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## LECTURE IX.

Use of the Fathers in ascertaining the *text* of the New Testament. Their motives for accuracy in this particular. Importance of their testimony in establishing the genuineness of whole passages. The impression produced by it increased, when the occasion of it is known. Its use further exemplified, where the genuineness of the passage is doubtful, as 1 John v. 7, and the subscription of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The same testimony of still greater value in the criticism of single words; opposed to the reading of Griesbach and Wetstein in Acts xx. 28, and to that of the "Improved Version" in Rom. ix. 5. Some other examples.

THE next advantage which I said resulted from the testimony of the Fathers, was the light they throw on the *text of Scripture*. It must be so with writers who lived at so very early a date, whose works are filled with quotations from the books of the New Testament, and with dissertations on the meaning, and who were under the strongest impressions of the grievous sin there was in taking any liberty with the sacred text.<sup>1</sup> Neither was it enough for them to have a *general* acquaintance with Holy Writ: the various forms of heresy, with which they had to contend, exacting more from them than this. Many of the heretics mutilated Scripture to serve their purposes; it was the more necessary, therefore, that they should be prepared with the genuine text. Many misinterpreted and perverted it; it was required of them, therefore, to wrest the passages thus distorted from their hands, on which occasions the disputes would sometimes turn on so small a matter as the position of a point. A *particular* knowledge, therefore, of Scripture was absolutely demanded of the champions of orthodoxy and the Church: and I think we must be often struck, especially when reading the works of the early Fathers, with the microscopic eye, which they

<sup>1</sup> See Irenæus, V. c. xxx. § 1. "Ἐπειτα δὲ τοῦ προσθέντος, ἢ ἀφελόντος τι τῆς γραφῆς, ἐπιτιμίαν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ἔχοντος, εἰς αὐτὴν ἐμπεσεῖν ἀνάγκη τὸν τοιοῦτον. Where it may

be remarked, the observation is called forth by a question respecting a text in the *New Testament* and not the *Old*; the number of the beast in the Revelation, ch. xiii. 18.

cast on Scripture, and the conclusions—the fair conclusions—they frequently extract from texts, which would not have suggested themselves to listless or superficial readers.

In treating of the subject before us, I am only overwhelmed by the mass of matter proper to illustrate it, which lies at the command of any man even moderately informed in these early authors. I will, however, endeavour to lay before you some examples of the use of the Fathers in this particular, not, perhaps, the best that might be furnished—for the best will not always come at one's call; and one often has to regret, after having delivered a Lecture, that such and such passages to the purpose did not present themselves at the time of composing it—but at all events examples sufficiently in point to establish the proposition before us, and to increase your respect for the study of authors so conducive to the most important interests of sound theology. Our own sense, indeed, would dictate to us that such use as I am now drawing from the Fathers must naturally belong to them, and some may think that it is superfluous to enter into details in a case so clear; but that sort of general acquiescence in a truth is a very different thing from a conviction of it wrought by the effect of specific illustrations in point, and with these present in our minds we become far more able to contend with gainsayers.

Now in the first place, *whole passages* of the New Testament have been objected against as spurious or of doubtful authority by persons who would understand the Scriptures in a sense of their own, and in no other, and who were, therefore, under a temptation to decry portions of it which stood in the way of their theory. For instance, modern Unitarians have called in question large portions of the two first chapters of the Gospel of St. Matthew.<sup>1</sup> The "Improved Version" of the New Testament pronounces it impossible that the genealogy and the history which follows the genealogy, and extends to the end of the second chapter, and which contains an account of the miraculous conception, could have been written by the same author.<sup>2</sup> Certainly it would be enough to reply, as it may be replied with truth, that the manuscripts are altogether against them. But two witnesses are better than

<sup>1</sup> Bloomfield's Greek Testament, vol. i. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The New Testament in an Improved Version, p. 1, 4th Ed.

one nevertheless, and it is satisfactory to be able to confirm the manuscripts by the testimony of the Fathers, who lived almost as early as when manuscripts of the New Testament began to have any existence—especially as such testimony is of a popular character, more readily remembered, and more easily appreciated, than the number and value of the manuscripts. Such a Father is Irenæus; fortunately, providentially we may say, he was engaged in controversy with parties whose faith was unsound as to the nature of Jesus Christ: not that they denied or doubted the Divinity of Christ (with the exception of a small and inconsiderable sect of heretics<sup>1</sup>); but instead of believing that “Though he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ,” maintained that Jesus and Christ were separate beings, Christ descending upon Jesus at his baptism and quitting him before his crucifixion. In refuting this absurd notion, Irenæus appeals, amongst other proofs, to the whole of the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, both to the genealogy and to the history of the miraculous conception which follows it, and evidently without the least suspicion that its genuineness could be disputed. “I have already sufficiently proved,” says he, “from the language of John, that he understood the Word of God to be one and the same, to be the Only Begotten; to be the same who took flesh for our salvation, even Jesus Christ our Lord. However, Matthew knowing that Jesus is one and the same, when setting forth his human generation of a virgin (even as God promised David, that of the fruit of his body he would raise up an everlasting king; and again, long before, gave the same promise to Abraham), saith, ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;’ afterwards, in order, to set our minds free from all suspicion about Joseph he saith, ‘Now the birth of Christ was on this wise; when as his mother was espoused unto Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost;’ afterwards, when Joseph was thinking of putting Mary away because she was pregnant, an angel of God appeared unto him and said, ‘Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

<sup>1</sup> *Tivés*.—Justin Martyr, Dial. § 48.

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us ;' manifestly signifying," continues Irenæus, "that the promise which had been made to the Fathers had been fulfilled, that the Son of God had been born of a virgin, and that this same was the Saviour Christ, whom the prophets foretold ; not, as *they* say, that Jesus was he who was born of Mary, but Christ, he who descended upon him. For whereas Matthew might have written, 'The birth of *Jesus* was on this wise,' the Holy Ghost, foreseeing corrupters (of the truth), and providing against their artifice, says, by Matthew, 'Now the birth of *Christ* was on this wise,' " (Irenæus reading *Χριστοῦ* and not *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*), "and says, too, that this is Emmanuel, lest perchance we should suppose him to be only a man . . . and in order that we should not suspect Jesus to be one person and Christ another, but be assured that they were one and the same."<sup>1</sup>

Who can read this passage and entertain a doubt that Irenæus had no misgiving whatever respecting the genuineness of the first chapter of St. Matthew ; that he felt in using it he was building his argument against the Valentinians on a foundation that could not be shaken ? And who can help being struck with the thought that these imaginations of the heretics of the first and second centuries, wild and baseless as they seem, so wild and so baseless that we wonder they should have called up such a patient antagonist as Irenæus, were just the very crotchets which were calculated to cause him and others, in refuting them, to put their testimony on record to portions of Scripture, which have the nature of Jesus Christ for their subject ; passages on that very account of infinite value, and worthy of every guarantee that could be devised for their authority, and thus to preserve to the end of time weapons of war against any Anti-Christian heresy which, in the lapse of ages, might discover itself.

Clemens Alexandrinus affords us similar evidence, and of the same incidental character as the last, to the genuineness of the first chapter of St. Matthew. Indeed, all the evidence these very early Fathers furnish on these most interesting

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, III. c. xvi. § 2.

topics is incidental, and on that very account is the more precious ; for they are pursuing other inquiries of their own—inquiries for the most part of little concern to us—when the information of which we are in search escapes them by the way. Clemens, I say, is engaged in a very copious and favourite argument of his, that of proving that all heathen literature is long subsequent to Jewish. In the course of it he gathers some dates which answer his purpose from Josephus, which show that from Moses to the tenth of Antoninus were 1933 years, so far back was the Law given. “Others,” he proceeds, “reckoning from Inachus and Moses to the death of Commodus, say that there were 2942 years ; others, again, 2821. But in the Gospel according to Matthew,” he continues, which is the passage I am submitting to your attention, “the genealogy is carried on from Abraham to Mary the mother of our Lord. For from Abraham to David, it says, are fourteen generations ; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon, fourteen generations ; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations ;—three mystical intervals completed in six weeks.”<sup>1</sup> And though the argument of Clemens does not lead him *in this place* to quote the first chapter of St. Matthew further than the genealogy, he elsewhere acknowledges the fact of the miraculous conception, the stumbling-block of the “Improved Version,” saying, for instance, “That the Word proceeding (*προεληθῶν*) was the author of Creation ; for when the Word took flesh in order that he might be visible, he *begat himself*.”<sup>2</sup> I have given the argument on which Clemens is employed, and the paragraph itself at full, in order that you may see the better the entire assumption there is on the part of Clemens, though impressed with the truth of the miraculous conception, that this genealogy cannot be gainsaid ; the utter absence of all suspicion from his mind that the genuineness of it can be questioned. Much of the force of the evidence would be lost, did I content myself with this single assertion, that Clemens evidently regards the first chapter of St. Matthew as genuine. You want the setting in order to do the jewel justice. I fear my Lectures are sometimes protracted by these amplifications ; but I presume that there are some here to whom these investigations are new, and I know I can reckon

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. Stromat. I. § xxi. p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> V. § iii. p. 654.

on the forbearance of those whose knowledge is more mature, whilst I amplify for a good purpose.

Nor is this all. The "Improved Version" further reminds its readers that Archbishop Newcome, whose translation is taken for the basis of that version, suspects the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of St. Matthew<sup>1</sup> to be a marginal note anciently taken into the text; but we see Clemens in this place not only quoting this verse, but actually discovering in it a mystical meeting. And Origen, it may be added, on one occasion without quoting, evidently in a loose manner refers to the verse<sup>2</sup>; and on another represents Celsus as founding one of his infidel arguments on the Saviour's genealogy as given in the Evangelists, and in replying to him, so far is he from intimating that the genealogies are spurious, that he actually retorts upon him that he was not even intimately acquainted with the argument he was handling; for that had he been he would have known, which it seemed he did not, that the Christians themselves had found a difficulty and a subject of investigation in the *discrepancy* of the genealogies; thus clearly suggesting to us that the genealogies both of St. Matthew and St. Luke were in his days what they are in ours, and were undisputed passages of the New Testament, both of them.<sup>3</sup>

Again, I observe it stated<sup>4</sup> that some modern Germans pronounce, in the same spirit of rash and presumptuous conjecture which dictated the last objection, the passage in the twenty-seventh chapter of St. Matthew,<sup>5</sup> where it is said, "The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves," &c.—an incident not mentioned by any other of the Evangelists—to be spurious. Here, again, it might be enough to reply, that the manuscripts are all against them. But still it is satisfactory to know, that so early as Ignatius there is allusion made to the fact, though not a quotation of the words, the allusion, perhaps, carrying even more conviction to the mind that the verse existed in the copy of St. Matthew's Gospel which was in the hands of Ignatius, than the insertion of the text itself would have done. "How shall we be able to live without

<sup>1</sup> "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum*, VI. § 5.

<sup>3</sup> II. § 32.

<sup>4</sup> See Bloomfield's Edition of the Greek Testament, *in loc.*

<sup>5</sup> vv. 52, 53.

him?" writes he to the Magnesians, "whose disciples the very prophets were, and whom by the Spirit they expected as their teacher; and therefore he, whom they righteously waited for, being come, *raised them up from the dead.*"<sup>1</sup>

Thus will the Fathers often supply a ready and intelligible answer to rash charges indeed, thrown out against the received text of Scripture, but such charges nevertheless as it is desirable to meet and silence.

Again, they will be equally important in the investigation of passages of doubtful character. How greatly is their testimony concerned, for instance, in determining the genuineness of 1 John v. 7. I am not of course, about to embark upon this elaborate controversy, a portion of which has nothing to do with the subject now before us, which is to show the value of the *Fathers* in determining the text of Scripture: though, indeed, this case of the disputed verse pretty much resolves itself eventually into a scrutiny of two passages of the *Fathers*, one in Tertullian, and the other in Cyprian. Annihilate these, and the support of the verse from other quarters greatly fails: on the other hand, prove that they certainly contemplate the verse, and in spite of the argument from the manuscripts there would have been great difficulty in rejecting a passage which could be vindicated by testimony so early. Show that the *resemblance* to the verse certainly discoverable in those two passages can be accounted for without supposing Tertullian and Cyprian to have seen it, and the probability of its spuriousness will augment in proportion to the success with which that proposition is made out. This is the passage in Tertullian: "Cæterum, de meo sumet, inquit; sicut ipse de Patris. Ita connexus Patris in Filio, et Filii in Paraclete, tres efficit cohærentes, alterum ex altero, qui tres unum sunt, non unus: quo modo *dictum est*, Ego et Pater unum sumus, ad substantiæ unitatem, non ad numeri singularitatem."<sup>2</sup> "He shall take, says the Son, of mine,<sup>3</sup> as I myself took of the Father's. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, makes three Persons cohering one with another, which three are one substance (unum), not one Person (unus), as it is written, 'I and my Father are one,'<sup>4</sup> *i. e.* as to unity of substance not as to

<sup>1</sup> Ignat. ad Magnes. § ix.

<sup>2</sup> Tertull. Adv. Praxeam, c. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> John xvi. 14.

<sup>4</sup> x. 30.

singularity of number." Here, says one party, in the expression, "tres unum sunt," you have a quotation from the disputed verse 1 John v. 7. No, replies the other, Tertullian does not mark it as a quotation, which, had it been one, he would have done; for he had done so just before, when he had quoted John xvi. 14, using an "inquit;" and again he does so just after, when he quotes John x. 30, using a "dictum est:" yet here he gives no intimation of the kind. Moreover, if the three heavenly witnesses were in Tertullian's copy, why does he content himself with so slight an allusion as this to a text so much to his purpose; so much more to his purpose than that of John x. 30, which he instantly after proceeds to cite? And how comes it, that in a treatise of some length, such as this against Praxeas is, and where the course of the argument is constantly forcing him upon this disputed text, he never advances it but in this one supposed case? The words "qui tres unum sunt," therefore, they maintain, are Tertullian's own; as if he had argued, "which three are one, *unum* I say, not *unus*; just as in St. John's Gospel we have, 'I and my Father are one,' where it is also *unum*; for it is meant unity of substance, not singularity of person."

The passage of Cyprian is in his "De Unitate Ecclesiæ,"<sup>1</sup> "Dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater unum sumus; et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est, Et hi tres unum sunt." "The Lord says, I and my Father are one; and again concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost it is written, And these three are one." Here once more the defenders of the verse contend, you have it quoted by Cyprian. No, rejoin their antagonists; it is only an application of his of the 8th verse, not a quotation of the 7th, a mystical application quite characteristic of him and of his school: just as Facundus, a Bishop of the African Church of the sixth century applies it, saying, "Joannes Apostolus in epistolâ suâ de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto sic dixit, tres sunt, qui testimonium dant *in terrâ*,<sup>2</sup> spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hi tres unum sunt, in spiritu significans Patrem, in aquâ vero Spiritum Sanctum

<sup>1</sup> § vi.

<sup>2</sup> It may be said that "in terrâ" is in itself a part of the interpolated verse, which is from *ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ* to *ἐν τῇ γῆ* inclusive. But hear Professor Por-

son: "In Facundus, it is true, the editions six times repeat in terrâ; but these words are so inconsistent with the interpretation which Facundus is labouring to establish, that Bengelius

significans, in sanguine vero Filium significans.”<sup>1</sup> “The Apostle John in his Epistle writes thus of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, ‘There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one;’ by the spirit signifying the Father, by the water the Holy Ghost, and by the blood the Son”—a passage they further argue, which very strongly implies that Facundus at least knew nothing of the seventh verse; otherwise, why should he prove the point, which the seventh verse affirms in plain words, by a mystical interpretation of the eighth? Moreover, they add, Facundus confirms his own mystical interpretation of the eighth verse by an express appeal to Cyprian, as one who understood it in the same way as himself, and accordingly he quotes the paragraph in Cyprian from the “De Unitate Ecclesiæ” just brought before you; only he assigns it to a work of his “De Trinitate,” whether by a mistake, or whether Cyprian had used it in both treatises, the latter of the two being now lost, a point at all events of no importance to the argument. This appeal to Cyprian by Facundus is a continuation of the foregoing passage, and is as follows, “which testimony of the Apostle John, Cyprian in an Epistle or book, which he wrote concerning the Trinity, understands to have been said of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for he says,” &c.; and then comes the paragraph from Cyprian already given. This shows that Facundus knew nothing of the seventh verse, and that he supposed Cyprian’s allusion to be to the eighth and not to the seventh. But how, rejoin the defenders of the verse, do you explain the term, “it is written,” with which Cyprian ushers in the phrase, “And these three are one?”<sup>2</sup> Does not this prove that Cyprian at any rate considered it a quotation, and is not the sentence in fact found in the disputed verse? No doubt Cyprian considered it a quotation, is the reply, but the eighth verse supplies a similar phrase, *καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν*, and is the one which Cyprian was thinking of and citing. And you will have the less difficulty in allowing this as Facundus, who unquestionably cites the

fairly allows them to have been added | p. 386.

by transcribers. We ought also to consider that Facundus has been published | <sup>1</sup> Facundus, Pro Defensione Trium Capitulorum, l. c. iii.

from a single MS.”—Letters to Travis, | <sup>2</sup> *Καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσιν.*

eighth verse and not the seventh, cites these words exactly as Cyprian does, "et hi tres unum sunt."

I shall not pursue this subject further, nor am I called upon to express any positive opinion on the disputed verse, whether it is genuine or not; but I say that the short statement I have made of a main feature of the controversy must suffice to satisfy you, that the Fathers have a great deal to do in determining it; and that he would be a strange critic of the New Testament who should undertake to fix the true text in this place, and banish the Fathers from all share in his reasoning.

Again, to take another case of a different kind; the date of the first Epistle to the Corinthians subscribed at the foot of it in our ordinary copies runs thus: "The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written from *Philippi* by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus." Now it is evident from an argument of Origen's in his treatise *περὶ Εὐχῆς*,<sup>1</sup> that no subscription of this kind was known to him; for he takes it for granted that St. Paul wrote this Epistle from *Ephesus* and not from *Philippi*. He is speaking of the congregation in which prayer is made; and is contending that besides the visible worshippers there are present also invisible angels, and the power of the Saviour, and the blessed spirits of the departed; and to prove the latter he adduces a text from the first Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>2</sup> where "Paul says, 'when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ;' as though the power of the Lord Jesus," proceeds Origen, "was connected not only with the Ephesians" (*i. e.* those amongst whom Paul was at the time) "but with the Corinthians" (*i. e.* those to whom he was writing). "Now, if Paul," he continues, "being yet enclosed in the body," and, as appears from the last paragraph, at *Ephesus*, "considered that he could help them with his spirit who were in *Corinth*, we must not deny that in like manner the blessed souls departed may come in the spirit to the Churches yet more readily than one who is in the body." Origen's date of the Epistle, it is true, is perfectly consistent with the internal evidence of the Epistle itself, as appears by comparing ch. xvi. 8 and 19; but it is entirely at variance with the subscription of the Epistle; and

<sup>1</sup> § 31, p. 269, Bened. Ed.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. v. 4.

confirms Paley's view of that subscription given in his "Horæ Paulinæ."<sup>1</sup>

I have hitherto been contemplating the case of whole passages of the text of the New Testament affected by the evidence of the Fathers; sustained, suspended, or proscribed by it. When we come to particular expressions and various readings, in proportion as they are vastly more numerous than the former, the value of that evidence becomes still more apparent.

Look at the well-known text, the 28th verse of the xxth chapter of the Acts. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," *ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἣν περιποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*. Here the evidence of the manuscripts is conflicting. Wetstein and Griesbach decide in favour of *τοῦ Κυρίου*, the latter particularly affirming that no MS. of very ancient date or high character presents the received reading *Θεοῦ*.<sup>2</sup> And yet the Vatican MS., perhaps that of the highest authority of all, was examined for the London edition of Griesbach's New Testament published in 1818, Dr. Burton tells us, and was found to contain this reading.<sup>3</sup> It has been observed by a very able writer in the "Monthly Censor," a shortlived periodical which appeared a few years ago, Number VIII., 1823, in a Review of Mr. Belsham's translation of St. Paul's Epistles, "We have been long aware that by those most hostile to the established faith, the labours of Griesbach have been looked upon with peculiar complacency."<sup>4</sup> But however that may

<sup>1</sup> c. xv. § 1.

<sup>2</sup> Griesbach, *in loc*.

<sup>3</sup> See *Monitum ante Præf.* p. ii.; Burton's Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> See e. g. Griesbach, 1 Tim. iii. 16, *ὃς ἐφανερώθη*. Yet see Porson's Letters to Travis, p. 143. "You will probably defend the latter reading (*i. e.* Θεός instead of ὃς), nor shall I dispute it."

Rom. ix. 5. Ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός ἐβλογητός. Griesbach, Θεός = Cyprian. ed. Does this mean, Cyprian omits Θεός? = is the sign of omission; but what does ed. mean? Certainly the Benedictine Edition of Cyprian (Tes-

tim. Contra Judæos, II. c. vi.) has Deus. Bishop Middleton, after making some remarks on the Socinian conjecture on the text of this verse, viz. that we should read ὢν ὁ—a conjecture, says he, involving an argument which is improbable, and Greek which is impossible, adds, "Yet Griesbach has, in his new edition, honoured this conjecture with a place among his various readings."—On the Greek Article, *in loc*. In a paper in the Quarterly Review, No. 65, p. 80, on the controversy on 1 John v. 7 (written I conclude by Dr. Turton, now Bishop of Ely), is the following passage:—"It is the fashion to extol Griesbach's la-

be, the evidence of the Fathers certainly tends very much to turn the scale in favour of Θεοῦ, and the received text: and so far from being fairly represented by Griesbach, who says, "neque apud Patres certa lectionis istius vestigia deprehenduntur ante Epiphanium,"<sup>1</sup> the contrary is the truth. It is possible, nay probable, that Griesbach trusted to Wetstein's note upon this verse of the Acts, in which he professes to produce the authorities from the Fathers for and against the expression αἷμα Θεοῦ. But even then he could not have felt safe in making so unqualified an assertion. And besides, Wetstein's list itself is far from being either complete or accurate—not complete, for it omits several authorities in favour of the ordinary reading, as that of Clemens Alexandrinus; quotes partially that of Tertullian; omits several places in Origen which involve the term, whilst he extracts two which indirectly seem to resent it—not accurate, for he probably misquotes a passage from Athanasius contra Apollinarium, and by reading καθ' ἡμᾶς instead of καθ' ἑμᾶς reverses the meaning. "According to you," says Athanasius (not according to us), "the blood of God is not mentioned in Scripture, but this is the daring of the Arians."<sup>2</sup>

Let us turn then to the phraseology of the early Fathers in succession, and so judge for ourselves of the value of this assertion of Griesbach's "that no certain traces of the ordinary reading are to be found in them before Epiphanius."

In the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians,<sup>3</sup> we have the following paragraph: "Being imitators of God; having animated yourselves by the blood of God, ye have performed perfectly the congenial work;" and if it be any satisfaction to any of my hearers to know it, the passage is found in the recently-discovered Syriac copy of this Epistle.

In the "Quis dives salvetur" of Clemens Alexandrinus occurs this sentence: "For they know not what a treasure we bear about us in our earthen vessels; a treasure protected

hours in that department. In matters of this moment it would be wrong to disguise our sentiments; and therefore, so far from expressing any admiration of his system, we avow our opinion that an edition of the Greek Testament which should adopt all his notions of the best readings, would vary much more from the original standard than

the editions in common use."

<sup>1</sup> Griesbach, vol. ii. p. 115, 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> See the Review of Mr. Belsham's Translation of St. Paul's Epistles in the Monthly Censor, No. VIII., 1823. This Review is recommended strongly in a note to the above paper in the Quarterly Review.

<sup>3</sup> § 1.

by the power of God the Father, and the blood of God the Son, and by the dew of the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup>

In Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem*, II. c. iii., "I know we are not our own, but bought with a price; and what sort of price? *the blood of God.*" This passage Wetstein quotes, but there are several other passages in this author most concurrent in meaning with this, which he overlooks. Thus Tertullian speaks of "God being crucified"<sup>2</sup> over and over again. In his "*De Carne Christi*," he is bantering Marcion: "You talk of the folly of believing this and that."<sup>3</sup> . . . But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise . . . Foolish things are they which relate to the insults and *sufferings of God*. Or will they call it wisdom to say that *God was crucified*? You must get rid of this, Marcion; yes, in the very first place. For which is the most unworthy of God? which must we blush for most; that he should be born, or that he should die? that he should bear flesh, or bear the cross? that he should be circumcised or crucified? . . . Make answer to this, thou slayer of the truth! Was not God truly crucified? Having been truly crucified, did he not truly die? As he was truly dead, was he not truly raised to life? It was a fallacy, to be sure, of Paul's, when he determined to know nothing amongst us, save Jesus crucified: he falsely taught that he was buried; falsely inculcated that he was raised again. False, then, is our faith; and all that we hope from Christ is a vision! Most wicked of men to excuse the *murderers of God.*"<sup>4</sup> Whatever may be thought of the temerity of these words (a temerity characteristic of their author), we cannot deny that they lend the most unflinching support to the reading *αἷμα Θεοῦ*. Neither is it on one occasion only, or in a moment of peculiar heat, that this expression of Tertullian escapes him; he recurs to it elsewhere; and in his treatise against Marcion, uses the following language: "God acted with man that man might be enabled to act with God. God was made little, that man might be made great. If you despise such a God, I am at a loss to know whether you truly believe that God was crucified."<sup>5</sup> And once more in the same treatise:<sup>6</sup> "Well is it with Christians who believe that

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. Quis dives salvetur, § xxxiv. p. 954.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, c. v.

<sup>3</sup> c. iv.

<sup>4</sup> c. v.

<sup>5</sup> Adv. Marcionem, II. c. xxvii.

<sup>6</sup> c. xvi.

*God did die*, and yet that he lives for ever." It is evident that, from whatever source derived, the mind of Tertullian is familiar with the idea of the αἷμα Θεοῦ. There is not one of these passages, except the first, of which Wetstein takes any notice.

On the other hand it is said, that Irenæus quotes the verse, and reads "ecclesiam Domini,"<sup>1</sup> as though Κυρίου were in his copy. But it must be borne in mind that we have not here the original text of Irenæus, but merely the language of his barbarous translator; which, though in general probably giving the substantial meaning of the author, cannot be depended upon as an authority for a various reading: moreover, that in several passages, where we happen to have the Greek as well as the translation, it appears that the translator was not nice in rendering either the term "God," or "Lord." Thus in Book V. c. iii. § 2, the Greek runs, τὰ δὲ τέχνης καὶ σοφίας μετέχοντα Θεοῦ, "things which partake of the art and wisdom of God;" but the translation has it, "quæ autem sapientiam participant Domini." So in Book V. c. ii. § 3, the Greek has it, "the body and blood of the Lord (τοῦ Κυρίου);" the Latin, "the body and blood of Christ." In the Preface to Book I. § 2, the Greek speaks of blasphemy against Christ, the Latin of blasphemy against God. So that it is clear in the case before us it cannot be concluded that Irenæus did not say ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, because the translator happens to say, "ecclesiam Domini." These instances of loose translation I have taken from Dr. Burton's "Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ;"<sup>2</sup> and I have little doubt many others might be added to them: indeed one I will name, in Book II. c. xxvi. § 1, where we have in the Greek, "blasphemers against their Lord or Master (δυσπότην);" but in the Latin, "blasphemers against their God."

Moreover, though it is true we do not find in Irenæus the exact phrase, "the blood of God," yet we do find in him language which approaches it very closely. Thus he says, This is the mystery which he (Paul) "tells us was made known to him by revelation, that he who suffered under Pontius Pilate, the same is Lord of all, and King, and God."<sup>3</sup> And another expression which Irenæus uses may be con-

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, III. c. xiv. § 2.

<sup>2</sup> p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Irenæus, III. c. xii. § 9.

sidered as belonging to the same class, "that the Virgin Mary received the glad tidings by the word of the angel that she should conceive *God*."<sup>1</sup> For it is probable that the same author who would speak of *conceiving* God, would find nothing objectionable in the phrase, *blood of God*.

But whatever may be the weight, be it more, or be it less, that we attach to the several passages from the Fathers which I have adduced on this subject, the purpose for which I have adduced them is answered; since none can deny, that, in determining the probable reading of Acts xx. 28, their testimony is of great importance; testimony which proves that the phrase *αἷμα Θεοῦ*, so far from being strange to the early Church, is thoroughly familiar to it, from whatever source derived.

I will take another example in illustration of the subject before us. In Rom. ix. 5, we have the text, according to our version, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever," *ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*. "Of whom, by natural descent, Christ came, God who is over all be blessed for ever," is the translation of the "Improved Version:" and there is added in a note, "The early Christian writers do not apply these words to Christ, but pronounce it to be rashness and impiety to say that Christ was God over all. The word God," it continues, "appears to have been wanting in Chrysostom's, and some other ancient copies; see Grotius, Erasmus, and Griesbach. It is a very plausible conjecture," it proceeds, "of Crellius, Schlichtingius, Whitby, and Taylor, that the original reading was *ὦν ὁ*, instead of *ὁ ὧν*. This would render the climax complete, *ὦν ἡ υἰοθεσία, ὦν οἱ πατέρες, ὦν ὁ Χριστὸς, ὦν ὁ Θεός*, 'of whom was the adoption, of whom were the Fathers, of whom was Christ, of whom was God, who is over all.' Nor is it likely, when the Apostle was professedly summing up the privileges of the Jews, that he should have overlooked the great privilege which was their chief boast, that God was in a peculiar sense their God." Such are the sentiments of the author of the "Improved Version," sentiments which one may remark, in passing, even the Greek subverts, requiring as it

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, V. c. xix. § 1.

would a repetition of the article,  $\delta\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\epsilon}\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\eta\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ , for which it makes no provision.

With respect to the omission of the word "God" in Chrysostom's, and other ancient copies, even Wetstein does not think it worth while to take any notice of it; and Griesbach, who does, and to whom the note in the "Improved Version" refers us, does so in a manner which only shows how frivolous is the argument drawn from that omission; for though Chrysostom, as Griesbach says, omits the clause,  $\acute{\omicron}\ \delta\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ , in his commentary on the passage; in the text, on which he is commenting, as given by him it stands; and so it does in other places in his works; the omission, which you see is not of  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  merely, but of the whole paragraph, being here made by him no doubt for short, and to save writing. But no early Christian writers apply the words to Christ! What then says Irenæus? We have the passage only in the Latin translation it is true; but what is that translation? "Ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, *qui est Deus* super omnes benedictus in sæcula,"<sup>1</sup> "of whom as concerning the flesh is Christ, *who is God* over all blessed for ever;" the reading  $\delta\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}$  also disposed of by it as effectually as the assertion that the early Fathers do not apply the text to Christ. And Tertullian's authority is as clear upon the point as that of Irenæus; nay, even yet more satisfactory; not only because we have not to get at him through a translation, but because, though his rendering of the verse is not the same as that of Irenæus, it nevertheless points to the same Greek text of the verse; gives the same meaning to it; and what is more still, whilst it presents to us the verse twice, it is not in the two cases in exactly the same words or order of words, yet in both cases the signification is the same as before; the same as that of our own version; and in both cases there is still the same evidence as before that the  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  was in his copy; and that his punctuation was the same as our own. "Ex quibus Christus, *qui est Deus* super omnia benedictus in ævum omne;"<sup>2</sup> and again, "quorum patres, et ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, *qui est super omnia Deus* benedictus in ævum."<sup>3</sup> Testimony to the same effect is

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, III. c. xvi. § 3.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> c. xv.

afforded by Hippolytus;<sup>1</sup> by Origen,<sup>2</sup> though in this instance only in the Latin of Rufinus; by Cyprian<sup>3</sup>; and by others.<sup>4</sup>

I will just point to a few other examples of readings of Scripture, affected one way or other by the testimony of the Fathers, without entering on any comment. Thus in 1 Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted," *Κύριον* is a reading recognised by Griesbach as bearing a comparison in authority with *Χριστόν*. However, "Nec tentemus *Christum*, quemadmodum quidam eorum tentaverunt," is the translation of Irenæus<sup>5</sup>; which, though not decisive of the question for reasons already assigned, must be taken into account in the discussion of it, valeat quantum valet.

In Rom. vii. 25, we have, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord:" *εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ* is the received reading; *χάρις τῷ Θεῷ* a reading, according to Griesbach, not inferior to it; *ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ* a reading given by him in the notes as that of the Clermont, and St. Germain MSS. "Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?" is the way in which Irenæus renders the text; adding, "deinde infert liberatorem, gratia Jesu Christi Domini nostri:"<sup>6</sup> as though Irenæus understood it, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"; which, though not answering exactly to *ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ*, comes nearest to that reading.

In 1 John ii. 23, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:" this is the received text according to the Greek; there is added in our translation, "but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also": and Griesbach marks it as a probable addition to the received text, *ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει*. Cyprian supports this supplement, reading, "qui confitetur Filium, et Filium et Patrem habet."<sup>7</sup>

In Rev. xviii. 5, we have, according to the common reading, "For her sins have *reached* unto heaven" (*ἠκολούθησαν*),

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, Contra Noetum, c. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, Comment. in Rom. lib. vii. § 13, vol. iv. p. 612.

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian, Testim. contra Judæos, II. c. vi.

<sup>4</sup> See Burton's Testimonies of the

Ante-Nicene Fathers, p. 87, *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Irenæus, IV. c. xxvii. § 3.

<sup>6</sup> III. c. xx. § 3.

<sup>7</sup> Cyprian, Testim. adv. Judæos, II. c. xxvii.

“*cleaved to the parties (ἐκολλήθησαν)*, even appearing against them in heaven,” is the reading of the Alexandrine and Royal Paris MSS., and is adopted by Griesbach. Hippolytus in his treatise on Antichrist<sup>1</sup> confirms this latter reading.<sup>2</sup>

These examples, which might be multiplied to a very great extent, may suffice for the purpose of these Lectures.

I again entreat you to look at the great religious interests concerned in the question of patristical evidence—in the question of the use of the Fathers; and to observe how frequently the defence of the text of Scripture, where a various reading even may touch upon a serious heresy, devolves in a considerable degree upon them; and then to ask yourselves whether the study of them can be safely abandoned.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, De Antichristo, § xl.

<sup>2</sup> I take it from Mill, who, in his Prolegomena to the New Testament, p. lxii., notices this and some other emen-

dations of the ordinary text, which Hippolytus suggests. See Hippolytus, Ed. Fabricii, p. 33.