

power named Jesus Christ, who is called by the Gentiles (peoples) the prophet of truth, whom his disciples call the Son of God: raising the dead and healing diseases, a man in stature middling tall, and comely, having a reverend countenance, which they that look upon may love and fear; having hair of the hue of an unripe hazel-nut and smooth almost down to his ears, but from the ears in curling locks somewhat darker and more shining, waving over (from) his shoulders; having a parting at the middle of the head according to the fashion of the Nazareans; a brow smooth and very calm, with a face without wrinkle or any blemish, which a moderate colour (red) makes beautiful; with the nose and mouth no fault at all can be found; having a full beard of the colour of his hair, not long, but a little forked at the chin; having an expression simple and mature, the eyes grey, glancing (?) (various) and clear; in rebuke terrible, in admonition kind and lovable, cheerful yet keeping gravity; sometimes he hath wept, but never laughed; in stature of body tall and straight, with hands and arms fair to look upon; in talk grave, reserved and modest [so that he was rightly called by the prophet] fairer than the children of men.

This follows the traditional portraits closely, and was no doubt written in presence of one. The Greeks, it may be added, had similar minute descriptions of the apostles and the Virgin—just as they had of the heroes of Troy.

I shall excuse myself from transcribing the letters of the Virgin to Ignatius and to the people of Messina and proceed to the forged Pauline Epistles. The most important of these we have already seen, viz. the 'Third Epistle to the Corinthians', in the Acts of Paul.

The Muratorian fragment mentions two of these: 'There is current also one to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrians forged (plural) in favour of Marcion's heresy.' The statement is obscure, and has given rise to all sorts of guesses. We have an Epistle to the Laodiceans, but it is entirely colourless in doctrine. That to the Alexandrians is gone. We also know that Marcion cited the Epistle to the Ephesians as 'to the Laodiceans', but this does not help; the Muratorian writer knows *Ephesians*. Very possibly the word *forged* applies only to the second letter, and should be in the singular number. If so, the fragment may refer to our Epistle to the Laodiceans, which is quite old.

EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS

It exists only in Latin: the oldest copy is in the Fulda MS. written for Victor of Capua in 546. It is mentioned by various writers from the fourth century onwards, notably by Gregory the Great, to whose influence may ultimately be due the frequent occurrence of it in Bibles written in England; for it is commoner in English MSS. than in others. As will be seen, it is wholly uninteresting, and was merely written to justify or explain St. Paul's mention of the letter from Laodicea in Col. iv. 16.

1 Paul, an apostle not of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, unto the brethren that are at Laodicea.

2 Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I give thanks unto Christ in all my prayers, that ye continue in him and persevere in his works, looking for the promise at the day of judgement.

4 Neither do the vain talkings of some overset you, which creep in, that they may turn you away from the truth of the Gospel which is preached by me.

5 And now shall God cause that they that are of me shall *continue* ministering unto the increase of the truth of the Gospel, and accomplishing goodness, and the work of salvation, *even* eternal life.

6 And now are my bonds seen of all men, which I suffer in Christ, wherein I rejoice and am glad.

7 And unto me this is for everlasting salvation; which also is brought about by your prayers, and the ministry of the Holy Ghost, whether by life or by death.

8 For verily to me life is in Christ, and to die is joy.

9 And unto him (*or* And also) shall he work his mercy in you, that ye may have the same love, and be of one mind.

10 Therefore, dearly beloved, as ye have heard in my presence, so hold fast and work in the fear of God, and it shall be unto you for life eternal.

11 For it is God that worketh in you.

12 And do ye without afterthought whatsoever ye do.

13 And for the rest, dearly beloved, rejoice in Christ, and beware of them that are filthy in lucre.

14 Let all your petitions be made openly before God, and be ye steadfast in the mind of Christ.

15 And what things are sound and true and sober and just and to be loved, do ye.

16 And what ye have heard and received, keep fast in your heart.

17 And peace shall be unto you.

18 The saints salute you.

19 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

20 And cause this *epistle* to be read unto them of Colossae, and the *epistle* of the Colossians to be read unto you.

It is not easy to imagine a more feebly constructed cento of Pauline phrases.

Zahn believed himself to have found a fragment of the Epistle to the Alexandrians in the shape of a lesson—a liturgical Epistle—in the (eighth century) Sacramentary and Lectionary of Bobbio (Paris Bib. Nat., Lat. 13246). It is headed 'Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians', but it is not from that letter or any other.

Brethren, we that are under the power of the Lord ought to

keep the commandment of God. They that keep the Lord's precepts have eternal life, and they that deny his commandments get to themselves ruin and thereto the second death. Now the precept of the Lord is this: Thou shalt not swear falsely, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not take gifts against the truth, neither for power. Whoso hath power and denieth the truth, shall be denied the kingdom of God and be trodden down into hell, whence he cometh not forth again. How are we frail and deceitful, workers of sin! We do not repent daily, but daily do we commit sin upon sin. That ye may know this, dearly beloved brethren, that our works <are judged, hearken to that which> is written in this book: 'it shall be for a memorial against us in the day of judgement.' There shall be neither witnesses nor companions; neither shall judgement be given by gifts; for there is nothing better than faith, truth, chastity, fasting, and almsgiving which putteth out all sins. And that which thou wouldest not have done to thyself, do not unto another. Agree thou for the kingdom of God and thou shalt receive the crown which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This, again, is a very incoherent little piece; it is rather like some curious fragmentary homilies printed by Dom de Bruyne from Carlsruhe (Reichenau) MSS. which I am sure are of Irish composition. I do not think it can be called an apocryphon at all; there are other pieces scattered about in manuscripts called 'preachings' of Paul, or the like, which are just centos of texts and precepts.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF PAUL AND SENECA

existed in the fourth century, for Jerome mentions it, says it was 'read by many', and is led by it to insert Seneca in his catalogue of Christian authors; Augustine also, quoting the genuine Seneca, says, 'of whom some letters to the apostle Paul are current (read)'. The Pseudo-Linus inserts a paragraph in his *Passion of Paul* (see p. 470) telling how Seneca frequently conversed and corresponded with Paul, admired him much, and read some of his writings to Nero.

Manuscripts as old as the ninth century exist, and of the twelfth-fifteenth centuries there are many. The composition is of the poorest kind: only its celebrity induces me to translate it once again.

1. SENECA TO PAUL, greeting

I believe, Paul, that you have been informed of the talk which I had yesterday with my Lucilius about the apocrypha (or possibly the secret mysteries) and other things; for certain sharers in your teaching were with me. For we had retired to the gardens of Sallust, where, because of us, those whom I speak of, going in another direction, saw and joined us. Certainly we wished for your presence, and I would have you know it.