nameless sins were to be excluded even from the ranks of public penitents. Tertullian's

objections to the exercise of the absolving power on the part of the bishops took their root in his conception of the Church, to which we devote a special section. He considered them as indeed successors of the Apostles in teaching, but not necessarily (or even probably) in the possession of spiritual power and insight, the unfailing marks of Apostleship. These he demands from those who claim the accompanying privilege. “Exhibit to me, apostolic Sir, prophetic evidences, that I may recognize your divine virtue, and vindicate to yourself the power of remitting such sins!”. Accordingly, the “Church” which has the power of so doing, is the Spiritual Church, enlightened by new revelations, and purged by the new discipline.

### *The Church*

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

What, then, was the idea of the Church entertained by those who believed that the Paraclete spoke by the mouth of Montanus and Maximilla? In the first place, there was the division of those who believed these revelations,—the “neumatici” or Spirituales, and those who rejected them,—the “Psychici.” Between these bodies peace might well prevail, for they comprise one church. “We share with them,” says Tertullian in the Montanistic treatise on the Veiling of Virgins,—“the law of peace, and the name of brotherhood. They and we have one faith, one Christ, one God, the same hope, the same baptismal sacraments; let me say it once for all, WE ARE ONE Church. This view was by no means reciprocated on the other side; the Montanists were reviled, and finally driven by force from the Church. Themison is declared to “blaspheme against the holy church” because he wrote in favour of the Prophets. And certainly it would have needed no small measure of Christian meekness to have submitted in silence to the title of “Carnal Christians” thus applied. The origin of the name was obvious : *Ψυχικός άνθρωπος* (said the Apostle in his First Epistle to the Corinthians). The *Psychic Christian* had the Scriptures, but only their letter; he had the Church, but only the outward framework or polity; and a system of machinery which, unless directed in obedience to the Paraclete, might do more harm than good. For the Spiritual Christian, although he submitted gladly to the outward forms of the Church, there was much more within. He was himself a priest: he might be a

prophet, an apostle. In his eyes, as Tertullian says :—“The Church is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity. [The Spirit] combines that church which the Lord has made to consist in ‘three.’ And thus, from that time forward, every number [of persons] who may have combined together into this faith is accounted a ‘church,’ from the Author and Consecrator.” And from these premises he drew the conclusion : “The Church, then, will truly forgive sins: but it [will be] the Church of the Spirit,...not the church which consists of bishops.”

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

It is unquestionable that all parties in the Church regarded martyrdom as the crowning glory of a Christian’s career. The follies, even the crimes, of past life were considered as triumphantly condoned. Even the Confessor, who had manfully undergone torture or imprisonment, gained a personal distinction and authority not always beneficial either to the Church at large or to the individual. It was natural that the Montanists should yield an excessive regard to a testimony which corresponded exactly with their ascetic ideas. The scriptural-rule “when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another”, was now derided as an unworthy cloak for weakness, and martyrdom, from being a privilege, was erected into a duty. One motive was obvious. If the Spirit of God were truly with the *Pneumatici*, He would sustain them under the pangs of death. And had the Montanists not been eager to dare the ordeal, we can imagine that bitter taunts would not have been wanting. As however they did seek, and (in the majority of cases) endure martyrdom, the accusation took another turn, which we must notice. They were charged with



- (a) provoking, and counselling to provoke persecution;
- (b) denying the right to flee to another city;
- (c) passing off as martyrs those who had suffered as criminals; and finally,
- (d) preferring and teaching to prefer apostacy under torment to flight.

The two first charges are not easy to refute, and it can only be alleged that similar theories were held by certain Christians doubtless from the very earliest times. The third rests on the evidence of Apollonius and the Anonymus, the former of whom declares that a certain Montanist named Alexander, “who called himself a martyr, was punished for robberies and other crimes.” It is by no means asserted here that Alexander had not suffered as a Confessor as well, which in fact is admitted in the case of Themison. [We know that the words “martyr” and “martyrdom” were often employed as if convertible with what was more strictly “confessorship.”] And perhaps the least agreeable side of the controversy is the taunting comparison and mutual depreciation of the character and motives of those who had endured punishment as Christians.

The fourth and most serious charge is only found in the writings of modern assailants of Montanism. Tillemont states it thus : “Tertullian, in his *De Fuga in Persecutione* (cap. 10), puts into the mouth of a pious Christian, evidently a ‘Pneumaticus,’ these words :—‘It is the Lord, He is mighty. If it be His pleasure that I die, let Him destroy me Himself, while I save myself for Him. I had rather bring odium upon Him by dying at His will, than wrath by escaping through my own.’” This Tillemont explains as meaning:—“I will face martyrdom even should I apostatize under torture, rather than escape.” Surely, however, this is a grossly unfair comment. The sense of the passage is, obviously, that the Christian should not desert his post, but look to God for aid. Wernsdorf, as usual, attempts to explain matters by quoting the pre-Montanistic treatise *Ad Uxorem*, which of course has no pertinence. Finally, it is untrue to suppose that the Montanists exaggerated the merit of the mere act of martyrdom. It is, of course, possible to find detached passages in Tertullian’s writings seeming to bear out the view, but none, at any rate, which might not be matched in his orthodox successors. But, on the other hand, he speaks on more than one occasion of the worthlessness of such an act when it is not the result of deep faith and conviction. He ridicules the pretensions of those who, on the strength of a few weeks’ imprisonment, flaunted their vanity in the Church. And his satirical pen reaches a terrible bitterness when he describes the unhappy end of those who (as it is to be feared was sometimes the case) sustained or replaced their failing courage in a disgraceful way.

Another dispute arose upon the question of the dress of virgins when in the church : the custom hitherto permitting these to keep the head uncovered, or but slightly veiled, while the Montanists strenuously enjoined the complete covering, as in the case of the married and widows. That the root of the controversy was far

beneath the surface, is clear to anyone who studies Tertullian's masterly analysis of the relation between Tradition and Truth which he prefixes to his exhortation, although he also appeals to the authority of St Paul, to reasons of good taste, and to a very singular vision. Other treatises, such as the *Soldiers Grown*, and *On Theatres*, only involved, as regards their Montanistic colouring, a slight exaggeration of principles bound up in the spirit of Early Christianity. It is significant that not even an Epiphanius found any capital in this department.

### ***Sacraments and ritual. Women***

Once more we have to work on materials of a one-sided character, the accusations of writers who lived in later times, and with but slender assistance from Tertullian. The question to be discussed in this section is, Did the Montanists introduce any changes into the outward service of the Church, or into the Sacraments? The best arrangement will be to treat, one after another, the accusations of willful and radical innovation made by Epiphanius, Augustin, and many others.

The first-named expressly asserts that women filled the offices of presbyters and even of bishops among the Montanists. Augustin appears to endorse the opinion. Here fortunately Tertullian is precise, and it is easy to understand the cause of the error. That women were allowed by the Montanists to prophesy in the Church, there can be no doubt. Even if the practice, as is probable, had been disused in the Church, its antiquity shielded it from any charge of heresy or innovation. But we have evidence that a Montanist prophetess only revealed her visions "dimissa plebe," i.e. after the regular service, and when only the select faithful remained behind. And we also have a very precise statement in the treatise *De virg. velandis*, to the effect that "it is not permitted to a woman either to speak or teach, or baptize, or offer [the Eucharist], nor any other masculine function."

In this Tertullian shows no change from the views expressed in the earlier tracts (that on Baptism and the Prescription of Heretics), written certainly before he had embraced Montanism. The next point has been already discussed in a former section. It was there shown, (a) that the keeping of Easter according to Roman or Asiatic use could never have become a note of Montanism; (b) that the evidence as to the rite adopted is at best conflicting; and (c) that the better opinion seems to be that the Montanists did adopt the Roman use.

***Baptism.*** Did the Montanists baptize "for the dead"? The accusation is made by Philaster alone, of whom the irreverent Wernsdorf remarks, "vir simplex, fortasse pius, sed scriptor ineptus". The learned German suggests that Philaster blundered between the Marcionites and the Montanists, which would not involve, I imagine, any excessive want of charity to believe. Tertullian alludes

twice to the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 29), and though he certainly utters no specific condemnation of the practice, he in no way approves it. "It is certain," says Tertullian, "that they adopted this [practice] with such a presumption as made them suppose that this vicarious baptism would be beneficial to the flesh of another in anticipation of the resurrection." This is not the language of a man who treats of a rite still exercised by a party to which he belongs, notwithstanding vehement attacks. Accordingly our conclusion must be to reject the statement of Philaster.

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

***Mysteries.*** Lastly we must deal with a topic which, were it Mysteries, possible, we would gladly pass over in silence. We must consider now the evidence upon which Epiphanius, Cyril, Philaster, Augustin, Isidor, and Theodoret accuse the party to which Tertullian and Perpetua belonged of participation in crimes so horrible that, if the charges be believed, Montanism deserves to the end of time to be the object of detestation. It would be easy to reject the evidence at once by the simple process of quoting the different accounts side by side, and pointing out the variations and contradictions involved; but such a course, allowable in jurisprudence, is not admissible in history. Besides, on one point all witnesses agree; and that is in the fact of Infanticide. A "fact," at least, if these holy writers have spoken truly, which we must be so presumptuous as now to investigate.

First let it be noted that neither Hippolytus nor the writers quoted by Eusebius know anything of these enormities. Clement, Origen, and Cyprian, all of whom mention Montanism in one way or another, are equally silent; so also is Athanasius. Cyril, in the middle of the fourth century, is the first to make the accusation. Let us transcribe his words:—"Montanus, most miserable of men, cutting the throats of wretched little children, and chopping them up into horrid food, for the purposes of their so-called mysteries." Philaster, who wrote later, is

vague in his details, but positive as to his facts. "And there [sc. at Pepuza] were celebrated the cynical mysteries, and the horrible impiety with the child. For they say that [the Montanists] at Eastertide mingled the blood of a child with their sacrifice." The story gains, as might well be expected, immensely in graphic detail, by the end of the century. Augustin cautiously shields himself under "it is reported," but nevertheless furnishes us with an account how the child was pricked with needles, its blood mixed with flour, and made into bread, and so forth. We will not even stop to point out the ridiculous contradiction between Cyril's summary "chopping up," and Augustin's "needle-pricking". That Isidor should join the chorus cannot surprise. Jerome is undecided. Theodoret honestly admits the lack of any corroborating evidence. Of modern writers it is sufficient to say that they can be divided into two classes; those who indignantly repudiate the charge, and those who "*imitent de Conrart le prudent silence.*" What shall be our conclusion? We shall not be disposed to believe an unproved indictment, because a piece of original slander has been copied and enlarged; nor shall we suppose that a man like Augustin would have repeated it had it not taken deep root in the popular mind. It seems that all writers forget that this crime of slaying a child was laid to the charge of all Christians, originally, by their heathen opponents. Now this charge was simply made because the Christians had private meetings, and it was possible that unknown and terrible rites were celebrated. This easy weapon was grasped by the enemies of Montanism, but not until Montanism had lost its numbers, and, above all, its mighty champion. Had Tertullian lived to hear this cruel falsehood,—"gross as a mountain, open, palpable," he would have answered the worse than heathen slanderers: "Monsters of wickedness, we are accused of observing a holy rite in which we kill a little child and eat it....This is what is constantly laid to our charge, and yet you take no pains to elicit the truth of what we have been so long accused. Either bring, then, the matter to the light of day, if you believe it, or give it no credit as having never enquired into it. On the ground of your double dealing, we are entitled to lay it down to you that there is no reality in the thing which you dare not examine !"

### ***Historical position of Montanism***

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

nationality is given perhaps an excessive share of attention. And if we believe the statement that Montanus was himself a convert from heathenism, and perhaps had been a priest of Cybele formerly, the notion gains no little in consistency. But when we attempt to account for all the phenomena of Montanism on this hypothesis alone, its insufficiency becomes apparent. Nor is it even clear that all the points of superficial similarity are connected radically. For instance, it is not accurate, with Schwegler, to trace the ascetic views of Montanism on the subject of marriage to this source. It is rather, as we find in all later manifestations of cognate nature, the necessary corollary of the claim to higher and more spiritual knowledge. The objection is mentioned by Tertullian, and very fairly rejected, with regard to fasting. We have seen elsewhere that there is a danger in comparing the Montanistic theory of ecstatic inspiration with the heathen *μαντική* the argument being somewhat more destructive than some of its modern employers profess to think. At any rate the opinion was so clearly that of the majority of the Church, that an examination of the whole question would carry us much beyond our special subject.

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

### ***Montanism and Gnosticism***

Continuing the examination, we ask ourselves what relations existed between Montanism and Gnosticism. Tertullian’s book against Marcion is a proof of the separations; what points of contact were there? Now both systems have at least this common ground, that they are based both upon a conception of the world’s destiny. But the difference is that, while the Gnostics turned their attention to the beginning of things, the absolute principles whether of revelation or of the world’s development, the Montanists on the other hand laid all stress upon the final catastrophe, from which they (as it were) reasoned back to the present and even to the past. Neander seems to have expressed the nature of this great division very ably. There are two movements or forces acting in the

Christian world in the first age after that of the Apostles : one idealistic, the other realistic; but both as well within as without the limits of the Church. The former attains its extreme in Gnosticism; the latter in Montanism. There does not seem any contradiction in the fact that the latter acknowledged a means of Revelation apart from, or rather explanatory of Holy Scripture; nor does a belief in the literal truth of the promises relating to the Paraclete involve in any way a “speculative direction,” as Schwegler would infer. This writer is quite correct in describing the Montanistic doctrine of the three Stages as “modern ausgedrückt, but surely the conclusion is quite gratuitous. And when he proceeds to find Gnostic elements in Tertullian’s theory of the Trinity, and quotes the use of the term *προβολή* as evidence, one is almost driven to the conclusion that he had not read the 8th chapter of the *Adv. Praxeam*, in which the word occurs. For how is it employed? “If any man shall think,” writes Tertullian, “that I am introducing some *προβολή* that is, some prolation of one thing out of another, as Valentinus does when he sets forth Aeon from Aeon, one after another;—then this is my first reply to you : Truth must not therefore refrain from the use of such a term, and its reality and meaning, because heresy also employs it. The fact is, heresy has rather taken it from Truth, in order to mould it into its own counterfeit.” And to argue that Tertullian must be in some way approximate to Gnosticism, because he was by no means “the worst thinker that the Church possessed”, is surely a burlesque of serious argument, and a significant commentary upon the value of the “Ebionitic” theory.

In one singular analogy, not to be unduly pressed, but still not surely to be disregarded, Gnosticism and Montanism do approach one another. It is not in any theory or opinion, but in the persons of Tertullian and Marcion, who although bitter opponents, had not a few points of similarity. Both men, as Neander well said, “are alike in a stern one-sidedness, a fiery, passionate love, which embraced its object with all its forces, rejecting everything else... The predominant element in both men was fullness and depth of feeling. All was the result of feeling, &c.” Only in this similarity, Marcion showed himself least a Gnostic, Tertullian most a Montanist. Both wished, and wished sincerely, to restore Christianity, just as Savonarola and Luther wished it. Both were hostile to the slowly encroaching inroads of hierarchical ambition and external formalism. But Tertullian was content to restore by the aid of the Spirit; Marcion with his own system.

### *Summary*

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

I. That it was neither the individual theory propounded by a man, nor the reflection of any past manifestation, whether Jewish or Heathen; but a simple reaction towards the primitive simplicity of Christianity, with a claim to the fulfillment of distinct promises from Christ to His Spiritual Church.

II. That a certain Montanus existed, and gave his name to the party; and that he, together with certain companions, claimed to have received revelations from the Holy Spirit.

III. That these revelations contained nothing contrary to the Catholic Faith, as found in the Scriptures; and that this fact is certified by Epiphanius and other fathers of the Church.

IV. That the belief in the Paraclete, and in the Persons and Work of the Father and the Son, was that commonly held; and that the individual views of Tertullian may be regarded as substantially identical with those of his party.

V. That the expectation of a speedy coming of the Lord, to be followed by a physical Millennium, and the reign of the Saints on earth, was common to the Montanists with many persons (like Justin Martyr) of unquestioned piety and orthodoxy.

VI. That the Montanists received the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, with the same belief in their nature and efficacy, and with the same rites, as the Catholic Church

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

VIII. That, although women were admitted to prophesy and to communicate visions, they were allowed to exercise no ministerial function, nor was any innovation in ritual or in the form of Divine Service introduced.

IX. That the spiritual claims of the Montanists, and their belief in a speedy end of the world, encouraged a system of asceticism, not in harmony with the full liberty of the Gospel, as proclaimed by St Paul, but still in no way repugnant to the commands of Scripture, or the custom of the Church.

X. That certain fasts, either entire or partial, were enjoined; but that no supererogatory merit was believed to be gained thereby.

XI. That second marriage was condemned as contrary to the original dispensation of God, as well as to the injunctions of the Paraclete, but that (although celibacy was recommended to those able, as conducive to advantage) the rite of marriage in itself was never discredited.

XII. That while sin after baptism (and even a repeated lapse) was freely absolvable by God's boundless grace and mercy, it was inexpedient for the

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

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

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



BOOK III.  
THE INFLUENCE OF  
MONTANISM UPON THE CHURCH.

We see clearly now that Montanism is not to be regarded as a sect, growing from within, though virtually without the Church, but as the exaggerated statement of fundamental and original principles, which, in a period of transition, would excite as much antagonism as the most violent novelty. To use an illustration, it would be quite inaccurate to compare it to such a phenomenon as Swedenborgianism, the founder of which system made no appeal to antiquity, and though not forming a sect, prepared his followers to dispense with all ecclesiastical forms. We shall trace in a later chapter the remarkable series of manifestations in the Church which almost each century produced; all starting from the Montanistic standpoint; all erring by the same exaggeration of good intentions; all, or nearly all, falling at times into the glaring logical inconsistencies which we have sufficiently noted in their model; but all, without doubt, leaving an influence for good by stirring up the life and activity of the Church. That at first the leading writers and thinkers were undecided what to say, fearful to approve extravagances of form, equally unwilling to censure principles which they cordially accepted, is clearly seen from the absolute silence of Justin, as well as the guarded utterances of Irenaeus. I cannot myself agree with Schwegler (who is certainly wrong in quoting Neander on his side), that the latter had any specially Montanistic leanings, other than as fighting the same battle against the Gnostics. Tertullian mentions him with praise, but does not add to his name, as with that of Proculus which follows, the significant “noster” There are two passages in his great work which seem to refer to the Montanists, although only one of them can be declared strongly probable in that application. This occurs in the fourth book where he denounces “false prophets, who have not received from God the gift of prophecy nor fearing Him, but feigning for vainglory’s sake, &c.”

Now no reasonable explanation of this passage can refer it to any other party than the Montanists, although we fully recognize that in many respects, as on the Consummation of all things, on Marriage, and above all, on the nature of Prophecy, Irenaeus was in perfect agreement with the sober element of Montanism. But in another place, where he denounces certain persons who sought to diminish the *πρόσωπα* of the Deity, to reject the Gospel of St John, and

above all, to “expel the gift of prophecy from the Church,” he cannot possibly refer to the Montanists, but rather to their virulent opponents the Alogi. In fact, with the exception of Bretschneider, no scholar of eminence has attempted to explain the passage as referring to the Montanists.

For a time then, in fact until the Church had entered into the new consciousness of a visible and secular organic unity, no measures were taken, and none in any case could have prevailed against so important a manifesto in favour of the Prophets as the letter of the Gallic martyrs. From the later turning-point of Praxeas’ intervention at Rome, the course of separation was inevitable if slow. The gradual nature is well evidenced by an expression of Origen’s, in whose time the absolute separation does not seem to have been fully accomplished.

### ***Points of cohesion and reasons for rejection***

It has been noted that one strange inconsistency pervaded the Montanistic system. While upon such subjects as prophecy, church-government, and the like, they adopted the Pauline liberty in its fullest extent; in matters of lesser moment, such as fasting, they seem to incline towards a Judaistic externalism, utterly foreign to their fundamental position. It is more easy to amass a number of examples of a similar intellectual “warp” in other times and parties, than to furnish any complete explanation of its cause. It is not sufficient to say that, the separation of the Church into *Pneumatici* and *Psychiei* involved an injunction (for the former) of a higher sanctity of life. Such an explanation is too obviously empirical, and is easily met by the fact that a precisely similar ethical differentiation followed in the Catholic Church from a totally opposite principle. The simpler solution, viz. that Montanists as well as Catholics succumbed to the same influence, the same tendency to “externalization” of religion, is at least in perfect harmony with the facts which we shall afterwards examine, and which certainly show that the same Church which anathematized the form of Montanism, assimilated unconsciously no small portion of its substance. We may even assert that the principle of the later ascetic movements of monasticism, of the absurd over-estimation of virginity as found in Ambrose and Jerome, not to mention others,—all were developed out of the Montanistic germ, which itself was, in some part at least, a product of the Judaistic spirit.

It was not the ascetic spirit of Montanism which the Church expelled, but it was the claim to spiritual insight, and the consequent antagonism to the theory of finality which became the basis of the new ecclesiastical organization. Had Bishop Zephyrinus and his successors confined themselves to the simple exercise of authoritative separation employed against the Donatists, they would have been quite within their rights. No government is possible if the nominal sovereign is liable to the checks which the Montanistic prophecy would, if suffered to remain

in the Church, have continually interposed. Accordingly one or other of the impulses had to succumb, and naturally the weaker. And we can hardly be surprised that, in order to account for the breach, it was deemed necessary to discredit the orthodoxy of the Montanists on other questions, where we now know that it was unimpeachable. It does not involve any mala fides on the part of the accusers that they declared the prophets to be inspired by the evil spirit, and not by the Paraclete. Indeed, this is the ground for the final edict for their rebaptization as heretics, by the Synod of Constantinople. Every phase of the prophetic claim became a mark for the hostility of the later generation. We have seen that, regardless of branding Justin and Athenagoras as heretics, the Church erected into a new dogma the assertion that a prophet must be conscious, and in command of his intellectual faculties. The next step was to throw overboard Irenaeus by repressing the exercise of that prophetic function in the Church to which he had so clearly and consistently witnessed, and confining the acknowledged manifestations of the Holy Spirit to the miracles and visions wrought and seen by the orthodox. Cyprian, however, the pupil of Tertullian, does not seem to have departed from the ancient views of the Church. He repeatedly bears witness to the very facts which Montanists had asserted, and, on a very critical-occasion in his career, he accounted for his retirement from persecution by the statement that it had been enjoined in a vision. That a good deal of incredulity began to prevail now with regard to the spiritual claims of those who did not always seem to correspond in their lives, could be reasonably conjectured, even if Cyprian did not expressly deplore it. And even Jerome speaks of his visions, including that remarkable nocturnal scourging for reading secular authors, which was so unceremoniously criticized by Ruffinus. Now it was not to be expected that the Catholic bishops should accept Tertullian's reasonings on prescription, which now served to defend the really ancient doctrines, now to excuse the new. Any statement of a new doctrine after the Synod of Nicaea was heretical ipso facto, as Athanasius says concerning the Council of Ariminum :— "They do not say : 'so we believe' but 'so is the Catholic Faith now established,' thus disclosing how recently their faith is dated. For whosoever says... that his private way of thinking is Catholic, is guilty of the folly of the Montanists. For these equally declare that the Christian Faith began with them, &c."

Finally, the Chiliastic views, not introduced by Montanism (since so many Fathers, and according to Justin, the most orthodox Christians embraced it), but decidedly adopted by them, and in the third century probably identified with them, became another source of rejection. Useful indeed as an incentive to repentance and piety, this mysterious doctrine was attended with difficulties and objections which were clearly seen by the Fathers of the Third Century, and the first attack, made by the Presbyter Caius, seems to have received the assent of what we may style the "official" world.

So, one by one, the fundamental principles of Montanism, its links with the Apostolical Church, were regarded as heresies. How its less laudable elements were bequeathed to the victors, we have now to discover.

### *Extent of influence*

As the Catholic Church proceeded in the course of re-assimilating the elements of Judaism, it was forced to adopt, one by one, all the ascetic opinions of Montanism which its short-sighted champions had so bitterly anathematized. In the third century we find even Origen condemning the absolution of grievous offenders, especially in the sins which Montanism so inexorably punished. Cyprian, who had not learnt in vain from his master, held the same stringent views, which he opposed to the more lenient principles of Stephen.

In the matter of Fasting, the assimilation is even more startling, as Daillé proved in perhaps the most powerful and effective argument that the whole literature of controversy can boast. He failed to see, indeed, that, although Montanism was corrupt in its external rites, it was the type of true Protestantism in its fundamental theory, or he would not have claimed for his own friends the honour of being alone the true descendants of the "Psychiei". He is perfectly right in asserting that the Church, from the fourth century onwards, out-Montanised Montanism in fasting; and, as Wernsdorf well put it, there was hardly a Council that met without adding some burthensome addition to the pile of ordinances. The later phases of the question, the gradual introduction of luxury in reality, while preserving the outward form of maceration, have been sufficiently exposed to ridicule: it is probable, indeed, that the introduction of a fish-diet on fast-days was a relic of Manichaeism,—a worthy addition to the mosaic of Judaism and Paganism. Daillé, in the third chapter of the *De Jejuniiis*, draws an effective parallel between the controversies of the second and sixteenth centuries, ending with the barbed arrow to which we alluded before.

As to second marriages, we find the same inheritance as fully accepted. Jerome declaims against them far more bitterly than even Tertullian: he regards as "execrable" the act of a widow who had re-married; and he declares the twice-married as universally to be regarded as "*scortati*." The Councils of Laodicea and Neo-Caesarea subjected those who married a second time to public penance, while that of Eliberis imposed a five-years' excommunication upon a widow who had attempted to condone fornication by marriage.

Such was the influence which Montanism exercised upon the Roman Church in later times, precisely the reverse of that which it aimed at, but that which alone the historic conditions admitted. Its nobler influence was not transmitted, but it did not expire. We have now to trace the occasions on which, in later ages, that influence was permitted to exert itself.

It would need a review of the whole course of ecclesiastical history were we to attempt to notice every occasion upon which some isolated note of Montanism has been manifested. The Novatianists and the Donatists, for example, are clearly linked by their severity of moral tone, and their rejection of an unlimited power of the keys. And in later times, each mystical writer might in some sense be claimed as occupying a Montanistic stand-point, especially when (as was so often the case in the Middle Ages) the aspiration to immediate union with the Giver of all knowledge was coupled with an earnest desire to reform the crying abuses of the Roman Church.

### *Cathari and Waldenses*

If the group of sects which are known by this generic title really claimed the Paraclete as their Pope, if they asserted themselves to be a Church within the Church, and, above all, exaggerated the merit of martyrdom, fasting, and virginity, there can be no question but that they represent a revival of Montanism in its most striking aspect. But our records are not ample enough to justify any exact conclusions, and more than one eminent authority has inclined to ascribe their origin as much to Manichaean and Gnostic elements as to those of Montanism.

There are also considerable points of analogy with the Waldenses, more especially if the early date (and not the common derivation of their name from Pierre de Vaux) be admitted. It is true that most authorities, both Catholic and Protestant, now incline to the latter opinion, e.g. Hurter, Füsslin, Guericke, Neander, Gieseler, and therefore would not date the sect before the year 1160. Hahn holds to the other opinion, and quotes a not very convincing explanation of the name from Bernard. Be this as it may, there is no doubt but that the Waldenses held completely Montanistic views on the approaching end of the world, and against a plenary power of absolution. Of the former we quote an instance from the curious didactic poem, *La Nobla Leyczon*, published by Raynouard in his *Choix des poësies originales des troubadours* (Paris, 1817):—

Car nous voyons ce monde de la fin approcher,  
 Bien a mille et cent ans accomplis entièrement,  
 Que fut écrite l'heure que nous sommes au dernier temps.

The other passage differs from the utterance of Tertullian in the *De Pudicitia* only in language. The question as to the orthodoxy of the Waldenses on all points could not be satisfactorily discussed except in a special monograph.

### ***Fratricelli.***

The fourteenth century was a deeply important era for Christianity. A long series of spiritually-minded men, Tauler, Ekhart, Amalric of Bena, David of Dinant, Gerard Groot, and many others, raised their voices against the combined tyrannies of scholasticism and the medieval Papacy. But from the Franciscan order in particular a party arose, known from their origin as the “Fratres Spirituales,” or Fraticelli, who proclaimed as a new revelation the approaching end of the world, and the consequent necessity of an ascetic life. Perhaps their most ill, striking resemblance to the Montanists is in their adoption of the triperiodic doctrine, i.e. that certain epochs in the world’s history had been directed by each of the Persons of the Trinity in turn. We find an exposition of their views in the *Liber Sententiarum* of Petrus Johannes Olivus, which, it may be added, was condemned as heretical by Pope Clement V at the Council of Vienne. Not only does Olivus develop this theory of the three periods, but he applies to the Church of Rome the very title that, more than a thousand years before, Tertullian had bestowed upon it. We must admit, however, that no Montanist ever carried out the conclusions so far, the connection of the Papacy and “Babylon magna meretrix” being a far later discovery. As to ethical reform, it must be noted that some of those dangerous refinements of asceticism, certain to involve evil effects, are to be found in the same work.

Another section, almost at the same period, called at times Adamites, “Brothers of the Free Spirit,” but more commonly “Homines Intelligentiae,” also adopted the Chiliastic and tri-periodic views of the Fraticelli, with an equally ascetic bent. But a special antinomian doctrine, leading often to painful excesses, is also to be noted among their views: also an anticipation of the Swedenborgian theory that the Resurrection is not future but past, having taken place in Christ’s person.

### ***Flagellants. Joan of Arc. Savonarola. Anabaptists***

Passing over, with a bare mention, the singular manifestation of the Flagellants, the next Montanistic phenomenon is undoubtedly that of the Maid of Orleans, in the beginning of the fifteenth century. No one with any pretension to historic perception thinks now of doubting the perfect (subjective) accuracy of her statements, which would alone be established by the singular consistency of her utterances during the course of the long interrogations.

In the following Reformation-century, the claims to prophetic insight were many and striking. Savonarola, although his martyrdom took place in 1498, may fitly be deemed to inaugurate the grand period. Perhaps no character in modern

history deserves so thoroughly to be placed in juxtaposition with Tertullian, although it was not permitted to the latter to seal with his blood his witness to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit. It is often forgotten that Savonarola, besides being the founder of the most remarkable of theocratic governments, and an orator of unparalleled eloquence, left writings of considerable importance, more especially on the subject of the prophetic

It was rather Mohler's controversial than his historical instinct which induced him to describe the Anabaptist Sects of the Reformation as the logical development of Montanism, regardless of the fact that, in every instance, some phase of antinomianism, from the mild theories of Schwenkfeld to the outrageous acts of the Zwickau and Munster prophets, predominated. Now we have sufficiently seen, in the former investigation, that the very opposite principle was the note of Montanism, often carried to an almost as dangerous extreme. In modern times we have to note with shame and abhorrence not a few instances (such as the Munster prophets, Eva von Buttlar, the sect of Brügglar, the Königsberg "Mücker," &c.) where a pretended claim to inspiration has merely been the cloak for the most revolting vice. This, indeed, is the Proof of the Spirits, whether they be of God; and this is our safeguard in distinguishing between the vulgar imposture of Müntzer and Bockelsohn, and the scriptural claims and teaching of Tertullian.

My knowledge of Boehme's theories only enables me to feel a strong impression that, although his general standpoint is similar to that of Montanism, and although he is in many senses the progenitor of thinkers who were representatives of a completely renovated Montanism, still, taken as a whole, he must be included rather among the number of theosophical enquirers, apart from any ecclesiastical system, than as the leader of a spiritual or moral reaction in any such body. One of his pupils, Petersen, will be found to have united all these deficient elements within the pale of German Protestantism, and to his work, as well as that of his English fellow-labourers, a special appendix is devoted.

Earlier than these, indeed, the labours of George Fox are almost in the same degree marked by the special notes of Montanism, as also those of Labadie (1610—1674), one of the most remarkable characters even in the seventeenth century. Passing from the Jesuits to their foes the Oratorians, then to the Jansenists, finally to the Reformed Evangelicals. Nourished on the Bible and St Bernard, he passed through these stages of natural sequence, and finally, in the intimacy of such choice spirits as Anna von Schurmann, he ended his career in the utterance of ascetic views worthy of the pen of Tertullian.

### *Quietism (Mme. Guyon). The Mennonites*

Perhaps the most deeply interesting page in the religious history of the seventeenth century is the Quietistic movement, passing from Spain to Italy, and thence to France. The phenomenon was in many points a repetition of far earlier manifestations in medieval mysticism, but it attained a far higher degree of historical importance, as much on account of the personages implicated in the movement as of being one of the main currents of reaction against the great Augustinian revival under Jansen and the Arnaulds. Madame Guyon derived the bulk of her opinions from Molinos, through her faithful but unfortunate friend the Abbé La Combe. In later life she enjoyed the intimacy of Poiret; but it is now proved upon good evidence that she obtained her first spiritual education from the learned mystic Bertot. Her own doctrine of revelation added to that of the Montanists something of a theory of clairvoyance, which a quotation given below proves. Her history is a strange one,—first patronised, then deserted by Archbishop Noailles and Mme de Maintenon; chivalrously defended by Fénelon at the risk of losing (as he did lose) the brightest prospects of political influence in the reformation of France; imprisoned, cruelly slandered, deprived of all spiritual privileges but those of which her gaolers could not deprive her,—at last, dismissed to lead a peaceful contemplative life, forgiving all her foes, and rejoicing in the society of her friends. Bossuet was not wrong when he compared her to that Priscilla whom Tertullian called “the holy prophetess.”

Lastly, we conclude our summary of the seventeenth century by the mention of one whose claims were neither those of faith and purity, nor of immorality and imposture, but of sheer simple madness. Quirinus Kühlmann wandered about Europe in the second half of the century, publishing works in German and English, each transcending the other in extravagance, but none the less (or, perhaps, on that account) attaching to himself a number of followers. The unfortunate man ended his career in Russia with a very unwilling martyrdom.

The eighteenth century once more affords a mirror of almost the same phenomena. While Zinzendorf and the Brethren of Herrnhut developed the simple primitive views and life of the first century, Eva von Buttlar and her friends revived the excesses of the Anabaptists; and, on the opposite side, Swedenborg, after exhausting the world of science as then known, proceeded to evolve an enormous scheme of theosophy upon the foundations of Origen, Richard of St Victor, and Boehme. How far Swedenborg really unites in himself and his system all or any of the notes of Montanism, we shall attempt briefly to examine in an appendix.

What have we to say of the present century? The claims to supernatural revelation are frequent,—were their “proofs” in righteousness and truth? Surely



not in Germany, where the exposure of certain painful episodes at Königsberg caused the profession of the truly pious to be viewed for a long time with a not unnatural suspicion. As discreditable, both from original imposture, and from the moral (or rather immoral) tendency which so soon became the leading principle, is the history of Mormonism. Perhaps there is no page of history which offers more capital to the pessimist than the narrative of Joseph Smith's career, utterly wanting even in the brute force and enthusiasm which made the Anabaptist Matthiessen rush alone upon the besiegers of Munster, to be immediately "hewn in pieces." Every feature is mean, vulgar, calculated to allure the basest of human passions, under the blasphemous guise of revealed authority. The so-called Book of Mormon is indeed a worthy "symbolical book," in its mixture of fustian, bad grammar, profanity and nonsense. Happily the last chapter of the shameful history seems to have begun. The conviction of the "bishop" Lee on the charge of murder removed the last shreds of character that hung round Mormonism, while the death of Brigham Young (reported lately) deprives them of an able and unscrupulous leader. It would be almost a mockery to discuss the so-called "doctrines" of the party : but it may be noted that the belief in an approaching Millennium, and the rite of baptizing for the dead, were prevalent. Happily we are enabled to conclude this brief sketch by the mention of two still existing forms of "repristinized" Montanism, in neither of which are to be noted the elements of imposture and immorality, although neither, on the other hand, can display among its ranks a Tertullian or a Fénelon. Some perhaps will deem this verdict unjust to the memory Edward Irving. It may be so, and it would be wrong to demand of the orator the same lasting monuments as the writer: but still the eloquence which astounded Canning and drew all Mayfair to Hatton Garden does not seem to us of quite the same standard as the passionate denunciations of the Carthaginian presbyter, and the incomparable grace and pathos of the Archbishop of Cambrai.

Irving suffered the misfortune of being driven to defend deep opinions without the aid of a thorough theological education ; and thus one who held and revered the Absolute Divinity of the Son, in the highest and fullest sense, was made to appear a heretic under the skilful crossexaminations of his inquisitors. If Neander's motto, "*Pectus facit theologum,*" were as true as it is suggestive, Irving would be the first of theologians, for none had a heart so true, so warmly-beating, and so sympathetic.

None surpassed his humility when, in those last gloomy years, he became the mere subordinate in the system which his own individuality had called into existence. But when, in 1834, that noble soul was called away, it left nothing but a frigid eclecticism of ritual without rule, prophecy without inspiration, and a title ("Catholic and Apostolic Church") without a meaning! Still, if the visitor to an Irvingite Chapel finds some difficulty in reconciling the assumption of mediaeval decoration and the claim of primitive doctrine, it must not be denied that the professed doctrines are very similar to those of Montanism. There is the strong

belief in the Millennium, previous to which there is to be the reign of Antichrist, and the resurrection of the just. There is the claim to a continued revelation from the Holy Spirit, but limited by the nature of the hierarchy, as if in an attempt to harmonize Tertullian and Cyprian.

Dating far back as to their origin (for their founder, Menno Simonis, belongs to the period of the Reformation), the Mennonites accomplished but four years ago an important step in their history, viz. their settlement in the territories of British North America. They do not claim prophetic revelations, but they profess to live after the model of the Gospel in refusing to take part in war, in declining all judicial oaths, and in practising a simple ecclesiastical discipline by banishing all committers of immorality from their societies. The first-named tenet caused them to leave their first settlements in Northern Germany, and to migrate to Russia under a pledge of exemption from military service. Notwithstanding their great services in civilizing the vast plains north of the Black Sea, this pledge was broken by the Russian Government; and once more these primitive Christians have girded up their loins, have journeyed thousands of miles, and have settled in lands which can only profit by their presence. With this synopsis (which it would be only too easily possible to extend) we turn to the last and chiefest consideration which our work demands.

### ***Conclusion***

What, then, shall we say upon the main question? What is to be the verdict justified by the impartial hearing of so vast a mass of evidence, and so numerous a body of counsellors? Are we to dismiss the Montanists to keep company with the dismal shadows of forgotten heresies, the inventions of foolish minds, the depravation of Scriptural truth? In one word, was the "Spirit" which Tertullian preached, and for which Perpetua died, the Father of Lies, or was it the Spirit of God?

Some would tell us to answer the question by a simple reference to the "voice of the Church" always the same in every place and time. But we have already seen that, to unlearned and unskillful minds, this voice is only to be found in its discord, or (at best) unanimous when the event has been long decided. Surely in a question in which issues of fact as well as of doctrine were concerned, the defenders of the "Quod semper, quod ubique" cannot blame us for appealing to that voice as it spoke at or near the very time; and what have we found? Epiphanius declares that the Montanists "held concerning the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, the views of the Catholic Church." Cyril accuses Montanus of claiming to be the Holy Ghost *in propria persona*. All the immorality that the contemporary Hippolytus can attest is "the eating of dry things and radishes, the introduction of new fasts and festivals", but John of Damascus, in the eighth

century, knows that they “made bread with the blood of murdered infants.” Perhaps it will be said that these are the mere *obiter dicta*, and not the official utterances of the Fathers. I appeal then to the facts, that one successor of St Peter (viz. Soter) wrote against the Montanists, while another (be it Eleutherus or Victor) was prepared to acknowledge the prophets, and had formally so acknowledged them, but was persuaded into retractation by Praxeas the Patripassianist! Perhaps, like the monks in the “*Epistolas Obscurorum Virorum*,” the opponents on failing with the popes turn to Councils; they must then have the goodness to instruct us which we are to select: for that of Iconium which commanded the rebaptization of Montanists is followed by that of Nicaea which imposed no such stigma.

Renouncing, then, our attempt to solve the problem in this way, let us adopt the test which Jeremy Taylor gave : “Whatsoever is either opposite to an article of creed, or teaches ill life, that is heresy: but all those propositions which are extrinsic to these two considerations, be they true or be they false, make not heresy, nor the man a heretic. What, in the detached oracular utterances of the prophetesses, brought to us through a hostile witness, can be alleged as contrary to the *Regula Fidei*, as entertained by Justin, by Athenagoras, by Irenaeus? Is it heretical for Maximilla to declare that “the end of the world was approaching,” or that her followers were “to hear Christ, and not me”? Even in Tertullian’s Montanistic writings, is there a sentiment, is there a statement about the Trinity, which is not to be found in almost the same form in other writers? And even if rash reasonings on mysterious subjects be found in the works, are we to stop here? Shall we not proclaim the heresy of Arnobius, Lactantius, and many others? In one word, have we not shown, fairly and fully, that all the views of the Montanists on the work of the Spirit, the end of the world, the Millennium, are identical with those of Fathers whose orthodoxy no one questions? Our conclusion is that there was nothing opposite to an article of creed.

And now for Jeremy Taylor’s second test:—“Or teaches ill life.” The Montanists introduced some fasts, “deferring (says Tertullian) what we do not reject”; they condemned second marriages; they recommended the endurance of martyrdom rather than flight in persecution; they declared that only God should give absolution for certain awful sins. Is this “teaching ill life”? And which side do the charges of Infanticide discredit? Is there any need once more to refute them by their statement? We answer, that there was no “ill life” taught.

If, indeed, other evidence shall in the future time be discovered, proving that any article of Creed was controverted by even an obscure follower of the Montanist Prophets, if any writer shall succeed in showing that these Prophets taught immorality under the guise of asceticism, as some have done, we shall accept such a conclusion then as freely as we reject it now. But without it, there is but one guide, which tells us: “there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to

every man to profit withal.... All these worketh that One and the Selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” And again :—“The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth”; it is “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” And where this Spirit shows itself in these fruits, though Popes and Councils may anathematize, the Great Judge will one day reverse their judgment.

APPENDIX A.  
KESTNER'S "AGAPE."

THIS curious work, published by August Kestner at Jena in 1819, attempts to construct from existing historical materials a perfectly new theory as to the nature of the early Christian polity. According to him, we must regard the Christians of the first three centuries as forming a vast secret society, like the Carbonari of Italy, with distinct worldly ideals, and not without frequent alliances or understandings with the Roman Empire. The foundation-stone of this theory, such as it is, seems to be the well-known passage in Orig. *adv. Celsum* (i. 1), in which the Christian Father replies to an accusation of the philosopher that the new faith involved "a secret, lawless association." This secret alliance, while denying the illegality, Origen seems to admit; and he points out to his adversary that such a proceeding was inevitable. He uses the well-known expression AGAPI, usually identified with the love-feast, but to which, in this case, a more extended meaning may be given. From Ignatius's Epistle to the Romans, Kestner ventures to base his assertion. It is not necessary to quote all the passages in which he finds and explains the use of the same term; it will be sufficient to Appendix summarize briefly his alleged history of the society until the appearance of Montanism.

Clement of Rome was its founder, and the date of foundation may be fixed immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, while the rapid rise of the society in numbers may be attributed to the disgust evinced by the civilized world at Domitian's tyranny. The first action taken was to circulate a large number of writings, falsely ascribed to Apostles, with the purpose of reconciling the fiercely discordant factions of Paulinists, Petrinists, and Judaizers, not to mention that of the Johanneans, still possessing their leader. After having, by this admirable means, attained his end, Clement next disseminated some "newly fabricated or interpolated works of Jewish or Heathen Prophecy," and crowned his diplomatic performances by "purloining from the Evangelist John the secret archives of his own 'Mysterien Gesellschaft', the so-called 'Society of Theologians', and with this and other ingredients (heathen and Jewish chiefly) compounding an esoteric system of ritual and mysteries, together with a priesthood."

Domitian had suspected and attempted to reach the society, but in vain : he probably owed his assassination to its machinations. Trajan pursued its traces with severity, and caused many of the leaders to be slain. Under Hadrian, the leaders succeeded in gaining the Emperor's favour by assuming the disguise of

Building Societies, and thus forming the origin of Masonic Lodges. Under Antoninus Pius, the society worked quietly by means of published apologies, and enjoyed the assistance of Lucian in combating the heathen-gnostic element, while under Aurelius the fullest success was reached. The Emperor allowed himself to be initiated into the mysteries of the Agape, “behaved himself throughout as the protector of Christianity” (sic), and obviously proposed to erect it into the state-religion of the Empire, had he not been hindered by a strong anti-Christian reaction, and, above all, by his premature death. During his reign the “Rebellion” of Montanism broke out. Its author, a daring ambitious character, entertained the notion of effecting, at one stroke, the long-planned reforms of the Agape, viz. of reorganizing society under the rule of the secret priesthood; and he was encouraged in his attempt by the manifest change in public opinion that the last generation had witnessed. He began by circulating a species of manifesto, which announced the speedy end of the world and the glory prepared for the faithful. In this document many of the Agapetic mysteries were revealed, a proceeding which caused the bitterest resentment against Montanus on the part of his former colleagues. The former, however, gained numerous adherents and wealth, and was even contemplating, if necessary, armed resistance to the Roman power. He enforced upon his followers a system of life calculated not only to nourish visionary and enthusiastic feelings, but to detach them from the ties of family and society. Above all, they were to give their lives in every case when persecution came.

The leaders of the Agape were filled with consternation at this outbreak, which not only imperilled their recently acquired amnesty, but fatally shattered their hopes of further peaceful progress in the Empire. Montanus had been successful in gaining the Overseer of the Society at Rome; but in Asia Minor active steps were taken at once. Even at Rome the skillful diplomacy of Praxeas was able finally to restore the supremacy. Seeing himself gradually forsaken by his followers, officially condemned in Asia, deserted at Rome, Montanus ended his career by suicide. Kestner points out the remarkable role played by the Roman power, which took no steps to crush the rising, and inflicted no penalty on even an open rebel (of the Montanistic party) at Rome. The Emperor was satisfied with the prompt and loyal action of the main body of Christians, which amply sufficed to crush the dangerous insurrection. Among the special anti-Montanistic manifestos should be mentioned Lucian’s *Philopatris*.

THUS FAR KESTNER : and the reader will ask perhaps, “Why have you taken the trouble to quote so much of a rather tedious paradox?” Paradox indeed, to those who accept history honestly and critically; but is there not a large party to whom this romance of the Agapé ought to be a godsend. The writers Appendix who profess to believe that the whole ecclesiastical system, as we find it in the fifth century, was revealed to the Apostles in the “forty days,”—what can they believe but that there was a “*doctrina arcani*” (they admit the “*disciplina*”), and what real difference is there between such a theory and that of Kestner, except in

a few artistic details? [*E.g.* the late Mr Chambers wrote in *Essays on Eccles. Reform*, 1873: “The sayings of S. Paul (sc. on virginity, etc.) are chapters from the great body of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, as the result of the great forty days’ communing with Jesus Christ.” I am not clear whether it is from the same source that, according to this learned writer, “S. James legislates concerning auricular confession and extreme unction.] Now, as this view is by no means confined to the members of the section to which this writer belonged, would it not be reasonable to furnish some explanation of this strange concealment? And would not the romance of August Kestner answer the purpose as well as any other?

## APPENDIX B.

## JANE LEAD, PETERSEN, AND THE PHILADELPHIAN SOCIETY.

IN the comparative study of later manifestations of a Montanistic nature, great care has to be taken not to confuse together with these the results of widely different influences. This mistake is specially liable to be made with regard to the various theosophical writers who have claimed a special insight not only into the truths of Scripture, but into the mysteries of Nature, and who may far more fitly be styled the Modern Gnostics. In this class, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, and perhaps even Jacob Boehme, have to be placed, and in later times, the “unknown philosopher,” Saint-Martin, and, perhaps strictly, Swedenborg. It is necessary, then, once more to remind ourselves of the special notes of Montanism.

- I. Belief in continued, immediate revelations.
- II. Attachment to the simplest forms of Christianity.
- III. Theory of a Spiritual Church within a Natural Church.
- IV. Stringent ascetic life incumbent on the Spiritual man.

To these might be added, what is indeed the strict converse of No. I., a distrust or even contempt for mere human speculations on the mysteries of salvation, and thus it is impossible to include the medieval and modern thinkers who ignored the primitive doctrines, and ran riot in the regions of astrology and alchemy. Nor would it be accurate, upon these data, to include those excellent men who, like Gerson and Richard de St Victor, found the bonds of scholastic theology too narrow, and strove towards a more spiritual insight. As we pointed out in a former chapter, Theresa appears almost alone as the fitting successor of Maximilla and Priscilla. But, for the purposes of illustrating the Montanistic principles in modern application, there are even better examples to be found in that remarkable period, the seventeenth century, when the immense renovation caused by Catholic zeal was evoking a sort of afterglow of the Reformation in Protestant Europe.

Although later in date than his English coreligionists, it will be well to consider the career of Johann Wilhelm Petersen (1649—1727) first, as better displaying the first stages of the modern Montanistic movement. Born at Osnabrück in 1649, where his father, a lawyer of eminence, had been sent by his native city of Lübeck as its envoy at the Congress, the son enjoyed an excellent



education, and in 1669 was sent as a theological student to the University of Giessen, where he obtained the degree of Magister. He afterwards studied at Rostock and the Saxon Universities, and upon his return to Giessen delivered philosophical lectures. About 1675 he made the acquaintance of Spener, whose subsequent influence upon his writings was considerable. He received the appointment of Preacher at the church of Lübeck, but was forced to leave the city owing to the machinations of the Jesuits, whom he had offended by a satire, and who petitioned the Emperor for his punishment. He finally settled at Hanover, but after a short residence was compelled to leave, owing to the increasing attacks from the Catholic party.

At last a haven appeared in the neighbourhood of his native city, and here he laboured for the next ten years (1678—1688). He married a lady, Johanna Eleonora von Merlau, of great piety, and soon after formed the acquaintance of the Frl. von Asseburg, whose visions and prophecies were beginning to excite attention. This remarkable person first opened his mind to wider views on the subject of God's present revelations to His Church. In the account of her which he published, he writes :—"As therefore we as yet knew not anything of these Heavenly Testimonies, or of the manner in which the Lord gave and dictated them, He was pleased to comfort and lift us up, who were wearied, and despised before the world for having believed and witnessed to His Kingdom. On the 20th day of October of the year MDCXC. we received this Testimony by this Blessed Maid, which here follows : 'I the Spirit of Love, I the Truth of Jesus Christ, do in the Spirit witness and declare, that ye my dear friends do stand in the truth I have witnessed this in the Spirit from the abundance of the love which I bear towards you. Amen.' Reading from this Divine exhortation and encouragement (continues Petersen), of which we had no manner of doubt, we fell upon our knees, giving thanks for it, and directing our vows to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of sacrificing up to him our whole life, of placing our confidence in him preferably to all Men, and of declaring abroad his holy truth"

On these matters becoming public, Petersen was subjected to new attacks, which resulted in his suspension from his post of Superintendent at Luneburg, to which he had been promoted in 1688, and in 1692 he was compelled once more to depart, and for ever to relinquish the work of public ministrations. Supported by friends, he was enabled to live in peace on a little estate near Magdeburg, which he exchanged subsequently for one in the neighbourhood of Zerbst, occupying the remainder of his life by writing in defence of the new Revelations, and later in organizing the German branch of the Philadelphian Society. He died on the 31st of January, 1727. The genesis of opinions in Petersen's case is precisely what we have found in Montanism, viz. :

1. Chiliastic views (leading to—)
2. Expectation of Divine aid in preparing the True Church for its future glory.

### 3. Joyful reception of prophetic claims.

A full statement of his theology will be found in the Articles of the Philadelphian Society, in which, if he took no part in their drawing up, he expressed his full agreement. It remains to be observed of Petersen that he had no insignificant claims to notice as a scholar and poet, apart from his theology. Leibnitz edited his *Uranias de operibus Dei magnis*, and his *Stimmen aus Zion* (Halle, 1698—1701) contain passages of real poetic value.

Before passing to the more important English branch, it is necessary to note the appearance in Germany, during Petersen's career, of a far less laudable character. Eva von Buttlar, a woman of birth and position, was attracted by the almost universal pietistic movement in the North of Germany in the last years of the seventeenth century, and joined a community of separatists, in which she soon gained the predominant influence. The opinions of this "Christliche u. Philadelphische Gemeinde" (of course not to be confounded with the real Philadelphian Society), were simply Millennarianism and opposition to outward forms, and involved at first no claim to new revelations. A stringent asceticism was proclaimed, and marriage between unbelievers was declared sinful. But the same degrading obscenities connected with a supposed purification of sexual intercourse were introduced, which ended in wholesale prostitution. Eva claimed to be the "Heavenly Sophia," and the "Gate of Paradise," and at last, with her companions C. Winter and Appenfeller, actually the incarnate Trinity! In 1704 the first rumours became public; discovery and arrest followed; the culprits escaped to Cologne and embraced Catholicism in order to avoid legal pursuit. But in 1706 they were once more seized and condemned to imprisonment, after which this disgraceful sect disappears from history.

Having fairly noticed an instance where fraud and obscenity assumed the covering of spiritual elevation, we now turn to the events in England which accompanied the labours of Petersen. Jane Lead was born in Norfolk in 1623. Early in life she relinquished worldly pleasures, although not moving in Puritan circles, and in her 19th year she began to claim revelations from the Holy Spirit. She married in the year 1644, and had four daughters, one of whom was subsequently married to Dr Francis Lee, the secretary and editor-general to the Society. Jane Lead was a woman not only of deep religious convictions, but of considerable mental power. Her numerous works, whether we accept their spiritual claims or not, cannot be condemned as the ravings of a visionary, although their literary form (when Dr Lee's hand is not employed) is certainly open to criticism. Her views were identical with those of Petersen, and are found expressed clearly and tersely in the subjoined Articles. The inmost and highest tenets (for there was undoubtedly an esoteric creed even within the spiritual code), are to be found in *The Laws of Paradise*, first published in 1695, but circulated in MS. many years before. Lead's powers shone to special advantage as an organizer, and to her talent and diplomatic tact is due the formation of the

Philadelphian Society and the affiliation of the kindred communities in different parts of Europe. Even those who condemn in other respects, will admire the wisdom which inspired the Constitutions. Her chief assistant in the work was John Pordage, a clergyman who had also imbibed his theosophic principles from Boehme's works, although he claimed the authority of individual revelation. He relates that near midnight on the third of January, 1651, he had three visions, which were repeated constantly for three weeks, and shared by other members of the Society who had been collected together. The accounts of these manifestations led to Pordage's deprivation in 1654, after an investigation before the magistrates of Berkshire. The Philadelphians now moved to London, and held regular meetings, continued until the Plague drove many of the members, including Jane Lead, into the country. The Society did not return to London until the year 1670, and in fact from this year alone its public existence and complete organization may be dated. Pordage procured a house for its meetings, and the number of members rose to more than a hundred, Thomas Bromley, Edward Hooker, and Sabberton, being the most important. He continued however to be its leader until his death in the year 1686.

We have few records of the Society during the next ten years, but in 1697 a monthly magazine was established, entitled the *Theosophical Transactions*, in which general articles, letters, and poetry appeared.

Finally, it remains to notice the connection between the English and foreign Philadelphians. Before 1694, a German, Loth Fischer, living at Utrecht, engaged in the translation of Lead's writings and their circulation on the continent. Petersen and his wife warmly welcomed the new allies, and a correspondence ensued which cemented the alliance. An inspector for Germany was appointed, Johann Dittmar von Salzungen, and provided with due credentials and instructions, being specially charged to promulgate the Fundamental Articles of Faith, the twelve Rules of outward conduct (vide infra), and also the 44 Constitutions. A common seal was introduced, with a mystical figure upon it, and the inscription "*Non est vol. nec curr. sed Dei miseric.*" The idea of a fixed contribution to a common fund did not find favour with the Germans. Notwithstanding differences between Dittmar and Gichtel, the Society continued to flourish, until the year 1703, when some secessions took place, including that of Dittmar, it is said on Spener's advice. In the following year Lead met with an accident, her death following on the 19th of August, 1704. She was buried in Bunhill Fields, the gravestone bearing the following inscription :

Exuvias carnis hic deposuit Venerabilis Aucilla Domini Jane Lead,  
anno LXXXI.

After her death the London Society soon lost its importance, and gradually was dissolved. Although traces of her influence are found in England in the eighteenth century, it is in Germany that her legitimate successors appeared.

The Fundamental Propositions of the Society are as follows :

I. The Church, or Bride of Christ, is to be made conformable to Christ throughout

II. This conformity is the adornment of the Lamb's Bride, who is now called to make herself ready.

III. This preparation and adornment cannot be otherwise, but by the Holy Spirit of God.

IV. This Spirit is one: and thence the Church must be also but one. Herein consists the true undivided Unity, and perfect Uniformity.

V. This Spirit is Holy : and thence the Church must be also Holy. Herein consists the virgin sanctity of all the members of this Church, that is to be redeemed out of the Earth.

VI. This Spirit is Catholic : and thence the Church must be also Catholic, according to the most strict sense of the Word, in an universal latitude of love, without any narrowness, partiality, or particularity of spirit.

VII. This One, Holy, and Catholic Church is not barely assisted by an Irradiation from the Spirit of Christ, but is actually and vitally informed by it, as the body is by the soul.

VIII. This vital operation and information being at present but in a very languid and faint degree, there must be a resuscitation and resurrection of the same, in order to the glorious kingdom of Christ.

IX. The resuscitation of this spirit is to be waited for.

X. It is to be waited for not only separately, but also jointly.

XI. Such a waiting is in obedience to our dear Lord and Master's command.

XII. It must be with these qualifications : (1) Humility, (2) Resignation, (3) Perseverance.

XIII. It must be for these ends : (1) Power from on High; (2) Wisdom from Above; and (3) Divine Learning and Theosophy.

XIV. It is lawful to wait upon God for power from on high, or the return of the miraculous deeds, by which His kingdom, that has hitherto been withheld, may come to be witnessed and proclaimed.

XV. It is lawful to wait and pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation, descending from the throne of God.

XVI. This is necessarily required in order to a right Appendix government in all spiritual affairs.

XVII. It is lawful to wait and pray for divine learning, and to prefer it above that which is human.

XVIII. This secret learning vastly exceeds the wit and industry of the most sagacious enquirers.

XIX. It shall be given of the Lord to all the members of this church.

XX. God is stirring up some persons in several countries, to wait in faith and prayer until such a pure church may arise.

XXI. To which a prospect of the present state of Christendom has very much conduced.

XXII. The many divisions and sects of Christianity, all pretending to be the true church, cannot be otherwise cured but by the effusion of the Spirit.

XXIII. The insufficiency of all other means and methods have been hitherto experimentally proved: (1) Of Human Learning, (2) Of Policy, (3) Of Power.

XXIV. Neither of which, separately or conjointly, is able to heal the divisions, supply the imperfections, or remove the corruptions of any one body of Christians. As (1) In the Church of Rome, (2) In the Lutheran Church, (3) In the Calvinistic or Reformed Church, (4) In the Church of England.

XXV. The consideration of the insufficiency of all human means, with a deep sense that Charity is waxen cold, and that Faith is hardly to be found, must needs excite us to wait upon those means which are sufficient.

XXVI. These means are not confined to a party, but are extended to all; even as far as the Holy Catholic Spirit reacheth, which passeth and goeth through all things : and by the effusion of this Spirit, all shall be taught of God.

XXVII. The Oneness, the Holiness, and the Catholicity or Universality of this Spirit, will not suffer us to appropriate it to any, and therefore not to our own Society, both with respect to ordinary and extraordinary operations of the same.

XXVIII. The design of our assembling is not to divide, but to unite; not to set up for a new religion, or Church, but to keep warm the spirit of love towards those of all religions and churches, and to endeavor after the only method of reconciling them into a perfect and lasting unity, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

[In pursuance of this proposition, it has been our custom to advise persons, when interrogated, to keep still the bond of peace in the visible unity of the Church. And even our assemblies have been very far from being grounded on sectarian principles, as we are able to demonstrate.]

XXIX. Catholic Love, and Apostolic Faith, are the two grand pillars of our Society, and the main objects for which we labour and pray, both separately by ourselves, and jointly in our assemblies.

XXX. The primary object of the Apostolical Faith is the revelation of the kingdom of God within the soul.

XXXI. This internal revelation is by Christ, the sovereign Head of the Church.

XXXII. Which, as it is diligently to be waited upon, so is it to be held fast, so far as it shall be received; a loss herein, or a relapse, being extremely dangerous.

XXXIII. Such a Revelation of the kingdom of God will constitute a Virgin Church, representative of its Head in (1) Holiness, (2) Truth, and (3) Power.

XXXIV. The members of this Church are to be anointed with Christ, and consecrated into (1) the Priestly Order, (2) the Prophetical, (3) the Royal and Davidical Order.

XXXV. The model thereof we do press after as attainable, and do not therefore rest in what we have attained.

XXXVI. The perfection of this model must be gradual, and the beginnings therefore of it consistent with a state of weakness and imperfection.

XXXVII. The Personal Appearance of Christ from Heaven is not to be, till after there be such a Philadelphian Church on Earth to receive him.

XXXVIII. Our design is Apostolical; abating only from what was of a temporary constitution, or fitted to such a particular Church.

XXXIX. The Will of God must be done in Earth as in Heaven, by the Inspiration of His Spirit.

XL. The Kingdom of God must come on Earth, as it is in Heaven, by Virtue of the same Inspiration.

XLI. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the foundation of our Hope and Faith.

XLII. There are some promises and prophecies which have not had yet their full completion.

XLIII. The Civil Government is an Ordinance of God, as He is the Supreme Governor of the World, and is accordingly to be submitted to.

[It is curious to note that the “ Short Project of the Manner of Education of Youth,” published in the same number of the Transactions, embodies all the main ideas which J. J. Rousseau and Basedow afterwards made into a system.]

IN THE NAME OF HIM WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID !

(We design not to set up any Form, or to lay any Burthen either upon ourselves, or upon others; but to maintain the Evangelical Liberty of Prophesying to all those that are, or shall be, anointed with the Spirit of Christ. However, it seems good to us, after having waited for the counsel of the Holy Spirit hereupon, to propose some certain Orders and Constitutions both to ourselves, and others whom they may concern, that may be either desirous to be admitted into our Society, or else inquisitive to hear a reason of our Faith or Hope.)

I. Let one of the Society open the Assembly with reading some portion of the Holy Scriptures. Upon which he, or any other, may have leave to prophesy, and to unveil the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God therein contained.

II. Let every one that prays or prophesies first wait in silence to be filled with the sweet internal breathings of the Divine Spirit upon their soul, before they presume to break into words.

III. Let none confine this spirit to any, or go about to restrain the various manifestations of it in such as are sanctified and taught by it.

IV. Let none erect to themselves hereby such a superiority as we esteem inconsistent with the Philadelphian purity of brethren and sisters.

V. Let there be a free liberty granted for any one of the strangers, if touched in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, to take up the Scriptures and read some portion in them (according to the custom admitted in the Jewish Synagogue, and then in the Apostolical Church), and to expound the same experimentally, or any otherwise to declare the movings and teachings of God upon their souls.

VI. But that abuses and disorders may be herein prevented, let there be no disputative or controversial way of propounding anything admitted, neither let there be asking of questions, which may engender strife; but let all be done and spoken for the promotion of Peace and Love.

VII. However, if there be any doubts upon the hearts of any who truly love the Lord Jesus, and desire to be obedient to His Gospel, they may after the hours of our solemn worship propose the same, either by word or writing, but rather by the last, to be considered of by the Society, in presenting before the Lord what shall be so proposed. And, if they desire it, let a private hearing be appointed for them by some of the members of the same.

VIII. Let also, for the same end, all they who prophesy be so far subject to the spirit of the Prophets, as united and combined together; that none of an irregular conversation be permitted to take up the Name of the Lord, or to speak as from His Spirit, till after a sufficient satisfaction be given.

IX. Let even the true spirit of Prophecy, wherever it shall be found, be under regulation; as anciently, in the schools of the Prophets : therefore let those who prophesy learn how and when to obey the conduct thereof; for (1) Imitation, (2) Exhortation, (3) Comfort.

X. If a woman pray or prophesy, let it be with all sobriety and modesty, to speak forth her own experience, sensation, or manifestation in the Divine matters.

XI. Let the various operations of the Spirit of Prophecy be encouraged and excited, for the ends proposed in the Reasons for the Foundation of our Society; what is not according to these, let it be rejected.

XII. Let not the manifestations of the Spirit be hindered in exercise, though attended with weakness: but rather let it be encouraged in the inferior degrees, so that all shall finally come to speak as the very Oracles of God, without the alloy of their own natural imperfections.



APPENDIX C.  
SWEDENBORG

SCHWEGLER, in his final chapter upon the later echos of Montanism, declares summarily that Swedenborgianism is “a renovation of the Montanistic system.” What grounds are there for this statement? Their examination, in any case, must throw light upon the subject, regarded from the stand-point of this essay.

Swedenborg claimed to have received direct revelations.— He relates that from his earliest childhood he had seen flames, heard admonitions, and had remarkable dreams. But the year 1745 (when he had attained the age of 57), was the beginning of his Seership. From that time he noted all visions in his Dream-Book, and regarded them as the materials for the most careful investigation. His theory of seership is that every man possesses, while in the body, spiritual senses, which may be, and in many cases have been, opened; contrary to the usual notion that angels and spirits render themselves visible by a temporary assumption of a material form, dissipated as soon as the purpose of the vision is accomplished. [He naturally referred to Numbers xxiv. 3, 4, and 2 Kings vi. 16, 17, in confirmation of his opinion.] Swedenborg claimed to have enjoyed the privilege of seership for twenty-seven years; and that he was thus enabled to live consciously in both the natural and spiritual worlds, to converse with the inhabitants, and to have cognizance of the affairs of both. He erects a distinction between prophets and seers. Some seers were prophets, but all the prophets were not seers. Indeed, it by no means follows that “seers” must necessarily be good men or women. Seership is the normal condition of all, and, according to Swedenborg, will become the actual condition in the future. It does not involve a sixth sense, but the twofold range of each of the five senses, with the addition only of an internal consciousness of the truth. It does not concern us to enquire here into the substance of these alleged revelations, except as regards the doctrines which he educated, and upon which we shall treat later. The second question is as to the object for which these revelations were afforded. Swedenborg answers it thus :—

Its object.

I. “ To learn the true doctrines of the Christian religion, by entering intellectually into the things of faith, that thus I might teach them authoritatively to mankind.”

II. “To learn the true and internal signification of the Word of God, and show that therein consists the genuine inspiration of the Scriptures.”

III. “To learn the true relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds, and, in the ‘science of correspondences,’ supply at once a key to this relationship, and also to that which subsists between the spiritual and natural senses of the Scriptures.”

IV. “ To learn concerning the states of man in the other life, the nature of heaven and hell, the character of heavenly joys, employments, habitations, and scenery, and of infernal miseries; the relationship between life in this world and the next, and to solve the problem of the fate of the heathen.”

V. “ Learn from angels concerning creation, preservation, and Providence, the origin of evil, and the ultimate triumph of goodness, and make known such angelic wisdom to man.”

VI. “ Learn concerning the sanctity and perpetuity of the marriage relationship, and make known to the world the real nature of the spiritual difference between the sexes; the true character of conjugal love, and its heavenly blessedness; and, contrarily, of the real character of adulterous love, and its infernal pleasures.”

VII. “ Be the witness of the great event in the spiritual world, which is so frequently referred to in the Word as the ‘Last Judgment,’ and thus be the forewarner of mankind of the vast spiritual, mental, and political issues which should result therefrom.”

VIII. “ That I might thus be an instrument in the Divine hands of aiding in the inauguration of a new age for the Christian Church, an age of clearer light, more fervent love, more intelligent faith, and more devout charity ; which new state of the Church, I assert, was predicted in the Apocalypse of John, under the symbol of the descent of the New Jerusalem.”

In these articles of belief (all of which find their fulfillment in Swedenborg’s works, according to his adherents,) we trace several notes of similarity to Montanism, and also some striking differences. In both the doctrine of the non-finality of the Gospel dispensation appears, and in both the possibility of the direct intercourse of man with the Divine Spirit; but the mode of revelation is widely diverse. The Montanist prophet falls into a trance or ecstasy, and there receives the higher instruction, which he sometimes communicates in a fragmentary, oracular form. The Swedenborgian is armed with the two theories, viz. of the three senses of Scripture, literal, spiritual, and Divine, and of correspondences, and with these he operates upon the Bible, in the coolest and most matter-of-fact mental condition. There is a remarkable similarity between the ideas of Swedenborg and Tertullian on the subject of marriage. It is true that the special polemical discussions of the latter are wanting in the former, but there is the same lofty ideal of the spiritual as well as carnal union of the Christian man and wife. Finally, it was neither intended by Montanus, nor by Swedenborg, to found a sect, or separate Church. In the Church of the future,

Swedenborg declared that there would be slight doctrinal differences, but a far broader charity : at present his doctrines are fitted to be the esoteric creed within the worship of any religious community.

But the great gulf is in the region of pure dogma. The Swedenborgian conception of the Trinity can only be described as Sabellian, and Tertullian would certainly not have welcomed into the ranks of the Pneumatici one who asserted : “that Jehovah Himself, and not a Son born from eternity, became incarnate in the world; that the Divine Trinity is a Trinity of Essentials in the One Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; that He, as to the Divinity, is the Father, as to the Humanity is the Son, and as to the Divine proceeding, operative energy, or outflowing Spirit, is the Holy Ghost; that during His sojourn in the world, He made His humanity Divine from the Divinity which was in Him, and which thus became one with the Father, &c.” This doctrine was developed by Swedenborg in his treatise published in 1763 [Doctrine of the N. J. respecting the Lord], and sufficiently prevents any complete approximation with the original Montanists, although possibly there may be analogies with the Aeschinist sect. The obvious reaction against the vulgar rationalism of the eighteenth century (as also in Lavater and St Martin) must not be disregarded.

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