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MONTANISM :

PROPHECY OR HERESY?

A Thesis presented for the
degree of M.Th.
Research having been conducted
in the Department of
Ecclesiastical History,
The University, Glasgow
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October 1983.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- A N E T Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the old
testament.
Edited by J.B. Pritchard
2nd Edition 1955
- A O T Altorientalisite Text Zum alten testament
Edited by H. Gressman
2nd Edition 1926
- B A S O R Bulletin of American Studies of Oriental Research
- B J R L Bulletin of John Rylands library
Manchester
- C S E L Corpus Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
Vienna 1866
- D C B Dictionary of Christian biography
Henry Smith and Henry Wallace
London 1880
- E T English Translation
- H E Historia Ecclesiastica
Eusebius
- H T R Harvard Theological Review
- J B C Jerome Biblical Commentary
Brown Raymond E S S and Others
London 1968
- J B L Journal of Biblical Literature
- J E H Journal of Ecclesiastical History

J T S Journal of Theological Studies

N T S New Testament Studies

P G Patrologia Greco-Latina
 ed J.P. Migne
 Paris 1843 - 90

P L Patrologia Latina
 ed J.P. Migne

R B Revue Biblique

T D N T Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
 E T of Theologisches Worterbuch Zum Neuen Testament
 ed G. Kittel, G. Friedrich
 Stuttgart 1933 - 74

I Q Sa Rule of Community (appendix) from Qumran Cave I

V T Vetus Testamentum

Summary

My interest in Montanism developed out of my quest for non theological factors surrounding religious movements in the early Church. This interest developed over a long time but was enkindled once more during the course of my studies with Professor W H C Frend. I became particularly interested in the Phrygian movement and the environment that helped its development.

Several opinions have arisen about whether Montanism was prophecy or heresy. Sometimes arguments have arisen as to how Montanism differed in its original home of Phrygia from that which was known in the West. Some authors saw the extinction of Montanism as the extinction of the Spirit of prophecy which gave life to the early church. Others have seen it as the ending of the "heresy of the Phrygians".

In this work an attempt has been made to trace prophecy up to the time of Montanism and see what factors, sociological, environmental or otherwise contributed to the spread or extinction. Hence in my Chapter one, I traced prophecy in Israel. Taking my bearing from the origin and the influence environment had on the prophecy in Israel, in Chapter two, I treated the New Testament prophecy and had a look at Paul's understanding of the word prophecy.

Chapter three deals with two books of the early Christian Centuries, which were written with the explicit reason that they were prophecy.

One, Revelation was written in Asia Minor and one, the Shepherd of Hermas was written in Rome. In the two books we saw how social and economic conditions precipitated the need for prophetic utterances.

Chapter four deals with the Montanist movement; a brief survey of the situation prior to the time of the outbreak of the movement and how/

/how it eventually spread as far as the West.

Chapter five discusses what 20th Century writers had to say about Montanism, and thus to Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Montanism as a religious movement in the early church has been branded a movement of double home¹. As a movement of enthusiasm, it took its rise in Asia, thereafter attracting the attention of the Church in Rome, it reappeared in 'Africa' in its later form, as a movement of rigorism. The above sentences give a birds-eye view of the fact that what is really a religious movement has many factors contributing to whichever phase it took wherever it took it. No one can seriously doubt the influence of paganism and philosophy as providing the intellectual background against which Christianity developed, similarly no serious student of history can doubt the contribution within the Roman Empire, Hellenistic Judaism in all its many aspects made to mould the social as well as the theological patterns that characterised its development. Non theological factors were always present in its steady advance during the first two centuries.

Environment and social conditions have a great deal of influence in whatever people believe. Examples abound as to the influence of these factors. For instance, one who is accustomed to worship only in one of the big cities of Western Europe would be completely surprised at what people of the same sect or faith do in the remote regions of Africa. The doctrine of heaven and hell will have more meaning to the impoverished regions of Nigeria than to the affluent society in the developed world. The difference between urban and rural environment plays a great part in shaping of peoples beliefs and as Professor Frend puts it "Christianity began as an urban movement and when the rural areas took over, it adapted". Could we not find the truths in the adaptations which the Christian message made from the Jerusalem home/

/home into all parts of the world? So, Prophetic Movement as a movement in the proclamation of the Christian message had its adjustments too.

The difference between Hermas of Rome and Montanus of Phrygia may lie partly in their local environment. The author of Revelation was clearly influenced by his environment and social conditions in Asia minor.

The same may be said of the Old Testament prophets like Amos, Micah and others in so far as we are able to discover.

My thesis therefore concerns the prophetic movement within the early Christianity. How far was Montanism a continuation of this? How far was the spread to North Africa and Rome the response to a social and religious message that appealed to Christian inhabitants with the orthodoxies and complacencies of a residential urban episcopate? Or was Montanism simply the heresy of the Kataphrygians? These are the questions my thesis tries to answer. In my work I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor W H C Frend whose advice and guidance has proved invaluable. I am also grateful to Anne Russell for her patience and courage in typing a difficult Manuscript.

Notes :

- 1 For this account cf G Salmon, s v 'Montanus' in D C B iii 935 - 45; J Tixeront, History of Dogma i Page 192 - 199, G N Bonwetsch, Die Geschichte des Montanismus (Erlangen, 1881) see also Tillemont, Memoires, ii 418 - 48, and Fleury, Hist Eccl 427 - 33

CHAPTER I
PROPHECY IN ISRAEL

Discussion of prophecy and its social implications in the Old and New Testament and in the Church in the first two Centuries must start with its origin among the Israelite people. Prophecy represents a phase in the religious history of Israel. In this Chapter, we consider its origin and the social and historical environment in which it first developed.

Prophecy appears in many religions and cultures, not least "those of ancient Near East." Though evidence is scanty, due to the fact that prophets proclaimed their message orally, some scattered traditions have survived about Near Eastern prophets which indicate its existence from early times. Two groups of individuals having prophetic powers are recorded, namely Seers (roeh) and Nabii (ecstatic prophets). One form of prophecy, that of the Seer was noted in the nomadic world. Among the nomads of ancient Near East, the figure of a Seer played an important role. While there are few specific allusions in the early period, persistency of the nomadic institution of the Bedouin world makes it likely that men of God or inspired persons appeared as Seers among the nomads proclaiming divine instructions on the basis of dreams and presentiments. Thus the Patriarchs of Balaam (Numbers 22 - 24) may correspond to Arabic Kahim¹. The Seer was not necessarily associated with the sanctuary, but there was no opposition between the Seer and the Sanctuary attendants because sometimes both these activities can be found in one person. In the early nomadic culture the activities of priest, magician and the clan leader might coincide with those of a Seer in a single person held to be inspired. The Seers' primary contact with the other higher world was through the sense of vision; /

/vision: hearing played a lesser role. Oracles were usually based on what came into view and what the Seer observed. This was true of Balaam, who had to see the Israelites before he could curse them. Another form of prophecy had its root in the settled area of the ancient Near East and was linked with stimulating vegetation and fertility cults. This is called the ecstatic prophecy in the Sanctuary or Royal Courts who are best designated by the Old Testament nabi. We are not going to delve into the etymology of the word, but it is enough to say that some medieval Jewish commentators understood the root meaning of the Nabii to come from the Akkadian word meaning "call". The Old Testament itself mentions the ecstatic prophets of the god Baal (I Kings 18 : 19 ff II Kings 10 : 19) and presupposes the existence of prophets as an internationally known phenomenon (Jer 27 : 9). In the 18th Century BC a letter from Aleppo, an ambassador of Zimrilin, King of Mari, mentions Apilum "Answerer" who had a female counterpart and normally performed his duty in the Sanctuary². From around 1700 BC a series of letters from Mari on the "middle of Euphrates" testifies to the appearance of male and female prophets termed apilum or Muhhum and Muhhutum³. They belonged to a class of men and women who received mandates from the deity with whose temple they are associated through omens, dreams, or visions and ecstatic experiences which they transmitted in the form of oracles. In the following period⁴ also they were in Babylon priests and priestess who supported the King with "spoken dreams". In Assyria, there was another type of ecstatic prophecy exercised by priestess known by name, especially those associated with Ishtar temple at Arbela. In the 15th Century BC a/

/a letter of Rewassa of Taanach mentions an ammanu of Asarte who was expert in magic and could foresee the future⁵. Inscriptions of Zakir, King of Hamath (about 800), speaks of Seers and men who could foresee future⁶.

In Egypt, there is no certain evidence for the appearance of prophets. Nevertheless, Pliny reported in his "Historia Naturalis" VIII 185 that during the cultic ceremony around the Apis bull young men were seized by frenzy and predicted future events. The Mari letters tell in each case how a man or woman came without being summoned to a governor or other high official of the King bringing a demand or message from the deity to be transmitted to the King. The letters frequently state that ecstasies received the instructions of the deity in a dream. No distinction is made between dreams and visions which are also mentioned. The requirements of the deity were addressed to the King and referred to quite diverse matters: the deity's instructions about the strategic situation when the King was at war, the construction of a city gate, the provision of sacrificial animals and the observance of a sacrificial occasion. Other examples abound. From what has been said, it is clear that prophecy was not a unique phenomenon to the religion of Israel. The parallels of the prophecies in the ancient Near East to the Israelite prophecy are unmistakable. The apilum or mahhum correspond to the nabi; like the nabi, he used the form of the short prophetic saying. He demanded that the divine command be transmitted to the King without regard for whether it pleased the King. He criticised the King's conduct without regard to the fact that the vassals of the King learned of his criticism. He delivered admonitions/

/admonitions and warnings. If a promise was conditional, he expected the King to obey the divine command, but he could also promise unconditionally. All in all, this is like the professional prophecy of Israel. The fact that in Israel there existed the form of prophecy found in ancient Near East is evident in I Samuel 9 : 9. He who is called a prophet (nabi) was formerly a Seer. This shows that nomadic Israelites brought with them to Palestine the institution of a Seer as represented by patriarchs in the pre-Yahwistic period and found the institution of the nabi (prophet) in Palestine and borrowed it. The same passage shows furthermore that the two distinct forms began to coalesce and something new was coming into being.

Old Testament prophecy transformed what it had borrowed, adapting it to the requirements of Jewish monotheism. Influence of Yahwism made a crucial contribution to the existing elements, even more marked than in other aspects of Hebrew religion. Thus began a long and complicated process that was still in full swing about 1000 BC. In this period Yahwistic Seers (Nathan) and Nabis (I Samuel 10 : 5) still existed side by side as representatives of separate phenomena⁷. Their gradual coalescence produced the Old Testament prophecy in the strict sense, first in transitional forms that are hard to make out, more clearly in Elijah and Elisha. Following the practice of the Seers, such prophets could make their appearance as individual figures independent of Sanctuary and Cult and without ecstatic experiences. In Israel as in other parts of Near East, prophetic ecstasy in the absence of bureaucratization remained a force to reckon with. In the times of war, these ecstasies were bound up with national movements. In this/

/this aspect really, the Israelite nebiim was not different from those found elsewhere. They were recruited according to personal charisma, they pursued their common exercises in special habitats. Mention is made of nebiim in such Israelite towns as Gibeah, Rama, Gilgal, Bethel etc and music and dances were means of evoking ecstasy (II Kings 3 : 15). Their activities also included acts of frenzy which was to acquire magical powers. The miracles with which Elisha in II Kings 4 : 15, 4 : 8^f is associated with is typical of professional sorcery. This allows us to confirm that the nebiim were sought after as medicine men. As war prophets, the Yahweh nebiim appeared in the Northern Kingdom at the beginning of the national wars. At first this had nothing to do with prediction. Its business was the incitement to crusade, promise of victory-magic. There is no proof of relationship between ecstatic war prophecy of individuals and the later school of nebiim ecstasy. Obviously there must have been a relationship because the war ecstasy was in no way confined to individuals' ecstasy of charismatic berserks, and war prophets of the earlier times; and mass ecstasy of the dervish bands of later times of the peasant army. When the peasant army got well organised, there was no longer any need for the nebiim. In the time of the Yahwistic revolt of Jehu against the Omrid dynasty the ecstatic nebiim under the leadership of Elisha once more appeared as a political factor. The Nebiim of Elisha differed from that of Saul and Samuel in that they constituted a school. Strictly speaking, these free prophets had no national Israelite character. Under given conditions they made their services available to non Israelites. Their confirmed employment in both parts of the/

the Kingdom was attested by the sharp words of the so called writing prophets who saw them as lying prophets. It would seem that the present version of prophecy no longer distinguishes between Roeh and Nabi. It maintains the Roeh was an older name for Nabi - we can dispute this. Roeh originally meant a man who gave oracles on the basis of dreams, in short narrating the mind of Yahweh, he could have visions and be able to interpret them. The Nabi employs an ecstatic frenzy and utters words, later they came to be in a group.

As the division between Roeh and Nabi in Israel gradually tended to disappear, there gradually arose a group representing the dominant state of prophecy. There developed cultic prophets who were participating in the cultic observances of the Sanctuaries alongside the priests and the levites. Discourses of these are found in the verses of the Psalms⁸, and the prophetic books of Nahum, Habakkuk. There were also Court prophets who exercised their ministry at the Royal Court and probably around the vicinity of other important national figures. They promised the King his desired victory before a military campaign (I Kings 22) or like Haniah supported the King's policies against dissenters, (Jeremiah 28). All these groups include those condemned as false prophets. The Israelites now thought primarily of the professional prophets as prophetic class alongside whom individual prophets made their appearance. These were regarded as extra. These individual prophets however, include the names of those who were accepted as true servants of Yahweh. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and some part of Deutero-Isaiah.

From Babylonian exile beginning in 586 BC the pattern of Israelite thought about the prophets began to change. There was a gradual realisation that the individual prophets, though few, were right and their court rivals had been proved wrong. In the post exilic times, cult prophecy more and more lost its importance, while the discourses and accounts of the great individual prophets were collected and gradually took the character of a Holy writ. The individual prophets were concerned with the covenant relation between the members of the Israelite Community. Oppression, and extortion were denounced as abominable to God. The Covenant included social idealism. Prophecy itself tended to coalesce in a single message pronounced by one who was acknowledged to have been "Called to God".

What then were the experiences of those prophets? Here we consider the phenomena common to all prophets. The ministry began with the "Call" experience⁹. This is persistent whether the message is accepted or not. The next is the proclamation. Here the prophet performed some public acts but he also had a deep personal contact with God in which the Spirit of Yahweh comes to him. They had a secret experience which was at first doubted by the prophets. The experience was obviously accompanied by ecstatic experiences. Ezekiel is a case in hand. The next is the prophets interpretation of his experience. This is aided by the prophet's life and is followed by rational interpretation or processing of his experience. This is followed by the reduction of his message to artistic form.

Let us now have a look at some of the individual prophets and the general outline of their teaching. Here we do not intend to be/

/be exhaustive but it still suffices to have a bird's eye view of what the prophets taught.

AMOS:

Amos is first in the list of the writing prophets. He was from Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem. His time of ministry was during the reign of Jeroboam II (786/82 - 753/46 BC) (cf Amos I : I, 7 : 9). His ministry must have been between 760 and 750 BC.

Though from Judah, he preached in the Northern Kingdom. Fundamental to Amos' message was a resounding no to the existing social conditions in Israel and its understanding of history. Amos came forth as a champion of civic and commercial righteous universal deity who was supremely displeased by his people's attitude and performance. They would be held accountable for their flagrant violations of the Mosaic Covenant. This Covenant which had first been presented to them as a divine gift intended to strengthen the community faith, had now become the instrument of Israel's indictment. Through prophets who he had already dispatched, Yahweh had favoured Israel with a clear sign of his will (2 : 11). He had also directed a series of famine, plagues, and droughts against his people in hope that they would once more take seriously their covenant relationship with him (4 - 6 : 11). To all but the insensitive, these disasters would have been interpreted as warnings that Israel would repent and return to her maker. Since the nation had not responded positively to such "exhortations" the deity had no choice but to let loose his wrath on the Cataclysmic day of Yahweh.

HOSEA:

Ministry also in the Northern Kingdom. His ministry began while the dynasty of Hehuwas still on the throne, probably during the reign of Jeroboam II (cf Hosea I : I, 4) and extended through the period of internal confusion and regicide following the fall of his dynasty as well as the Syro-Ephramite war (736 - 733 BC) into the days of Hosea the last King of Northern Israel, (cf Hosea 11 - 12, 12 : 2) but ended before the fall of the Northern Kingdom so his ministry could be dated between 755 and 750 BC to 725. The text of his discourse were brought down to Judah after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. His message is dominated by severe tension between Yahweh's conduct towards Israel and the conduct of Palestinian Israel towards Yahweh. Amos rejected the cult as a means of salvation on ethical grounds opposing it to practice of daily life. Hosea attacked the cult because it was not directed to the God of Israel but to a baalized Yahweh or infact, to Baal. He also attacked the domestic and foreign policy of Israel.

MICAH:

Micah came from Moresheth-gath in the hill country of Judah, south west of Jerusalem. He appeared during the reign of Hezekiah (cf Jer 26 : 18). His activities must have begun before the fall of Samaria. So his ministry can be dated from 725 to soem time before 711 BC. Through his personal experience he knew the abuses he attacked, especially the Jerusalem initiated annulment of the ancient Agrarian law for the benefit of large landowners. The prophet's censure of the rich is especially pronounced in Micah. He claims that the well-to-do remain awake at night devising schemes of wickedness (2 : 1). He even/

/even outlines their illegal real-estate transaction (2 : 2). Then comes the awful disclosure of divine intention. "Behold, against this family I am devising evil, from which you cannot remove your necks; and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be an evil time" (2 : 3).

But who precisely is the target of divine rebuke? Perhaps the term "this family" applies to Jerusalem's irresponsible upper class¹⁰.

Another view however is that this term is a later gloss inserted by an unknown individual who wished to limit the disaster¹¹. Neither alternative has to be accepted, however. Amos 3 : 1 - 2 and Jer 8 : 3 illustrate the noun "family" can denote the entire covenant people. If this is how Micah used the term, then he would be predicting the destruction of the entire country and the attendant suffering of the rich and poor alike. Because the Southern nation as a whole has become corrupt it must suffer ruin. In 2 : 6 - 11 other examples of outrageous social behaviour are mentioned. The affluent seem to have employed robber gangs to victimise their unsuspecting neighbours (2 : 8). The people have also silenced those who speak the truth. The one who says "I will preach to you of wine and strong drink" (2 : 11) attracts an enthusiastic crowd, whereas the popular response to Micah's candor is "Do not preach" (2 : 6). In Micah's estimation, Judah's urban culture is plagued by rank corruption.

ISAIAH:

Isaiah came from Jerusalem and was probably of noble birth. He exercised his ministry during the reign of Joham Ahaz and Hezekiah, a time of political turmoil. His last discourse dates from 701 BC. In the first years of his ministry, Isaiah devoted his message to the/

/the attacks on social and ethical situations in Judah and Jerusalem remonstrating against the King and the Government. He also attacked the upper class, the great landowners. He rebuffed the cult as a means of salvation. For him it is being willing, doing good and obedience to the will of Yahweh that can save.

ZEPHANIAH:

Zephaniah was a Judaite and probably lived in Jerusalem. He appeared during the reign of Josiah. His ministry could be dated around 630 BC. In his preaching, Zephaniah followed Amos, Isaiah and Micah. He attacked idolatry, the imitation of practices based on foreign religions.

JEREMIAH:

Jeremiah came from the priestly family that resided at Anathoth, north east of Jerusalem. He was probably born around 650 BC or shortly after. His prophetic call came in 626 BC (cf Jer 1 : 2, 2S : 3). He exercised his prophetic ministry for more than four decades with interruptions. His ministry can be divided into four periods whose message reflects both internal situations of Judah and the crucial events of world politics which also determined his own conditions. The first period comprised the year of his call to shortly before Josiah's reformation was finished (626 - 622 BC). After a short period of activity at Anathoth, he went to Jerusalem where he preached against the sins of his people in cultic, ethical and political realm. When he was the futility of his message, he considered his message over, and he remained silent for many years, (cf Isaiah 6 : 10 - 11, 27 - 29). The second period fell in the reign of Jehoiakim and it/

/it involved him in serious conflicts (608 - 597 BC). This time he attacked the temple and cult, asking the people to return to Yahweh and judgement was approaching. He found serious opposition both from the King and the priests who threatened and attacked him, accusing him of blasphemy. His thoughts were written down by Baruch and recited in the temple. The King ordered his arrest and he had to go into hiding until the King's death.

The third period comprises the years of accession of Zedekiah after the first deportation until after the fall of Judah and Jerusalem (597 - 586).

After the fall of Jerusalem, he remained in Palestine, but after the murder of Gedaliah, the Commisar appointed by the Babylonians, by a group of refugees, he was forced to accompany them to Egypt (Chapt 42-43). There he exercised his ministry for a short time and disappeared from history. Heremias's message bore his personal stamp as no other prophet had done. He was the sins of his age that he attacked in political, cultic and ethical realm. On account of these, Yahweh's judgement was coming. Intercession of even Moses or Samuel was a useless exercise (Jer 15 : 1). Jerusalem and Judah were living in alienation of Yahweh.

PROPHETS AND THEIR TEACHING:

The prophets regarded themselves as intercessors for the people of Israel. Yahweh spoke and it was for them to warn the people. Most or all of the times, the preaching fell on deaf ears. They had opposition both from the priests and the King and the false prophets, also from the local populace. The prophets in general attacked the evil of the society, the life of the people in general, the cultic life and the relations with their neighbours. The prophets warned/

/warned against the old life because it was characterised by many ills. Great conflicts existed between Kings and the prophets. They tolerated the prophets only in uncertain times, but whenever they were sure of themselves, they had recourse of persecution. The King of Israel said to Micah, "I hate him for he never prophesies good concerning me but only evil". He put him in prison (I Kings 22 : 8, 27). Likewise Elijah was persecuted by Ahab because he was regarded as one who brought disaster to Israel (I Kings 18 : 17). To the Kings, the prophets who prophesied peace were popular not because people only wanted to hear good news, but that the preaching actually brought peace. Throughout history, the Kings were hostile to the great prophets. About the priests, no prophet before Ezekiel ever spoke favourably of the priests. Amos recognised only the Nazarites and the Nebim as Yahweh's tools but failed to mention the priests. The very existence of their own free type of prophecy was a sign of the weakness of the priesthood. Besides, the priests have been instrumental for the worship of false gods, in Israel. This they failed to oppose because they were feeding fat from the worship and sacrifices to the false gods. Because of those economical reasons, the priests failed to heed the warning of the prophets for change of life and return to the true worship of God.

On the other hand, the prophets never attacked the temple as such but the cultic worship which had degenerated to the worship of a baalized Yahweh or even to Baal. The prophets also received oppositions from the upper classes who opposed the prophets' call for repentance on economic grounds. From the poor they also received opposition because many gained from the false sacrifices and the debased moral/

/moral life of the community. The prophets were falsely accused of being haters of culture but what they preached was culture as handed down from their fathers. A revival or a going back to the morals as handed down by God. Can we see this attempt at revival anywhere in the New Testament?

THE POST EXILE PROPHETS

What then happened to prophecy after the exile?

At first sight the predictions of Ezekiel that prophets would no longer be enrolled in Israel (Ezek 13 : 9) seems to be fulfilled, for no prophets appear on any list of returned exiles, yet prophecy did survive the debacle and prophets were active in the Golah (return). In some cases their names have come down to us, Haggai, Zechariah, and no doubt others. Ezra speaks of prophets of God (Ezra 5 : 2). Zechariah (1 : 2 - 7) refers to temple prophets and 8 : 9 refers to the prophets who had been preaching before the foundations of the temple were laid. They urged the re-establishment of the temple cult without abandoning hopes for a spectacular reversal of fortune. For them, it seems that the observance of Torah and the temple cult were necessary preconditions for the coming of God's Kingdom. Most of the prophets during the early period seemed to have worked closely with the clergy and were concerned with cult and ritual. Compare this to the prophets before the exile. Is this a transition? How did the post-exile prophecy become apocalyptic? Here mention must be made of Ezekiel. In this man, the formative elements of apocalyptic style combined and produced the model for many centuries to come. This is evident both in his first part 1 - 24, 33 - 37 and in the last part where the priestly concern is more manifest 40 - 48. In Ezekiel's prophecy we can identify apocalyptic modes./

/modes. With the fall of Babylon before the forces of Cyrus II (The Great) of Persia in 539 a new but obscure chapter begins in the history of the Jews. A new community is formed which looks back to the past to understand its future. During the Persian rule, 539 - 332, the apocalyptic movement will now feel the impact of an anti-gentile spirit, the demise of prophecy and the eschatological psalms.

The post exilic community tended to isolate itself from her neighbours. Mixed marriages were forbidden (Ezra 10), (Nehemiah 13), though there were some devout Jews who recognised the goodness of foreigners. The story of Ruth is an example of this. As far as the Jews were concerned, it was the Canaanite fertility rites and their superstitious concern over rituals as well as the foreign alliances of the royal party in Jerusalem that had brought the difficulties to Israel. They must not repeat the mistakes, they must keep themselves uncontaminated by gentile impurity (Haggai 2 : 10 - 14), (Zech 5 : 5 - 11). So they rejected all offers of help in rebuilding the temple from a non-Jewish community (Ezra 4 : 1 - 5). This decision of Zerubbel and Joshua triggered off a big hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans.

In 351 the Jews were involved in a general revolt against Persia. Artaxerxes III (358 -338) put down the revolt with a great force¹². It was at this time of trouble and distress that we can locate the works such as the apocalyptical works of Ezekiel (38 - 39), Isaiah (Chapters 24 - 27), Deutro-Isaiah 63 : 1 - 6, Obadiah, Zechariah (9 - 12). The apocalyptic gradually turned to a position of sanctuary revolt; major difference between them and the pre-exilic prophets who seldom, if ever, favoured wars that the pre-Egyptian party in/

/in Jerusalem stirred up against Assyria and later Babylonian masters
Isaiah 8 : 12, 10 : 5, 19 - 20.

PROPHECY AND DECLINE

The last that was heard of prophecy was in 460 BC when Malachi preached. Even here the prophet is now being judged by the Torah. His position is subservient to the Levitical priesthood and his hopes centre around the temple. This evaluation applies to Haggai, Zechariah whose ministry came some 80 years before Malachi. Though Zechariah condemned social abuses, he relied on the priesthood for hearing. At this time, preaching no longer strove primarily to instil personal goodness and social justice. Its goal was the careful functioning of liturgy. The prophets no longer brave wrath to hurl judgement on the erring nation. Rather prophecy is subjected to the Torah¹³ and judged by the priests. For this, prophecy no longer fitted the old name hence bible commentators refer to it as apocalyptic to designate the new religious movement. The demise of prophecy helps to explain the upsurge of sapiential movements which rushed to fill the gap. What has now happened to prophecy is now evidenced in Joel¹⁴ composed around 400 BC as a temple sermon. The preacher quotes frequently from earlier prophets. Another example of what has happened to prophecy is the work of the Chronicler composed also around 400 BC. Joel and the Chronicler speak of Judah and Jerusalem. The work of the Chronicler was prophetic history with midrash and apocalyptic tendencies. However, prophecy was still a force to reckon with, a bit earlier. This is evidenced by the fact that Sanballat and his allies accused Nehemiah of soliciting prophetic support for his own messianic pretensions (Nehemiah 6 : 7). We hear of the prophetess Noadiah and certain cultic ecstasies./

/ecstatics. These allusions, however, give the impression that prophecy no longer stood high in repute. The book of Jonah written later does not show a high regard for prophecy. Prophecy is now dead admitted the author of I Maccabees (I Mac 4 : 46) 9 : 27, 14 : 41, Ezra 7 : 26 Lamentation 2 : 9. They believed that as a result of its faithfulness to the observance of the Law, God will break through the narrow boundaries of post-exilic Judaism and make Jerusalem the world Capital. That through a mighty outpouring of the Spirit, he will fulfil the ancient promises, hence many symbols were used to depict this situation of Zechariah 1 - 6.

During the Hellenistic period 332-63 BC the world politics and thought changed but Judah was unchanged in her hopes and practices. The Jews felt very unhappy when Alexander the Great permitted the Samaritans to maintain their own temple in Gerizim and from this time on, the break between Gerizim and Jerusalem was bitter and beyond repair. Judaism itself gradually separated into two principal groups. The Jerusalem priesthood, later to be called the Sadducees and the fervent lay sect later to be called the Pharisees. The priests maintained a slavishly literal attachment to the Torah, unwilling to tolerate any change or new practice and the Pharisees gave equal treatment to oral Torah with its application and modification of the written Law. An example of the priestly caution is Ben Sirach composed around 190 BC. The other position open to new religious ideas such as the resurrection of the dead and retribution after death found expressions in apocalyptic and midrashic writings. 2 Maccabees, Dan 12 : 1 - 13. About 150 years after Ezekiel was written, apocalyptic literatures/

/literatures began to appear. Daniel was the first among these. He used images to bring his message across. It was attributed to an author who lived before Ezra at the time of the Babylonian exile. Pseudonym was applied by the writer because it was a literature of resistance against the hostile authorities. It was this pattern that other apocalyptic writers were to follow. Another reason for using fictitious names was that the Jerusalem priesthood accepted only the Torah or the Pentateuch as revised by Ezra (Ezra 14). There was a tendency to attribute the apocalyptic works to men of great personalities of early salvation history so as to get a hearing following that is also the fact that the conviction of the post-exilic Judaism was that true prophecy has to be vindicated by its fulfilment. The authors wrote about the present but applied the literary form of an ancient prophecy or early vision. Soon after the book of Daniel, the book of Enoch was written, not long after the Maccabees' revolt came the book of Jubilees. This was followed by the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and in 50 BC the Psalms of Solomon. With these there came complete transformation from prophecy to apocalyptic.

PROPHECY AND APOCALYPTIC - ANY DIFFERENCE?

The prophets were men of action, rising to the needs of their time by spontaneous eloquent preaching. The apocalyptic were men of written word communicating their message with studied effect. The prophets were involved in the Palestinian politics, but the apocalyptic reached a cosmic mission. The prophets presented their message as a judgement upon individual events, the apocalyptic especially that/

/that of Daniel developed a religious explanation of religious history. The prophets crusaded for the rule of Yahweh over his people Israel, and championed the course of Davidic royal family. The apocalyptic envisaged a wide world reign of Yahweh and gave less and less attention to Davidic line and messianism. The apocalyptic view of history is that only Yahweh and his direct intervention can transform the world into a new order. The prophets spoke more about religious abuses but apocalyptic used symbolism. The two key figures are Ezekiel and the author of Daniel. As a prophet, Ezekiel acquired a place of leadership within this movement but as a priest, he diverted the movement into a different direction.

Daniel signalled the liberation of the apocalyptic from the priestly group. The temple remained the centre of liturgy and hopes.

Many more things can be said about prophecy and apocalyptic; pages and pages are written about them. How then did the prophetic line continue in the New Testament? The next chapter will treat that. We shall consider John the Baptist as a prophet, then go on to the New Testament proper.

PROPHETESSES:

We have discussed the prophets therefore it will be unfair not to say anything about the prophetesses.

In Israel, as in all ancient Near East, women enjoyed considerable privileges. In old Arabic religions, Gods and Goddesses often occurred in pairs¹⁵, the Goddess being the greater. In various functions of worship such as bringing offerings, smoking and the sacred stone, etc, women took part as well as men. Women were also found in the official/

/official position of the Kahim (Seer) the chief officer of the Arabic religion. In Babylon we hear of the Goddess Ishatar. Among the Assyrians we hear of Astarte the supreme goddess. Women took prominent roles in the worship. Women were recognised as priestesses and prophetesses. In Judaism then, while there is evidence that there were prophetesses as in all the Near Eastern religions, there is meanwhile no evidence that women were priests.

Women appear from time to time in the history of Israel as inspired prophetesses. Miriam is called a prophetess (Exodus 15 - 20). She is associated with her brother in exclaiming "had Yahweh indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken by us" - Numbers 12 : 2.

Deborah appears as a prophetess and a judge (Judges 4 : 4, 5).

Huldah appears as a prophetess to whom the messages of Josiah applied when they were directed to inquire.

In Nehemiah 6 : 14, the prophetess Noadiah appears among the rest of the prophets hired by Tobiah and Sanballat to hinder the restoration of Jerusalem. It is manifest that in Israel the appearance of prophetesses was exceptional. The prophetic guild did not include women.

There should be no great surprises because we know that the great prophets were not members of any caste inheriting an office. He may be taken from any class; from the priesthood like Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and probably others, or from the aristocracy of the Capital, like Isaiah; from the population of the country township like Micah and Uriyah of Kiriath Jerim (Jer 26) or from those that followed after the flock like Amos. A prophetess was like Amos coming from his farm work not trained for office but inspired and compelling respect/

/respect for her gift of power and influence. The Law forbade her to speak and no custom hindered her from rising to the position of influence. In New Testament times, we shall again hear of prophetesses, an example of which is Anna (Luke 2 : 36).

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EXCURSUS

The Qumran Community and Prophecy.

Before discussing John the Baptist our attention must be drawn to the Qumran Community. Who are they and is the Teacher of Righteousness a prophet? Since the discovery of the scrolls in 1947, a good deal of research has been done and work is still going on to identify the people of the scroll. For the purpose of our work, we shall accept the arguments of A Dupont - Sommer and F M Cross in favour of identifying the essenes and the covenanters¹. Coinage evidence in Qumran dates the Covenanters to the reign of John Hyrcanus I and the Seleucid Anthioches VII, but the main building of the Monastic settlement appear to be later, not before the time of Janneus². This might suggest that the sect retreated into the desert as a part of a protest against the perpetuation of the high priesthood in the Hasmonian family coupled with Janneus policy of surrounding petty states, and seeking closer ties with the Roman republic. This time the faithful remnant was represented by the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers who went out into the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for the Lord (Isaiah 40 : 3) by studying the law and the Revelation of the prophets.

They expected a rapid end to their age. They were concerned with the membership of the future kingdom. Their teaching was a strongly social teaching favouring the poor with whom they identified themselves. For them they were the "Community of the poor". Their basic aim was to live according to the communal rule, to seek God... to do what is good and upright in his sight, in accordance with what he commanded/

/commanded through Moses and his servants the prophets (1Qs 1 : 2 - 3)
 The disclosure of the revealed will of God from the law is the function of the priestly teachers in the first place, in every group of ten men of the community there had to be a seeker or interpreter of the law (probably a priest) who night and day in continuous study and who shared with the brethren the truth he discovered (Qs 6 : 6 - 7). But the tradition of an esoteric revelation goes back to the Teacher of Righteousness (the Right or Rightful Teacher).

The sect regarded the Teacher of Righteousness as one of those who discovered or had revealed to him the true interpretation of the Torah. Support for this view would be strong if some of the references to the interpreter of the law - not all of them, of course since the task of interpreting the Torah had to continue after the death of the first Teacher of Righteousness - are references to the functions of the Teacher of Righteousness. This view is in agreement with the suggestion that the Teacher of Righteousness was an aspirant to the office of the high priest as described in 2 Chronicles 15 : 3 ff ie a chief priest as a teaching priest whose prerogative it was to teach or expand the law³. The books of the prophets form authorities that demand obedience (CD 7 : 15 - 18) and their importance for the community was enormous, for God through the words of his servants the prophets, foretold all that could happen to the people and the land (1 Qp Hab 2 : 9 ff) but what the prophets said like the words of the law, remained a mystery until explained or interpreted.

One notable passage from the Habakkuk commentary illustrates their exegesis (known as peshar - interpretation) of a prophetic text/

/text. In Habakkuk 2 : 2 God tells the prophet 'write down the vision and make it plain upon the tablets, that he who reads may read it speedily'. This is interpreted as follows : God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but he did not make known to him when time would end, and for that which he said "that he who reads may read speedily", interpreted - this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of 'his servants the prophets' (1 Qp Hab 7 : 1 - 5).

Several of the sect's basic beliefs about prophecy are expressed in this text. In the first place the words of the prophets are mysteries which have a hidden significance that must be discovered by further revelation. Secondly this hidden meaning has to do with what is to take place in the last days. Thirdly the end was near and therefore the prophecy applies to the writer's own generation and movement. Fourthly, and the most important, the person to whom all these mysteries are revealed is the Teacher of Righteousness⁴.

In short biblical prophecy - whose meaning was not known to prophets themselves was made comprehensible to the community alone, most of them were about to be fulfilled in the community's own history. The men of Qumran never employed the term 'prophet' with reference to the Teacher of Righteousness but then Josephus never used the term either of himself and his historical writings or of the essenes - Yet they share the conviction that the real meaning of the text, in both the law and the prophets, is revealed to the inspired exegete as a result of direct divine illumination. Is not such an inspired person or interpreter of biblical texts with reference to their present and/

/and future fulfilment in many respects: a prophet as we know it?

The Teachers words are received 'from the mouth of the Lord' (1 Qp Hab 2 : 2) and he is instructed by God himself (1 Qp Hab 1 : 4)

We may not continue this enumeration or explanation, we can infer that one very significant distinction between the Teacher of Righteousness and the Old Testament prophets is the fact that although the Teacher is inspired by God to unravel the secrets of the words of the prophets which will remain hidden mysteries to the community apart from his expositions, he does not create new prophecies of equal authority, he does not add, through his teaching to what is written, but bases his teaching solely upon the written word. He has been given by God a right understanding in order that he may bring his community into the Covenant which they may live according to the law, that is according to the will of God⁵. Inspired interpretation, however authoritative, is not the same as direct and immediate address from the 'Council of the Lord' in the message form - Thus said the Lord.

Attempts have been made to identify the prophet of 1 Qs 9 : 11 with the Teacher of Righteousness mainly on the basis of similarities of language with C D 6 : 11. One can certainly agree with G Jeremias⁶ that there is no text which conclusively identifies the Teacher of Righteousness with the prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18.

It may be that the Teacher was never called a prophet because the Qumran community flourished during the period when prophecy was regarded as no longer existing and perhaps because of his own consciousness of his particular task of bringing back to the practice of the Mosaic Torah. The Teacher of Righteousness nevertheless has prophetic/

/prophetic features such as Josephus would have recognised and which are in considerable accord with our idea of prophets. However it is probable that John the Baptist was more truly a successor of Old Testament prophets than was the Teacher of Righteousness.

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CHAPTER II

PROPHECY IN THE

NEW TESTAMENT

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Discussion on Prophecy both in the Old and New Testament cannot be complete without mention of John the Baptist. He has been regarded by all believers as a prophet of transition. Not much is known about John from the evangelists because their main line of action is Jesus and John is mentioned in so far as it has to do with Jesus.

We have no reason to doubt what the evangelists tell us about his family. That John was born into the priestly family of Zecharia and Elizabeth. So John the Baptist set out in history as a prophet proclaiming the eschatological day of the Lord. He was the one to make ready for the Lord God a prepared people (Luke 1 : 16 - 17). He is thus the one who will himself set the stage for eschatological day of deliverance. As a herald of God's coming (Malachi 3 : 1, 4 : 6) (Sirach 48 : 10) he is endowed with the Spirit from his mother's womb and born in consequence of divine intervention according to the bible (Luke 1 : 5 - 24).

John was born six months before Jesus and nothing more was heard of him until his preaching in the wilderness. At the time, the promised land was occupied by Rome, the chief priests held the offices at the pleasure of the Roman rulers. God had promised Israel the land and political sovereignty (Deut 15 : 6). Prophets and seers of Israel had written about a day when God's wrath would be poured out upon the wicked, and his promises constituted the basis upon which were raised hopes for the coming of the Kingdom of God. This would mean deliverance from the clutches of the gentiles from the point of view of the righteous who were wealous for the Covenant. The unrighteous would be/

/be punished. The alternative for the righteous were limited. Some escaped the unclean and corrupt life of the city and towns and withdrew into the wilderness. Others remained bound in the towns observing the complicated and highly refined system of ritual washing. When Mark the evangelist talks of John he does so in composite quotation¹, what he says is about John's diet. This is because this builds gradually up to John as a forerunner. His clothes were like that of Elijah (2 Kings 1 : 8) (Zech 13 : 4) for the main message of Mark is that John is the prophet of the end time. In Judaism, this restoration came to be conceived of as a mass repentance of Israel.

With no concrete materials, we are left with speculations as to where and how John spent his early years until his wilderness debut.

There is a hypothesis which states that John must have had connections with the Qumran community, that it is likely that John must have been sent (perhaps at the death of his parents) to be trained in the discipline of the Qumran Community². That this community had many followers among priestly families and it appears more likely to have drawn this not from the Sadduciac priesthood it anathematized, but from those rural circles whose ideals of piety, as represented in the Lukan birth narratives, are the closest approximation to those of the Qumran to be found in the New Testament.

This community is situated not very far from John's home and it is still nearer to where John emerged in the wilderness of Judea (Mt 3 : 1). Provision is made in the additional column to its manual of discipline³ for the training of those who came for instruction as children and for their assimilation by stages as adult members (I Qsa, 4 - 18).

/(I Qsa 4 - 18) through the essenes of the community did not marry, according to Josephus⁴. However this hypothesis says that John later broke with the community. The Essene Community as they are called believed that Satan had spread his net over Israel. Un chastity, ill gotten riches and pollution of the temple had become common place things. To them the service of the temple could no longer be carried out without defilement by the priests being so lax, and when their representation was not followed by the removal of the evil, they ceased to attend to the temple or take part in its services. To look at another hypothesis, random statements in Josephus and Talmud reveal that in the 1st Century AD a sharp cleavage was developing in the Jewish priesthood between the urban aristocracy of Jerusalem and their less fortunate colleagues who lived in towns and countryside and came to the temple two weeks in a year for their turn to perform sacrifice. Three factors were deemed responsible for the trouble.

1. There was the tendency of both Herod and the Roman Procurator to politicise the high priesthood.
2. There was the tendency for the family so appointed to live loose moral lives.
3. There was the tendency for the priests and families or family circle to appropriate all money to themselves. Josephus⁶ talks of some priests dying of hunger in the period before the Jewish War, and the Talmud⁷ mentions disputes over the division of amenities of an earlier time.

If John had followed the normal course he may have become a priest. He however may have seen what was happening in the temple in Jerusalem/

/Jerusalem as a desecration of high calling bringing the Wrath of God to the whole nation.

Allowing for John's vindictive temperament the situation confronting him could have led him to turn his back upon the priestly calling with a sense of revulsion against its representatives. For John to have taken such a decision would have been unintelligible to the local folk who regarded priesthood with honour and this would have made life unbearable for him sending him forth into bitter anguish, and out into the wilderness⁸. As I said earlier, this is also a hypothesis, I am tempted to believe this more. Whatever is the case, his decision to go into the wilderness would have resulted from a catastrophic event.

WHY THE WILDERNESS?:

The wilderness of Judah was a centre of religious worship as well as a place of refuge. The wilderness sojourn of John was however not entirely negative. For the ancients, the wilderness was not only a place devoid of human habitations and remote from man made civilization, it was a place where man came in contact with the supernatural power. For the Jews in the ancient Palestine, it was a place full of danger. The supernatural power was however not limited to Satanic influences. In the wilderness the ancient Hebrew found God and his angels. It was in the wilderness of Sinai that Moses found Yahweh. It was under the Juniper tree in the wilderness that Elijah encountered the Angel of the Lord. (I Kg 19 : 4 - 8) It was the herdsman of the wilderness of Tekoa Amos who became the inspiration for the greatest period of the early Hebrew prophecy.

Between the wilderness and the prophet a relationship seemed to exist that the dress of the wilderness dweller became the characteristic garb of the prophet (Zec 13 : 4). John was not the only one in the first century AD to reveal the association of those claiming special endowment by God with wilderness environment. Josephus tells stories of men who tried to lead people astray claiming prophetic power and messianic endowment⁹. These deceivers began by urging people into the desert. For them, it does not necessarily mean seclusion, but to get Divine Influence. The wilderness must have been looked at this way by John. In the wilderness, John became what he had not been before, a preacher, a man who felt himself divinely inspired to speak to the people. There is an analogy to John's preaching and the Old Testament prophecy which talks about the religious experiences of the prophets. We have an allusion to this in (Luke 3 : 1 - 2) the New Testament. Where we are told that the Word of God came to John in the wilderness in the fifteenth year of Tiberius. This suggests a date at the beginning of the ministry of John to be between 27 - 28 AD¹⁰.

JOHNS PREACHING

Two New Testament writers gave us a clue as to where John preached:

Mathew talks of the "Wilderness of Judea" (Mat 3 : 1). In traditional Hebrew usage the wilderness of Judea is the area along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea where John couldn't have baptised, Matthew, using the designation loosely thereby reducing its value for us¹¹.

The other is the fourth gospel which talks of John's activities at Bethany across the Jordan and Aenon near Salim (John 1 : 28, 10 : 40, 3 : 23)/

/(John 1 : 28, 10 : 40, 3 : 23). Archaeological discoveries and Patristic evidence has now clarified the location of the two cities. Bethany was probably a hamlet on the eastern side of the Jordan not far from where the river was forded by those travelling the main Highway from Jerusalem eastwards by way of Jericho to Rabath Ammon in Transjordan. Aenon, as the name implies spring, is almost certainly a well watered area some thirty miles up the Jordan Valley on the western bank of the stream, it lay north of Samaria not far from where the highway leading northwards from Jerusalem dipped down into the Jordan Valley before passing Scythopolis (Beisan) and thus reaching lake Galilee¹². This is evidenced by the fact that John was taken prisoner by Herod's antipathy, which must have happened in Perea, while the strength of John's preaching lay in Judah, Galileans found him within their reach¹³.

We do not intend to enter into the dialectics of whom John was preaching to because opinions vary. Some say he was addressing the Jews as a nation, and others, that he was addressing certain individuals.

Whichever way the argument goes, our main concern is the message. We know at the time of John the Baptist, like all other times of the prophets, the nation seemed to have lost its way towards Yahweh by debased morals. This the prophet seems to correct.

Among general statements, the one that formulated John's exhortations clearly is that of Mat 3 : 1 - 2, here we are told that John came preaching in the wilderness "Repent ye for the Kingdom of God is at hand". This is an elaboration of Mark's statement that John came preaching a baptism of repentance Mk 1 : 4. By giving repentance/

/repentance a significant place, John falls into line with Israel's prophets. From Ezekiel onwards repentance was understood in Hebrew thought as an act by which man turned from sin and unrighteousness to God and the performance of his will. For the prophets, this would obtain the forgiveness of God.

John in his preaching stressed the need for individual repentance. For John repentance and baptism was for all, Jews and gentiles alike. There was none privileged in the eyes of God. What John thought did not differ from what earlier prophets insisted on. To do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly before God. To everyone he gave a message appropriate to one's status.

While the common people were impressed and sought baptism, religious leaders remained unimpressed. John was concerned with righteousness (Mt 21 : 32. , 16 : 20. Josephus Antiquities XVIII 116f). The message was not revolutionary but the motive of social justice was evident. John's ethical teaching perhaps reflects his picture of a corrupt society which would soon be swept away, a society dominated by inequality, abuse of power and oppressive taxation - the very issues which a prophet like Amos attacked with vigour and authority. It is noteworthy that the Synoptic gospels describe (cf Luke 3 : 1, with Jer 1 : 1, Hosea 1 : 1, Joel 1 : 1, Zech 1 : 1 etc) the appearance (cf Zech 13 : 4 and especially 2 Kings 1 : 8 with reference to Elijah) and the preaching of John wholly after the manner of Old Testament prophets, and his baptism can be interpreted as a prophetic sign or action for those who penitentially received eschatological message of salvation. In John's teaching/

/teaching theological (prophecy) and non theological (social) factors go together as in the Old Testament Prophets.

The climax of John's ministry was as the New Testament tells us the baptism of Jesus which marks the beginning of his own ministry. The narrative in Luke 7 : 24 - 35, Mat 11 : 7 - 19 treats the relationship between Jesus and John. In this passage John is designated as a prophet, indeed as more than a prophet.

About his death; John meets virtually the inevitable end of a prophet, that of persecution and death. The idea of a prophet as a martyr figure is one which has a long tradition reaching back into the Old Testament. Next we shall look at prophecy briefly in Jesus.

JESUS:WAS JESUS A PROPHET?

The statement in Revelation 19 : 10 reveals that the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.

We might not be very wrong to say that the phenomenon of prophecy in the New Testament Church in some quarters at least, was regarded as having inspiration in the witness or testimony of Jesus. To say it in another way, the central concern of Spirit-inspired prophecy was bearing witness to Jesus.

The proclamation of John was this; 'Judgement is at hand, repent'.

Jesus proclaimed 'The Kingly rule of God is now dawning'.

To talk of Jesus' prophetic ministry we have to start at his baptism, what did he understand his baptism to be? He regarded it as a call to embark upon his ministry.

At Jesus' baptism we are told the Holy Spirit descended upon him. No matter what is said to the elaborate explanatory details found in various accounts of the gospel, all agree on the endowment with the Spirit for his ministry. In Judaism of the time, the imparting of the Spirit almost meant prophetic inspiration¹⁴. So when it is said that the Spirit descended on Jesus, the meaning is that Jesus is both called and charismatically endowed to be God's messenger, and that the ending of the era of quenched Spirit (already initiated by John) is further confirmed. The prophetic spirit had been given. The similitude of the children playing at weddings and funerals (Mat 11 : 16 - 19) makes it clear that, whereas John's ministry was a stern and preparatory ministry of repentance, Jesus ministry was the joyful ministry of grace/

/grace and salvation. It can be said in another way, that John's baptism marks the time when Jesus' awareness of the dawning, indeed the presence, of eschatological salvation breaks through. Jesus understood his call to ministry by John's baptism and its endowment with authority and the Spirit (prophetic) to carry out in the ministry in which the Kingdom becomes a present reality in history. This is summed up in Luke 4 where Jesus applies the words of Isaiah 61 : 1 f to himself. 'The Spirit of the lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. Luke's interest in the Spirit is well known. As one whom the Spirit rests upon, Jesus is according to the Jewish thought of the time, a prophet and engaged on a ministry marked by numerous prophetic features.

In certain respects, Jesus' activity had similarities with that of the scribal teachers of his day. He gave much of his teachings to a group of disciples : he debated the interpretation of the law : he was approached for legal decisions (Mark 12 : 13 - 17, Luke 12 : 13 f). He had many differences with the other scribes and one outstanding one was that he did not have recourse in his teaching to past authorities. His disciples were to remain disciples (Mat 23 : 8).

His teaching was direct and authoritative because it was charismatic rather than professionally learned as Mark 1 : 22 demonstrates to the satisfaction of most of the interpreters of the verse¹⁵.

It follows that the conclusion to be drawn from Jesus' manifest inspiration and authority was that he was a prophet and some of his contemporaries certainly regarded him as such. In Mark 6 : 15 and 8 : 27 it is reported that some people, (not the disciples) considered him/

/him to be (like) one of the prophets ie according to semitic idiom, a man belonging to the prophetic typed, not one particular type pf prophet¹⁶. This popular estimate of Jesus appears again in Matthew 21 : 11 and 46. Even the pharisees are recorded as having known or shared this contemporary assessment of Jesus. Simon the pharisee observes that if Jesus were a prophet as some considered him to be, he would have known about the murky past of a woman who anointed him (Luke 7 : 39) and the demand for a sign made by the pharisees (Mk 8 :11) in all probability carries with it the assumption that Jesus is a prophet who ought to authenticate his claim. Even the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24 : 19) considered Jesus during his lifetime to be a prophet in deed and word before God and all the people. Luke makes Peter to see in Jesus the promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18 : 15 ff (cf also Stephen's speech in Acts 7 : 37) it is possible that the words of Luke 24 : 19 reflect an interpretation of Jesus as the prophet like Moses who was indeed powerful in speech and action before God and men¹⁷. The crowd response to the miraculous raising of the widow's son at Naim is a typical example of what the people thought of Jesus 'a great prophet has arisen among us and God has visited his people' Luke 7 : 16. A careful comparison of this Lucan story with the LXX of I Kings 17 : 7 - 24 reveals a number of striking similarities in the characters involved, the location of the incident and the language employed¹⁸. What Luke is really saying here is that Jesus is a prophet like, or as great as Elijah (in his power to raise the dead) for, in the following paragraph the testimony that Jesus gives to John's disciples/

/disciples to relate to their master includes a reference to the raising of the dead (Luke 7 : 22).

That Jesus was considered to be the eschatological prophet 'like unto Moses' an expectation based on Deut 18 : 15 seems clear in Matthew and John as well as in the primitive Christology (as witnessed in Acts 3 : 2 f, 7:38) and in the Jewish Christianity following the apostolic period.

We may continue endlessly into this. What is really certain here is that Jesus was regarded as a prophet. What did Jesus himself say about himself, did he understand himself as a prophet?

There are only two logia explicitly containing the word 'prophetes' to be considered.

- 1 The proverbial saying 'A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country' (Mark 6 : 4 f).
- 2 'it cannot be said that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem' (Luke 13 : 33).

In neither case is 'prophet' a self designation, but Friedrich's remark is both penetrating and pertinent. Jesus is not describing himself as a prophet but quoting a common view. Nevertheless, by not merely adopting the view but also preparing to exemplify it, Jesus numbers himself among the prophets¹⁹. In other words, without using 'prophet' as a self designation Jesus clearly indicates that he understands his role in prophetic terms in so far as it involved rejection, persecution and martyrdom - the fate of prophets according to certain strands of Old Testament thought (I Kg 9 : 10 Neh 9 : 26) made popular in apocryphal words (like the ascension of Isaiah/

(Isaiah 5 : 1 - 14) and testified to in the many passages in the New Testament (Mt 23 : 31 and with Acts 7 : 52).

Within Judaism of the time, the possession of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God was regarded as a mark of prophecy. It follows then that Jesus' inspiration and equipping for the ministry by the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God signifies that he was (and probably regarded himself) a prophet. His claim to possess the Spirit is quite explicit if 'the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit' (Mark 3 : 29) is rightly interpreted as the denial of the divine source of the spiritual power with which Jesus casts out demons as an activity which indicates that the Kingdom of God, or God's sovereign rule - itself another characteristic theme of Old Testament prophetic proclamation is breaking through and becoming present reality in history (Luke 11 : 20).

Continuity can be seen between Jesus and the prophets of the Old Testament. Most of Jesus' teachings were delivered in using parallelism, rhythm, paronomasia etc as was the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. The parable form which Jesus uses often has precedent in prophetic speech (2 Sam 12 : 1 - 7, Isaiah 5 : 1 - 7) and the beatitudes, especially in the second person - as in Luke whose tone is that of consolation and assurance rather than of paraenetic exhortation, are not without a few parallels in the prophetic or prophetic-apocalyptic speech (Deut 28 - 3 - words of Moses; and Isaiah 32 : 20) and woe-saying (like those found in Luke in association with the beatitudes) are frequent in Old Testament prophets, even in Series (Isaiah 5 : 8 - 23)²⁰.

From time to time, the gospels suggest that Jesus had visions, and ecstatic-prophetic experiences.

Jesus claimed that his ability to cast out demons derived from the power of Spirit of God (Luke 11 : 20, Mt 12 : 28) and that these victories over evil were manifestations of the dawn of the era of salvation. Another indicative of the charismatic nature of Jesus' prophetic role is his possession of the gift of insight into the innermost thoughts and motives of people in his company. The ability to reveal the secrets of a man's heart was regarded by Paul as a distinctive mark of effectiveness of prophesying (I Cor 14 : 24 - 25) and it seems to have been considered a mark of the prophetic phenomenon by Jesus' contemporaries (cf Luke 7 : 39 f). Undoubtedly he possessed the prophetic power to scan the thoughts and impulses of men²¹. There can be no doubt that Jesus foresaw his death, constantly under threat from his opponents, he had to reckon with the possibility, indeed, the likelihood, that he would meet the fate of a prophet - persecution and martyrdom.

The claim by Jesus to authority or even to finality for his mission finds expression in saying, which take the form - I came (elthon), (Mark 1 : 38, 2 : 17, 10 : 45, Mt 5 : 17, 10 : 34 - 36, Luke 12 : 49, Mt 11 : 19 f) or I was sent (apostalen) (Mark 9 : 37, Mt 10 : 40, Luke 10:16).

Though some scholars like Bultmann may regard some of these as Church formulations. In Luke 12 : 49 Jesus is clearly speaking of his ministry as still in progress and of his tension until it finishes.

It is of interest to note that the authentic core of the sayings of the 'I came' or 'I was sent' kind around which later tradition built concerns Jesus' ministry to the outcast from religion and society. It was here that his consciousness of mission appears to have been most strongly/

/strongly expressed. Yet it is precisely here that his activities passed beyond that of a prophet, even on an eschatological prophet, whose task was to proclaim a salvation that was yet to come. In Jesus, the salvation is breaking through and its consequences; breaking out into his own mission of grace and acceptance. Just as there is a difference between 'Thus says the Lord', and 'I say unto you'. There is a corresponding difference between the prophet who, like John the Baptist, looked forward to a greater than himself, and the more-than-the prophetic Jesus who affirmed that God's decisive action and revelation was taking place in himself. -

From the historians' point of view, the working concept which guided Jesus in the task of his ministry was that of 'prophet'. True also that as far as the speech-forms, authority, action and attitude are concerned, we can point to many similarities between Jesus and the Old Testament prophets as well as the charismatics of his day which are sufficient to justify his being called a prophet, or 'the prophet' by his contemporaries. But this 'prophet' was unique in the sense that his proclamation and activity were confronting men and women with the present saving action of God in midst of history, and that his commitment and obedience to God made him the channel of that gracious and saving action²². This the High Priests would not accept and hence, their determination to rid themselves of him.

Having looked at John the Baptist and Jesus as inaugurating the new era, we can now look at prophecies in the New Testament properly. Beginning with the Acts of the Apostles.

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECYACTS OF APOSTLES

To begin discussion of prophecy in the early Church, our document is the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

The Old Testament prophets spoke to the people of Israel. Following the tradition, the Church as the new Israel took from the old institution what was good. So the tradition of the Spirit of God dwelling in people continued.

From the start it was seen that the Spirit was to inaugurate the new age (Luke 1 : 35). The fact that the new age has indeed come is strongly demonstrated by Luke's emphasis on the presence of the spirit of prophecy throughout his birth narratives. Concerning John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke 1 : 15, 17, 67); he lays emphasis on the role of the Spirit in the Christian life.

In the book of Acts, Pentecost holds a place equivalent to that held by the baptism of Jesus in the gospel and Luke's equivalent affirmation (The Spirit of the Lord is upon me) (Luke 4 : 18).

The account in Acts actually shows that it is the gift of the spirit that empowers the Church for its universal mission. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterances (Acts 2 : 4).

Quite early, we see Peter and John standing before Annas and Caiaphas. Now the Apostles like the Old Testament prophets are fearless, and speak with as much freedom and conviction as if they were animated by the same spirit which had characterised their master. They had been with him so long that they caught his manner and inherited the/

/the independence, the directness of his spirit but in truth their boldness was not due so much to their having been long in the company of Jesus as to his presence to them in the Spirit.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterances (Acts 4 : 8).

Representatives from every part of the then known world who were assembled at Jerusalem heard the mighty deeds of God each in his own language. The Spirit or the gift of the Spirit here is understood as an endowment which enables the Apostles and other Christians to communicate with all people, it makes possible and effective the preaching of the word and works of God. Thus equipped to be witnesses of Jesus Christ (Acts 1 : 8), the Apostles interpret what has happened in the light of scripture. The widespread experience of gifts of prophecy were foretold by Joel (2 : 28 - 32). The phrase is drawn from Isaiah 2 : 2 - 4 which speaks of the eschatological pilgrimage of all nations to Zion. Moreover, the ancient desire of Moses had come to fulfilment "Would that all Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them" (Numbers 11 : 29). Elsewhere in Acts, it is reflected that all the Lord Christ's people received the gift of prophecy. In Acts 4 : 31 which says when they (the Church) had gathered and prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word with boldness. Being filled with the Holy Spirit would in Jewish usage be tantamount to saying, becoming prophets, and in that capacity, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the disciples testify to their faith in the face of hostile opposition. Through its possession of the Holy/

/Holy Spirit, the Christian community has the assurance that in the world in which they live for the time being it is not left to its own resources but experiences help from above in missionary enterprises. Another endowment of the Spirit is that of the gentiles recorded in Acts 10 : 44 ff, it has the characteristics of the first one. While Peter was speaking, 'the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word', and the Jewish Christians were amazed that the gift had been poured out on the gentiles 'for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God'. The early manifestation of the Spirit provoked after some time, a counter manifestation of evil. The first outbreak of evil in the Church of Jerusalem arose out of an excessive zeal which in itself was good. It would seem as if with the first outburst of Spiritual power recorded in Acts 4 : 31, the first enthusiasm for this life revived, and believers who still owned property in lands or houses began to strip themselves of it and devote the proceeds to the good of the community. Among those who did so was one Joseph, a hellenist Levite from Cyprus. The Apostles gave him the surname Barnabas. His act was the simple outcome of inner life of the Spirit of unselfish love. But there were some whose motives were less pure, a man and his wife agreed upon a plan which seemed to promise them a high place in the esteem of their fellow believers without a corresponding sacrifice. The man presented part of the land which he sold as if it was the whole and his wife when questioned told the same tale (Acts 5 : 1 - 11). The insincerity met with a punishment that once for all vindicated in the eyes of the Church the awefulness of the gift which it has received. Ananias and the wife had attempted to deceive the Holy Spirit, to lie, not to men/

/men (Peter, John, or the whole community) but to God. They were punished. This made a great impression on the community. For the author of Acts, Luke, the character of the gift of the Spirit is central, it is the equipment for the gospel proclamation. When the disciples at Ephesus (who had known only the baptism of John) received the Spirit, they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19 : 6). This means that all believers had received the prophetic Spirit and could be inspired to prophesy and that for Luke means to proclaim among Jews and gentiles the good news of God's grace and action in Christ. In Acts 2 : 4 we have the important word 'other' they spoke in other tongues, that is to say various languages, that would be understood by the hearers with a view to the proclamation of the works of God through the diaspora. It seems as if Luke was using the word synonymously for languages spoken in the countries from which the listeners had come and the audience was amazed that the Galilean Jews could speak languages foreign to themselves but understandable to the non-Palestinian pilgrims.

In Acts 10 : 46 and 19 : -6 there is no reference to other tongues. One has now to ask whether Luke intends these to be reference to glossolalia as usually understood (ie unintelligible utterance which does not involve the mind of the speaker) one wonders why it is absent from those summaries (eg Acts 2 : 42 - 47) in which he describes the activities of the primitive Church. While Paul talks of glossolalia as occurring in the course of worship of the established communities Luke's reference (Acts 2 : 4) related with initial onset and reception of the Spirit. This shows that Luke is primarily interested in the Spirit and only/

/only as a symbol : calling in the miraculous signs that authenticate its presence. Luke understands the Holy Spirit in Acts (2, 10 : 46, 19 :6) as the power of inspiration to communicate to men singly or collectively truth from God or about God's actions. An example of this is when Peter declined God's action in Christ before the Sanhedrin, the Spirit filled him (Acts 4 : 8) when we read that the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke to his adversaries could not be withstood. (Acts 6 : 10) Spirit here denotes inspired speech or prophetic endowment to utter convincingly proclamation. 'Paul a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the gentiles and kings and sons of Israel' is filled with the Holy Spirit to fulfil his task of evangelism (Acts: 9 : 17). Mention is not made about his speaking with tongues when the Spirit comes upon him. To cut the long story short, the gift of the Holy Spirit is primarily concerned with the proclamation of good news and glossolalia is not an indispensable part of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit to the community of the faithful now means that they were all equipped to bear witness to the events of Christ the messiah. In the Acts, prophecy as an eschatological power of the Spirit is a possibility for any Christian fulfilling the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2 : 28 - 32) it appears that some emerged as having the gift of prophecy in more prominent or continuing measure. These are called the Prophetai (Prophets) not because the ability to prophesy was confined to them, but because their inspiration and exercise of the gift was more regular and more frequent and thus entitled them to a more recognised position in the community. When Luke talks of one being full of the Holy Spirit, it implies that one has such sureness of insight and conviction of speech as betoken a more/

/more sustained and lasting inspiration²³ which brings about his conviction of the genuineness of his message. On this account suggests Cothenet²⁴, Stephen is to be regarded as one of the prophets in the primitive community. One of 'the seven men of good repute full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom' (Acts 6 : 3) and himself 'full of faith and the Holy Spirit' (Acts 6 : 5) Stephen's ministry was marked by not only grace and power but also by miracles and signs and is reminded of the same association between the action of the signs in the Pauline letters (cf I tim 1 : 5, I Cor 2 : 4, 2 Cor 12 : 12). Moreover, Stephen's long speech recounted in Acts 7 : 1 - 53 has a strong prophetic ring about it. In the manner of some of the prophets of Old Israel, Stephen utters a passionate indictment of unbelieving Jewry and denounces its vain confidence in the temple. Stephen's irresistible and inspired interpretation of the scripture brings vengeance upon him and, as a prophet (full of Holy Spirit 7 : 55) he receives in his dying moment a vision of the Son of Man, whose prediction according to Matthew 23 : 34, he so amply fulfils, 'I send you prophets and wisemen and scribes : some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town'.

Another of the seven full of Spirit and Wisdom is Philip. He is the initiator of the Mission in Samaria and miracles accompany his preaching (Acts 8 : 5 - 7). Somehow Philip is presented in a manner reminiscent of the inspired men of Ancient Israel who were objects of sudden and dramatic interventions of the Spirit (cf I Kings 18 : 12, 2 Kings 2 : 9 - 12, 16, Ezekiel : 12, 14) it is the Spirit which tells/

/tells Philip to go and join himself to the Chariot of the Ethiopian (Acts 8 : 29) a directive which gives him the opportunity of winning a convert by means of the interpretation of Scripture. Here again prophetic characteristics are evident. Philip begins from Isaiah 53 and shows how it applies to Jesus of Nazareth. In a manner similar to the actualization of prophetic scripture interpretation in Qumran, the words of Isaiah are applied to the figure of Jesus.

Undoubtedly, this discovery of the meaning of scripture belonged to the prophetic charisma. At least part of the ministry of the New Testament prophets was the interpretation of the Old Testament. After having evangelised Samaria, Philip settled at Caesaria, (Acts 21 : 8) and had four daughters who prophesied. Women exercised the gift of prophecy regularly. The four prophetesses were destined to enjoy considerable prestige in early Church traditions. (The Montanist in the Second Century claimed their patronage). Acts 21 : 9 suggests that they were attached to a community (and therefore not wandering prophets) and that there was a connection between virginity and prophecy (cf Luke 2 : 36) consonant with the esteem in which asceticism was held by Jewish-Christian communities²⁵. We are not sure what the contents of their prophecy was but it may have been a kind of liturgical prophecy taking the form of prayer (cf I Cor 11 : 4, 5) or spiritual songs (cf Cor 3 : 16, Eph 5 : 19)²⁶. Another person full of the Holy Spirit in the primitive Church is Barnabas (Acts 11 : 24). He best represents the figure of a prophet in the earliest decade of the Church. At Acts 4 : 36 Luke introduces us to a land-owning Levite of Cypriot origin named Joseph who was called Barnabas by the Apostles, which means Son/

/Son of Paraklesis (exhortation) it is likely that Luke intends to represent Barnabas as a son of prophecy on the assumption that Paraklesis means exhortation. It is Barnabas who introduces Paul to the Apostles at Jerusalem and assured them of the sincerity of the erstwhile persecutor and the reality of his conversion (Acts 9 : 27). As one who enjoyed the confidence of the mother church at Jerusalem, Barnabas is sent to Antioch to make enquiries about the entry of the gentiles into the Church. Being well satisfied with the situation he exhorted them to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose (Acts 11 : 23). At Antioch Paul and Barnabas are invited to give a word of Paraklesis to the congregation (Acts 13 : 15) and Paul obliges with powerful speech recorded in verses 17 - 41. Barnabas is again at Paul's side at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15 : 2, Gal 2 : 1, 9) from where emerged the Jerusalem decree given through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and termed (exhortation) Paraklesis (Acts 15 ; 31). This goes to prove that Barnabas is taken as one of the prophets. In Luke's thought, says Earle Ellis, exhortation is one way in which the Christian prophets exercised their ministry and in this context a form of prophecy²⁷. In the letter which made known the Jerusalem decree which resolved a matter of pastoral concern relating to uncircumcised believers, it is termed Paraklesis (exhortation) issued under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15 : 28, 31) when we read that the whole Church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was filled with the Paraklesis (exhortation) of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19 : 31) we may be confident that the writer is alluding to its instruction and encouragement through Spirit inspired prophetic teaching. The/

/The prophetic ministry therefore has characteristics of pastoral preaching. So according to the book of Acts, the interpretation of Scripture is an important activity of the New Testament prophets.

A good example is the homily found in Acts 13 : 16 ff. This sermon set in context of the Synagogue worship is given by Paul in response to the request for a word of exhortation. Paul is linked with Barnabas among 'prophets and teachers' in the Antioch Church (Acts 13 : 1). It is not very clear from Acts 13 : 1 that the first three mentioned (Barnabas Simeon and Lucius) were prophets and the remaining (Manaen, Paul) teachers. Although didaskein (to teach) is the term regularly used for Paul's ministry within Christian communities, (Acts 11 : 26, 15 : 35, 20 : 20, 28 : 31) it is probable that both titles apply to all five. It is not easy to distinguish the office of teachers from prophets. In the early stages of the Christian mission, clear distinctions of office and function had not been made, we cannot detect an absolute distinction between prophet and apostle for Barnabas is designated by both terms, and E C Selwyn's suggestion (based on Didache 11 : 3 - 5) that apostles were prophets on circuit (ie sent out as missionaries) in contrast to prophets in session²⁸ will not account for the fact that elsewhere in the Acts apostles reside in Jerusalem and prophets engage in travel.

The most we can say is that the difference between them lies in the terms and method by which they build up the Church's life. The prophet disclosing the revealed Will of God for and in a certain set of circumstances and the teacher being more concerned with the exposition of Scripture and the transmission of tradition concerning Jesus.

Acts 13 : 1 does not permit us to say with certainty that Paul delivered/

/delivered his homily at Antioch in his role as a prophet or as a teacher or even as a missionary apostle. Concerning the Jerusalem decree and the speech of James, that precedes the deliverance, the opening words, 'it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...' (Acts 15 : 28). This is an acknowledgement of the Spirit-directing role of the missionary enterprise as well as in the decision-making regarding its experience. Even if the decree was received at Antioch as a prophetic exhortation, (Paraklesis) the opening phrase does not necessarily imply that it had its origin in the prophetic utterances. If we look at the context of the sermon rather than at its formal structure, we may discern the utterance of a prophetic spirit, an exhortation designed to lead to repentance and conversion. But if the address is the utterance of a Christian prophet, (in this case, Paul) it is prophetic not because it interprets scripture in the way it does (or may do) but because of the exhortation to repentance and obedience, the Paraklesis which it contains. Now we come to one named prophet of Acts to whom there is attributed the ability to predict future events.

Agabus Ananias designated 'a certain disciple' (Acts 9 : 10) received a prophetic revelation concerning the newly converted Saul, but this is not really prediction. Together with a group of prophets from Jerusalem, rather like the bands of early Israelite prophets. Agabus comes to Antioch and prophesies through the Spirit that a great famine would take place over the whole world (Acts 11 : 28). Luke has certainly understood the prediction in a historical sense, but it is possible that the famine which Agabus prophesies was an established feature/

/feature of eschatological preaching, one of the events preceding the end of the age (cf Mark 13 : 8, Rev 6 : 5 ff). The fact that a relief operation followed upon Agabus' predictions may be due to Luke's having combined two quite separate traditions, one about an itinerant prophet, the other about relief brought by Barnabas and Paul from Antioch to Jerusalem²⁹. The second prediction by Agabus concerned the fate of Paul - a prediction which was not quite fulfilled, a point which some³⁰ think guarantees Luke's exact preservation of the oracle - and it is accompanied by a symbolic gesture (21 : 10 f) reminiscent of the prophets of the Old Testament. Noteworthy in this case are the words which form the introduction to the oracle; ' Thus says the Lord' but insistence on the direct intervention of the Spirit is a feature not only appropriate to the book of Acts and its understanding of the Spirit, but also to Christian prophecy as the letters to the Seven Churches show, as well as the later oracles of Montanist prophets. In the case of Agabus, one may wonder if he was not actually trying to cast himself in the role of an Old Testament prophet, but not quite succeeding, for the fact that his words did not strictly come true would have made his prophecy 'false' by Old Testament standards. It is clear that for the author of Acts prediction is not the main function of Christian prophets. In several important passages Christian prophecy, as an eschatological gift or power of the Holy Spirit is a possibility for any believer but it is primarily identified with certain leaders (Acts 15 : 22) who exercise it in a continuing ministry. Among such professional prophets were one group from the Jerusalem Church visiting Antioch including Agabus (Acts 11 : 27)/

/(Acts 11 : 27) the Antioch Circle (13 : 1) Judas and Silas, who accompanied the Jerusalem decree to Antioch (15 : 22, 32) and the daughters of Philip (21 : 9), together with some other individuals better known to us as Apostles (eg Paul and Barnabas)

PAUL:

In this sub-heading, we have two things to investigate.

- a) Whether Paul can be called a prophet.
- b) What has Paul to say about prophecy.

Most of what Paul has to say about himself as a prophet is to be found in the chapters 12 and 14 of the first letter to the Corinthians. Chapters separated by - not at all seperable from the famous hymn in praise of Christian love (agape). Calling to mind our characterisation of Christian prophet as Christian who functions within the Church occassionally or regularly as a divinely called and inspired speaker who receives intelligible and authoritative revelations which he is impelled to deliver publicly, in oral or written form to Christian individuals and/or the Christian community. If this definition is taken, it will be difficult to deny that Paul might rightly be called a prophet though nowhere in the New Testament is he given that title. He, himself does not explicitly claim to be a prophet, or the possessor of prophetic powers, despite the fact that he obviously held the prophets of the Old Testament in high esteem (Rom 1 : 2, 3 : 21, 16 : 25f, Acts 13 : 27, 24 : 14. 26 : 22. 27) and frequently quoted from them especially from Isaiah to support his teaching. The nearest approach to self-designation as a prophet may be Paul's use of the Servant of Christ (Rom 1 : 1, Gal 1 : 10, Phil 1 : 1) with reference to himself. In/

/in certain books of the Old Testament (2 Kg 9 : 7, 17 : 13, 23, Ezra 9 : 11, Jer 7 : 25 etc) the prophets are referred to as Servants of the Lord. If we wish to give a comprehensive account of Paul's prophetic characteristics³¹, we could draw attention to the poetic (and therefore prophetic like) quality of much of his language. There is no doubt that Paul was divinely called and commissioned, that he received revelations and that he felt himself to be under divine constraint to proclaim in word or letter, what he had been given. Let us take a look at Gal 1 : 15 - 16 : Paul's own testimony to what is usually referred to as his conversion experience "When he who set me apart before I was born and had called me through his grace was pleased to reveal his Son to me in order that I might preach him among the gentiles". The words about election and call must be interpreted as pointing to the moment, in advance, when he experiences that revelation. The parallel with an important passage from Isaiah 49 : 1 - 6 concerning the callings of God's servants. Similar quotations could be found in a way in Jer 1 : 4 ff. Paul's description of his call and the commission revealed to him clearly bear the impress of the prophetic self understanding. The account in Acts which is closest to Paul's own words is 26 : 12 - 18, where Christ says that he has appeared to Paul 'to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have and those in which I will appear to you'. This is further evidence of continuing revelation - 'delivering you from the people and from the gentiles' - hinting at prophetic fate of persecution and suffering (cf Acts 9 : 16) - 'to whom I send you to open their eyes...' (Jer 1 : 7, 8, Isaiah 42 : 6, 7, 16). Further prophetic traits in Paul could be seen by comparing/

/comparing the Acts account of the Damascus road encounter with Isaiah's vision and commissioning in the temple (Isaiah 6) with Ezekiel's call and commission in a throne theophany (Ezekiel 1 - 2). Which has parallel with Enoch's visionary call (1 Enoch 14 : 8 - 16 : 4 also Daniel 7 : 9 f), as well as with Jeremiah³². From our knowledge of Old Testament prophecy it will be recalled that the true prophet stood in intimate counsel of the Lord (Sod Yaweh) thus gaining the knowledge of the divine will, plan, purpose which he had to declare to God's people. It appears that Paul stood in such relationship with Christ. For instance, he points out to the Galatians that the gospel he preached was 'not man's gospel for I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation in Christ' (Gal 1 : 12) and in I Corinthians he asks, 'Have I not seen Jesus our Lord' (I Cor 9 : 1); to the Ephesian elders at Miletus Paul speaks of 'my course and my ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the grace of God' (Acts 20 : 24, 23 : 11, 27 : 23) it was by revelation that he went to Jerusalem after forty years (Gal 2 : 1f) to present his case to the ecclesiastical authorities whom he was frequently in a relationship of tension.

There are many places in his writings which can still be explored to assert this authority : it is possible that Paul's words in Philippians 3 : 12 'Christ Jesus has made me his own' - possibly referring to the Damascus road event (experience) from a phrase which is open to interpretation as 'Christ Jesus has seized me'. In a very forceful way Paul is saying something not unlike Jeremiah's claim 'Thou art stronger than I and thou has prevailed (Jer 20 : 7).

From all that has been said we can safely say that Paul can be called a prophet. However, this title he never uses for himself, instead he prefers to use the word apostle, a word which in its New Testament context is probably derived from the verb (Apostellein) possessing the underlying meaning of messenger, emissary, delegate or more generally one who is sent. In short an apostle is a divinely called and inspired authoritative messenger. It is for this reason that Myers and Freid conclude their essay by saying that apart from somewhat broader orientation of the apostles' mission, there may in the final analysis not very much difference between the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament Apostles³³. However, the New Testament talks of Apostles, prophets, teachers, it might not be really out of place to believe that the apostles were the real successors of the Old Testament prophets. To those called the prophets in the New Testament it is the fulfilling of the ancient prophecy of Joel (Joel 2 : 28) but as far as those prophets were concerned they exercised this gift of the Spirit more often and regularly hence they earned special place in the community. It follows that those called the prophets in the New Testament primarily exercise the gift of prophecy, though as in the case of Judas, Silas and Barnabas, they may fulfil other tasks as well and indeed in their case, the name 'prophetes' is indebted to the Old Testament understanding of prophecy but mediated through the interpretation of Joel (2 : 28f) in Acts into a milieu in which it was understood in somewhat less rigidly definable fashion, simply because of current usage and literature. While the Apostles might be able and certainly in the case of Paul were able to exercise prophetic function. New Testament prophets/

/prophets nevertheless were a meaningful way and in line with our definition, entitled to be called prophets.

PAUL AND PROPHECY

Answer to Paul's understanding of prophecy can be found in I Cor 12-14. However, there are few other references to the phenomenon of prophecy outside I Cor. From Romans 12 : 4 - 6 we learn that prophecy is a grace gift or charisma given to members of the Church to be used in such a way as to express and maintain the unity of the one body that it was a gift either not given to or not exercised by all the members of the Church, but by certain individuals and those who use the gift of prophecy must do so in proportion to the faith given to or possessed by them. In short, for Paul, to use the gift efficiently one must be very conscious of the fact that he is being used by the Spirit to proclaim the message.

Again in Thess 5 : 19 - 21 'Do not quench the spirit, not to despise prophecy but test everything'. I Cor 12 : 28 is a clear indication that prophets form a distinct group in Churches, it names the offices appointed by God (apostles, prophets and teachers) V 29 confirm this equally.

Paul like other New Testament writers, notably Luke and the author of Revelation is aware that the gift of prophecy belongs potentially to the whole Church (since inspiration of the Holy Spirit is available to all), and therefore any Christian (including female ones (I Cor 11 - 15)) might on occasion prophesy. This does not mean that all Christians were prophets, in the narrow sense, the professional prophets,³⁴ those who came to hold a recognised and authoritative position in the/

/the congregation by reason of their prominent and continuing exercise of the spiritual gift³⁵ and who from evidence of Paul's letters, do not seem to have engaged in the itinerant ministry as the prophets mentioned in Didache did.

To find out Paul's understanding of prophecy in I Corinthians 14, we have to know that his idea is contrasted with the idea of understanding of prophecy by the Corinthians it is likely that Paul derived his idea/view of the phenomenon from Old Testament/Jewish models and possibly from contact with prophets influenced by such models, (like those in Acts) whereas the Corinthians understanding seems to reflect the Greek ecstatic model. Those who practiced according to it were employed in the mystery cult and their activities were described by terms which are not used of the New Testament prophets (terms like *Mainomai*, *Mantis*, *enthousiasmo*).

Paul possessed the Spirit of apostolic ministry of teaching and preaching and therefore a prophet par excellence, he calls into question the adequacy of the manifestation of religious ecstasy that was accepted among Corinthians as a legitimate sign of Spirit inspired prophecy. He is attacking the fact that the Corinthians were regarding glossolalia as a *Sine qua non* of prophecy. He tried to show that glossolalia is not an important or indispensable part of prophecy and that prophecy was brighter and more edifying to the community.

I Cor 14 : 31 asserts that the purpose of prophecy is that all members of the congregation may receive 'from speech' with the mind instruction and exhortation to bring about spiritual growth. It now follows that the individual is edified by the response to the word by the/

/the outsider. Prophecy edifies also because it serves as a sign for the believers (14 : 22). The Corinthians maintained that glossolalia serves as a sign for the believers that is as a proof of high pneumatic states and authority. Paul refutes this and with the help of Isaiah 28 : 11 - 12. He said that glossolalia was sign for the unbelievers instead. Prophecy can be described as a sign for the believers. All in all, glossolalia and prophecy are signs. Glossolalia has no value because it is self edifying (14 : 4). Prophecy builds up or edifies the community because it often came as a word of revelation. It seems likely from 14 : 26 and 30 that the possession and the public declaration of a revelation was characteristic if not exclusive contribution of a prophet to the assembly's worship. What then is meant by a revelation in V 26 or a word of revelation in V 6. In the light of the spiritual gifts, it may be related to utterances of wisdom mentioned here, that is, mature, insightful practical instruction and exhortation, but it could go further to include the intelligible communication of some supernatural disclosure of God's purpose or even of some ecstatic auditory experience (2 Cor 12 : 1, 7)

Whatever precise content we attempt to give to a 'revelation' the mere reception of apocalypses does not constitute a prophecy until it is publicly and intelligibly proclaimed; only then does it build up the Church; exhort and console, for the word revelation may be a challenging or comforting word. Now if conviction and conversion (14 : 22f) disclosure of revelation as well as encouragement and comfort are associated with the prophetic speaking in worship, what/

/what kind of utterances can we then call it, it is not simply teaching (Didache) nor simply preaching (kerygma) to believer and unbeliever alike, it can be seen that the category of Pastoral preaching may be a useful designation for a Christian prophet's speech and signs of these are seen in the Acts.

Two distinguished authors, - M A Chevallier and F J Leenhardt had much to say about these views. The former at the end of his examination of I Corinthians 14, he had this to say "Prophecy has its function, the illumination by revelation of God life of Christians whether as a community or individuals"³⁶, and with reference to Romans 12 : 6 Leenhardt says "The prophet is not a man of predictions, but of preaching who implants the word of God into the life of a community who gives words or orders that are concrete and precise"³⁷.

These two statements point in the direction of classifying prophetic utterances as a pastoral preaching which by its very nature offers guidance and instructions. This view can be supported by the book of Revelation if not in entirety, then certainly in the circular letters of Chapters 2 - 3 and also from relevant materials on prophets in Acts. These aspects of prophecy are also among the characteristics of Montanism.

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CHAPTER III
PROPHECY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION
AND THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND PROPHECY

Having treated prophecy in the Acts of the Apostles, and what Paul had to say about prophecy, we now come to the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is the only book or document in the New Testament which is written with explicit claim to be prophecy in its entirety (cf Rev 1 : 3, 22 : 7, 10. 18 f) on the basis of this claim we proceed to ask what Revelation has to tell us about Christian prophecy. In the opinion of many, the title of the book and its opening word the revelation - Apocalypsis of Jesus Christ, as well as its content decisively locate it in the category of apocalyptic not prophetic. Before going further, it is good to note that a clearcut distinction between prophecy and apocalyptic is not easy to come by, and biblical scholars differ greatly in the identification of the characteristics which belong to each kind. The commonly held view that apocalyptic represents a continuation of prophecy¹ is contested by P Veilhauer who argues that while it was the intention of apocalyptic writers to continue prophecy this did not in fact take place and dualism, determinism and pessimism of apocalyptic form the gulf that separates it from prophecy². G Von Rad declares that the view that apocalyptic literature is a child of prophecy is out of the question and claims that the decisive factor is the compatibility between the apocalyptic view of history and that of the prophets³. It is suggested that in its denunciation of evil and exhortation to pure and noble living and its possession of the quality of real inspiration aver against the gloomy pedestrianism of much of the Jewish apocalyptic writing, Revelation stands close in tone to the work of the Old Testament/

/Testament prophet⁴.

J Kallas argues that the real touchstone of apocalyptic thought was its attitude towards nature, purpose and source of suffering⁵. Another distinguishing factor between revelation and apocalyptic is the absence of pseudonymity and its fictitious claim to antiquity for the book. We know that the apocalyptic did not write in his own name but under the name of an ancient worthy (Elijah, Enoch, Baruch, Ezra) and from the disguise he borrowed an authority he did not possess. John, whoever he may be, writes under his own name and his is known to the Churches he is addressing and he writes under his own authority as one called and addressed by Christ and who even dares to claim canonical authority for his book (cf Rev 22 : 1 f). As opposed to apocalyptic, the Book of Revelation is unsealed, open, clear eschatological message and exhortation which is related to the present and indeed to the future. The writer insists that his writing would be understood as an ecumenical letter not as a secret document (Rev 1 : 4, 11, 19, 22 : 16, 21). In this respect the writing stands closer to prophetic tradition than to apocalyptic.

The opening sentences of the book recall at a number of points, the first words of prophetic books (cf Isaiah 1 : 1, Amos 1 : 1 and especially Amos 3 : 7) and the writer, in his address to the Churches casts himself in the role of a prophet through whom the Spirit speaks. In Chapter 10 John is the recipient of a clear prophetic call, the symbolic account which recalls the vocation of Ezekiel (cf Ezek 2 ; 8 - 3 : 3) and the content of the charge to proclaim the oracle of God to the nations resembles that of Jeremiah (cf Jer 1:10) J Conblin argues here that the/

/the intention of John was the renewal or the recommencement of prophecy which relates to all nations and which includes words of promise as well as judgement (Rev 10 : 7, 14 : 6 f) which begins with him and is committed by him to the Church for transmission⁶.

The task undertaken by John in his prophetic vocation consists essentially in the interpretation of history, more particularly perhaps the interpretation of present and future history (cf Rev 1 : 19). John's starting point is the saving action of God in Christ. Like the prophets of old he takes his own age and emphasises his contemporaneity with his readers. He offers no review of past history. The idea of salvation history is the foundation of the view of history which underlies the revelation and it is from this perspective that the author can address with comfort and challenge the Church. Because of John's concern in the interpretation of history, he is no doubt a prophet. A Feuillet has this to say "The profound originality of the Johannine apocalypse lies in the fact that whilst making use of style imagery and methods of Jewish apocalyptic, it remains faithful to that which creates greatness in ancient prophecy⁷. For our defence of the prophetic character of the book of Revelation, we have these points. Prophecy can be written down (Rev 1 : 3, 11, 19, 2 : 1, 7 etc) and can be included in a letter form with its overall form, numerous words and phrases as well as other formal features appear to be characteristic of the prophetic mode of speech by reason of frequent repetition. They occur at key points in the Book of Revelation, and are similar to the Old Testament form. The vocabulary and phrases are that of prophetic utterances. W C Van Unnik suggests that Rev 1 : 19 contains a formula describing prophecy⁸. The same applies probably to the shorter form 'what must take place' - a phrase/

/phrase from Daniel 2 : 28 which is used in three key junctures in the book (Rev 1 : 1, 4 : 1, 22 : 6) to denote impending divine will. We can also refer to the problem of another audition which is typical of Old Testament prophets. The formula like 'I heard' (ekousa) occurs twenty-seven times in the book referring to the prophetic revelation. More indicative of the prophetic form speech is the call to hear the inspired utterances⁹. What then have we to say about the messenger formula characteristic of the Seven Churches letters which begin with words found nowhere in the New Testament except in Acts 21 : 11 on the lips of Agabus - which often form the septuagintal rendering of Hebrew for 'Thus says the Lord'. The Old Testament prophets had established this formula as appropriate introduction for God's address to his people. "John" follows them.

As regards materials used by John, this has prompted some scholars notably Dr J M Ford to hold the opinion that the revelation emanated from a John the Baptist tradition at Ephesus - As far as the Old Testament prophets were concerned, it is not easy to distinguish between when they are using a traditional material and fresh original oracle, that is indeed if any oracle can be regarded as absolutely original and not a new combination of materials of which the prophet was in some sense already aware even if subconsciously. It is obvious that John was acquainted with older apocalyptic literature or writings as almost all critical works since R H Charles¹⁰ have assumed. He may have had some familiarity with the Pauline material though this does not necessarily presuppose literary dependence. John speaks sentiently to the issues or the actualities of the Church situations he knows. The/

/The conflict with the God opposing political (as he sees it) power is interpreted theologically as the prophet understands the prophetic spirit to be instructing him.

HISTORICAL SITUATION AND BACKGROUND

At the time of the writing of the Revelation, c 95 AD Christianity was making many converts or is it easier to say made many converts. Many from all walks of life have become Christians. The Roman Empire was well organised and wealth flowed. With wealth came the evils that it brought. The Christians were part of the growing affluent society, as such they did not escape the general ill of the society, a kind of wanton extravagance which had invaded Rome. The condemnation of Rome is not merely the work of a Christian ascetic but it was a condemnation in which nobles of Rome shared with the Christians¹¹. John not only attacks Rome but he also attacks idolatry and immorality within the Church (Rev 2 : 14, 20), like the prophets of the Old Testament proclaims God's kingdom on earth and to assure the Christians of the final triumph not only in the individual or within its own borders but throughout the Kingdom of the world and in their relation to one another. It was a time of relative peace for the Christians, when they were getting to terms with the delay of the Parousia which must have seemed imminent in the upheavals of 66 - 70 AD. There was persecution of which Antipas (Rev 2 : 13) and John himself were probably victims, but it was local and selective rather than systematic. The result was that overt witness-bearing and non-conformity could be avoided by not attracting attention. We know that in Roman law any religion was illicit or unauthorized outside its country of origin, though/

/though punitive measures were not normally taken unless some anti-social behaviour was connected. The Jews who had communities in every nation were exempted. They practised their national religion outside Palestine and for some time the Christians were able to shelter under this umbrella, as a Jewish sect (Tertullian Apol 2 : 1). However two events took off this umbrella.

- a) Nero's action after the fire of 64 AD, perhaps influenced by his wife's favour to the Jews resulting in action against the Christians as such formed a deadly precedent.
- b) The Jewish war of AD 66 - 70, in which the Christians avoided identification with the Jews. After the war Judaism closed its ranks and took steps to exclude all heretics from the synagogues especially the Christians who on their part took the destruction of the temple as God's judgement on Jews for the murder of Jesus¹².

The letters to the Churches suggest that the chief danger confronting the Church was not persecution but complacency and compromise. At this time, the Christians like the Jews of the Old Testament times were disposed to forget what was the actual character of the great city. They had strayed a good deal by the influence of wealth and apparent good will of the empire to the converts. Morality had fallen, the Christians needed reminding of the inherent idolatrous life of the state and what she had done to the people of God, whether under Pharoah, Jezebel or Anthiocus or in the guise of Sodom, Niniveh, Babylon, Jerusalem and finally Rome. It is generally agreed that John expected persecution of the Church by the Roman Empire, but like the other apocalyptic/

/apocalyptic writers, he has set this against a background of world history. The Christians were being carried away by world situation and the prophet had to warn them. What then had Revelation to say to the Churches.

Chapters three and four are full of biblical symbolism and local references. Warning is given to Ephesus about false prophets and Nicolaitans who in the third and fourth letters to Pergamum and Thyatira are linked with biblical villains, Balaam and Balak and Jezebel who tries to introduce pagan religion and morals into Israel. The second and sixth letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia speak of opposition from false Jews who bear the name of God but do Satan's work. They attack the churches' faith while the Nicolaitans adulterate it. The first Church Sardis is asleep (dead). The seventh Laodicea is lukewarm (complacent). Christ calls the Churches to repent, to be faithful to death and to reproduce his witness to his father. Chapters four and five show that the Churches' chief dangers are internal complacency, somnolence and compromise with worldly virtues. But there is also a real danger of external attack and the scene now shifts to heaven where John is shown things which would have served to strengthen Christians in the face of slander, for as Professor Frend puts it, 'in the province of Asia, the struggle between Jews and Christians was bitter and incessant, by the end of the first century, it was contributing towards hostility which the Christians were to encounter soon throughout the Graeco-Roman world'¹³

Chapter thirteen to eighteen looks as if it is against the Roman Empire. These are also interspersed with warnings to Christians (13 : 9 f, 18/

/18, 14 : 12, 16 : 15, 18 : 4), which goes to confirm that really the object of John's prophecy was to wake up the Churches which were slipping into conformity with their witness to it. They must be shown its true colour (nature) and the destiny under its glamour and power. the deadliness of compromise inspite of its apparent reward and the real witness to truth inspite of its apparent suicidal folly (Rev 1 : 5-6) Like the Old Testament prophets, John attacks the affluence of Rome. Trade with foreign ties and wealth it brought had in the eyes of the Old Testament prophets destroyed the primitive simplicity of Israel's national life. The same had happened to the Christians in the Roman Empire. This outlook is partly because Christianity was rooted in the cities which were centres of commerce especially Thyatira and Laodicea more deeply perhaps that wealth creates a false sense of security which prevents men from seeing cruelty, injustice and other evils in their true light.

Such situations have been created by development of trade and commerce. Again like the Old Testament prophets, John attacks three groups of people whose fortune depends on the survival of Rome. The Kings of the earth (Rev 18 : 9 - 10), the merchants (18 : 11 -17) and the sea faring (18 : 17b - 19). These have grown rich due to the political situation. If we compare John's condemnation of these three groups of people with what Isaiah had to say in Chapter 23 and what Ezekiel said in Chapter 27 one would be tempted to think that John might be merely quoting these prophets. The truth of this will be seen with slight look at the social and economic background I have used mostly from M Rostovtzeff's book 'the Social and Economic History of the Roman/

/Roman Empire' First Edition. By around the time of the writing of Revelation, the Roman Empire was affluent. There were increasing numbers of rich men in the empire, wealth was no longer concentrated in the hands of few people or places as in the Athenian republic or the Roman senate. Wealthy men were not exceptional among the Senators of the Second Century. Rich men were to be found partly in Rome (mostly among freedmen) but chiefly in the provinces. Rich men were found in the most unexpected places in all the parts of the Roman Empire. The fact that Christianity was still more or less based in the urban area or built up area made the converts a product of their time. Fortune sprang from commerce and along with commerce is the closely connected business of transportation industry also played a part. The Empire was linked by commercial relations with all its neighbours who were in territorial touch with it. From the Second Century we have series of inscriptions which mention the profession of men of the time. Many of these give us names of merchants (Mercatores and Negotiatores) and even tell us of their special line of business.

As a model for lament John uses two dirges found in Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 26 and 27. The situation as he saw it was real but he had to use the solution or message of the Old Testament prophets to adapt to a historical situation in which he finds himself. So the prophecy of Revelation was to correct the evil and abuse found in the community as it is found. John might have read other prophetic writings. In Chapter 18 he draws into his service so many phrases and figures from tant-song and dirges in Isaiah, Exekiel and Jeremiah. The song in Revelation is a resounding echo of passionate faith and exulting in the doom song of the great/

/great prophets. If we read what Isaiah had written about Babylon (Isaiah 21 : 9 - 14) and all nations immersed in luxury and pride, we shall find out that John does not only derive certain phrases from Isaiah, it was the spirit in which it was written. If we compare Isaiah 21 : 9ff to 18 : 1 - 3; in some places John seemed to have used the exact words of Isaiah. If we read how Jeremiah and Ezekiel denounce the great cities of this world : Jeremiah 51 : 1, Ezekiel Chapters 26 and 27, we shall find out that John has remembered what they wrote and his words are charged by conscious recollection. In short Chapter 18 is in line with prophetic doom-songs but it is a new song altogether because it has passed through the prophetic imagination. It is also a summary of all the prophetic oracles on the doom of unrighteous people. When John read such passages as Ezekiel 27, the song heralding the imminent fall of Tyre he discerned a prophecy which bore resemblance upon his own world, the world of the Roman order. Tyre is less a city than a symbol. As John sees it, she stands for complex sea traffic of the empire, she is a part of age long Babylon and therefore what Ezekiel wrote about her doom could appropriately mingle with what Isaiah and Jeremiah said about the doom of Babylon. Concluding, Revelation is a book of prophecy and the author a prophet, who was motivated by political, social and economic situation of his time.

Before going further, we shall have a look at one of the now Christian prophets who wrote around the same time, before going over to the Montanists.

THE PROPHET HERMAS

"Towards the end of the 1st Century, the Christian Church at Rome seems to have made a convert of whom it was never proud. He was not a great man. His writings were not included in the New Testament, though they were seriously considered for it" This is a direct quotation from W J Wilsons article on the Career of the prophet Hermas¹⁴. We have already discussed the John of the book of Revelation and tried to understand his prophecy from the point of view of the social and economic background at the time of the prophecy. While it was supposed or agreed that John was writing in Asia minor, Hermas was writing in Rome. The social and economic conditions were not different throughout the empire. Who then was Hermas and what was his message in the situation he found himself?

Hermas lived in the capital city of the empire but he was not a native Roman. He had been born somewhere in the provinces perhaps in Greece. Many guesses have been made about his parentage, but all that is known is that he was an unwelcome child and had been abandoned by the wayside for anyone to pick up. The man who picked Hermas up and reared him for trade brought him to Rome and sold him as a slave¹⁵ to Rhoda, a lady of some wealth and refinement. Later he escaped from slavery perhaps by earning his value and paying the money. He set up business for himself, prospered and was able to marry. He bore seven grown up sons. Sometime he met some Christians who told him about the Lord who is about to come to judge the world sending the wicked to torment and saving the good for a blessed life hereafter. Hermas did not clearly understand what the message was or the Lord properly but all that/

/that was clear to him was that if he were good and repented of his sins especially sins of pleasure, or self indulgence, he would be safe on the day of judgement. So he was baptised and was assured of salvation. Further they told him of the Holy Spirit, whose influence would help him to be saved. Before now he was only concerned with making money not always too scrupulously. Suddenly, his interest widened and something beyond his life opened to him. As he went to the meetings of the Church and sang songs and listened to prayers and exhortations he discovered that there were certain persons called prophets who saw visions relating to the deep things of life. He found that he too could have visions and he began occasionally in the meeting and reported what he had seen and heard. In the course of time, he learned to cultivate trances and visions by means of fasting.

Among the members of the Church in Rome he met Rhoda the lady who years before had owned him as a slave boy. One day he saw her bathing in the river Tiber, and, as she was climbing out, reached forth his hand and helped her up the bank. Sometime Rhoda died. The first vision that Hermas saw was in connection with Rhoda. This was the beginning of his ministry.

Thus the first vision "as I was walking along, I fell asleep, and a spirit seized me and carried me away through a pathless region through which nobody could walk for it was through a piece of a country all broken into gullies by water. Well, I crossed that river and came to a level spot and I knelt down and began to pray to the Lord to confess my sins, while I was praying, the heavens was opened and I/

/I saw that woman whom I had admired, she greeted me from heaven and said 'good morrow Hermas'. I said 'Lady what are you doing here'. She answered 'I ascend to accuse you before the Lord for your sins,' I said, to her 'are you making accusations against me now?' 'No' she said, 'but hear what I am about to tell you. The God who dwells in heavens, and who created out of what was not the things that are and multiplied and increased them for the sake of his Holy Church is angry with you because you sinned against me'. I answered her, 'Sin against you? In what way? Did I speak an unseemingly word to you? Did I not always regard you as a goddess? Did I not always respect you as a sister, how could you falsely charge me with this kind of impure things?' But Rhoda laughed and explained that it was not a wicked act but only the thought of his mind. This was the beginning of Hermas prophecy. This theme occurs throughout in his work Hermas could rightly be called a moralist. He starts with the conviction that for sins committed after baptism, there can be no forgiveness. But he presents himself as charged with special mission to proclaim that by an exceptional act of grace, one more chance of salvation is offered to all those who will now repent and sin no more. They must however, clearly understand that sin is not confined to outward acts of wrong doing. Sins of thought and sins of word are no less fatal in their consequences than sins of deed. His book is divided into three parts. First came the five visions, in the last which appears the Shepherd from which the book has received its title 'The Shepherd of Hermas'. Then came twelve mandates or commandments and lastly ten similitudes or parables. Hermas had been suffering/

/suffering from reverses. As he says later, his wealth, derived, it may be, from some retail business, perhaps in wine or oil, had been pared down. He likes to think of himself as someone who had been subjected to the perils and temptations of great wealth. Now however, he is poor and wonders what could have so aroused God's anger against him, some kind of business failure having overtaken him, he concludes that he must have sinned, being especially sensitive on the subject of sex. He at first imagines that God is charging against him that passing thought concerning Rhoda as earlier said. This was with regard to the beginning of his visions.

HISTORICAL SITUATION

The Shepherd of Hermas reflects Christian life as lived during the second phase which inaugurated by Trajan was advanced by Hadrian and continued through the years of Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius. This was a time of basic changes in the empire as the influence of the provinces came to be felt more than that of Italy. It was a time of new organization of the army, the development of great corps of administrators of the provinces, of growth of the Roman law and of important reforms, in the collection of internal revenue. During the period, the power of the emperor increased, and the prestige of the Senate waned. A closely knit nation of provinces emerged over which the emperor maintained his close personal supervision. During the period important changes in social order occurred as the rise of position of the freedmen at once met and furthered the shift in commercial organization of the empire which was steadily becoming more necessary. Certain changes in the distribution of wealth operated to effect deep/

/deep seated differences in status of social groups.

The Shepherd of Hermas tells us the way in which the Christians met these changes. It is with the purpose of control that the book of Hermas was written. In other words the purpose of the message of Hermas was to effect control of the Christian life. While Hermas enunciated his teaching so as to make it seem directed to himself and his family, it is obvious that his real purpose is to instruct his fellows. His instruction is quite practical, he looks back to a period of persecution from which the communities have emerged and looks forward to another such rather vaguely expected in the future. The crux of the matter is his message in view of what has happened since the last, and what he foresees may happen in the coming persecution. For while the time is peaceful the internal development made possible by this peace impends. The danger is rather that of cessation of the purifying fire of persecution has permitted certain unhealthy parasitical bodies to live on within the communities. This was the case with the lukewarmness in the Christians of the revelation of John. The central problem is the condition which Hermas calls double mindedness. The condition implies a variety of aspects it appears not infrequently as he mentions persecution.

"You escaped great tribulation through your faith and because you were not doubleminded when you saw so great a beast" (Vision 4 : 2 : 4).

Other references tend to explain more "Some were apostates to the end ... they blasphemed the Lord and denied him and many of them were double minded" (Sim 8 : 8 : 3a). Again the double minded and those/

/those who have the Lord on their lips, but do not have him in their hearts..... are neither alive nor dead. Therefore, they are like the double minded when they hear of afflictions become idolators through their cowardice and they were ashamed of the Lord" (Sim 9 : 21 : 1 - 4)

Sometimes double mindedness appears frankly an attitude of doubts eg: "He said to me remove from yourself double mindedness and do not at all be double minded..... For those who have doubt towards God these are the double minded..... But they who are perfect in faith..... This double mindedness uproots many from faith and despite this double mindedness master it in every act" (Mandate 9).

For Hermas double mindedness could even lead to schism. The problem emerges as follows : of one group it is said 'Those who are double minded and evil speakers and are never at peace with themselves, but are always making schisms' (Sim 8 : 7 : 2). Again he is told "If any of them turn again to schism, he shall be cast out from the tower (ie the Church) and shall loose his life" (Sim 8 : 7 : 5). Among the schismatics and law breakers there is death (Sim 8 : 7 : 6). The Shepherd pictures a religious body in which the unity of the group is broken by differing attitudes by lack of unanimity, which is exhibited not merely in intellectual matters but more serious also in the matters of discipline when pressure threatens some individuals retreat, when it moves to a situation of persecution some deny and when it pleases, some secede and effect a schism.

CAUSES

The force operative in Hermas message is the influence of wealth.

Here he is in line with both John of the Revelation and the Old Testament prophets. It was the influence of business and wealth that had made the Christians of the Revelation of John lukewarm. It is the same influence of business and wealth which Ezekiel and all the other prophets of Old Testament accused of being responsible for the debased morals of Israel. Now Hermas sees the same situation. This is shown in Hermas vision in the building of the Church. One type of stone being used symbolises those who have faith but also have riches of this world. When persecution comes, because of their wealth and because of their business, they deny their Lord.

"..... when..... their wealth, and because of their business they deny their Lord..... when..... their wealth, which leads their souls astray shall be cut off they shall be useful to the Lord. For just as rounded stones cannot be useful unless something be cut off and taken away from it, so too they who have riches in this world cannot be useful to their Lord unless their wealth be cut away from them" (Vision 3 : 6 : 5, 6). Again a parable in which various sticks are the figures has this feature : "Those who gave up the stick half green and half dry these are those who are concerned with business and do not cleave to the saints for this, half of them is dead and half alive..... some of them were apostates to the end..... because of their business they blasphemed the Lord and denied him" (Sim 8 : 1 : 2). One effect of such preoccupation with business is the neglect of the intellectual aspect of religious life. The mandates naturally present this item as/

/as follows, "But even when they listen, concerning the Godhead and truth, their mind is taken up with business and they understand nothing properly (Mandate 10 : 15). There is a tendency for wealth to break down the social solidarity. Those who have business connections or have heathen friends are especially liable to corruption. There are various degrees of culpability as the force of wealth affected the churchmen directly. For some, business caused a temporary withdrawal in certain situations which social disapproval attached to adherence to Christian group (Sim 9 : 19 : 3). In such situations there seems to be a tendency for those primarily interested in business to form their associations in line with this interest. This of course was the case with all the commercial centres of the empire. The wealthy were reluctant to share their wealth. The following passage is an indicative of this.

The rich cleave with difficulty to their fellow Christians (fearing that they would be asked for something by them) so this type of sharing is harmful to you who are rich and do not share with the poor..... let those who have abundant seek out those who are hungry... see to it then you who rejoice in your wealth that the destitute do not groan and their groans go up to the Lord and you with your goods be shut outside the doors of the tower (Vis 3 : 9 : 4, 5). For Hermas wealth and distinction in social class has removed the characteristics of the early Church. It looks as if Hermas was an extremist in his attitude towards wealth and business. Certainly some groups among the early Christians must have been such. With Hermas it is good to put his attitude towards wealth and business over against the/

/the social conditions or situations known to have obtained with special acuteness in his particular time.

The public buildings of Hermas' days were at the zenith of their beauty and magnificence and were as a group an unmistakable index of the empire's wealth if not its prosperity. Such wealth worked deep changes in the social standard of the people. It is hardly to be expected that in such a changing world, the consistency of the Church would be unaffected. It is against such a background as this that the teaching of Hermas concerning wealth and business obtain their force. The evident fact is that though the religious group is to a degree becoming socially and economically integrated into the organization current in its time, Hermas represents the point of view that such integration is brittle, it is liable at any moment to be uprooted, and Hermas is desirous that when disturbances should come, the adherence of the religious group should be unincumbered with real property. He feared lest the choice of values, in favour of the "earthly city" should entail the loss of allegiance to the ideal values due to the attractions of property and the other economic advantages. Such a choice would ensure the disruption of the Community.

The lessons however of Hermas were ethical, namely for the purpose of self control, it is with the expectation that he can exercise control that he makes the exhortation. What distresses him is the attention to the wealth and business leading to private sin on the part of the guilty individual. He is distressed too at the tendency to permit integration of the faithful into the economic and social organization which was tending to break down the unity of the group. He entertains/

/entertains the possibility that the matter may be brought to the mind of the people concerned in such a way that the drift towards breakup may be prevented. Therefore he recounts his visions, reports his mandates and details of parables.

He is a messenger of the Church and his messages are to the Children of the Church for their direction and welfare. Hermas had a great deal to say about keeping the commandments 'living to God' etc and also much about sin and breaking of the commandment and the possibility of repentance.

He pictures the Shepherd as an angel who is in charge of repentance and it is from the Shepherd that he learns the most significant lessons which he passes on to his fellow believers. His lessons come to him from common sense observation of people, the crux for him was not the nature of sin and repentance but the actual difficulties occasioned the Churches by the behaviour of their members, namely the task of the exercise of discipline by the Churches in the interest of control.

In the mandates, Hermas relates how he is shown that in view of a persons weakness and the devil's subtlety it is provided that should one sin after becoming a Churchman he is allowed one repentance (Mandate 4 : 3). The same teaching occurs also in the visions and have the connection of the Church in the matter appears. Repentance as Hermas sees it, is a process of discipline in which afflictions and punishment play their part¹⁶. Hermas' idea of repentance is that of a process of discipline covering a period of time and under the guidance of the Church. The late Professor Lake had this to say about it 'it is the beginning of the great Catholic system of penance which/

/which is difficult to estimate at its full value because of its corruption and exploitation in the middle ages... it has much to do in producing in the next century a Church which inspite of persecution ultimately won the assent of the best of the Roman World¹⁷, and Le Long had also this to say ' it is without doubt under the influence of Hermas that the ideas of indulgence made such rapid progress in the Church during the second half of the Second Century..... The Shepherd had thus the good fortune to mark this first and most important moment in the troubled history of penance. He opened with the call of rigorism, the breach of which Callistus and Cyprian had but to enlarge during the following century¹⁸. At the same time, as Pierre de Labriolle has seen, the Shepherd of Hermas is to some extent a forerunner of Montanism especially as connected with Rome.¹⁹

Once more, the Shepherd of Hermas is a book of discipline written in an era of peace between persecutions and it was designed to meet a situation which experience showed was acute where ever it obtained. With this we come to the end of this short survey of the prophet Hermas - We have seen how both Revelation and the Shepherd of Hermas were trying to make prophetic utterances to keep the Christians on the right track. We know also from our history that many problems beseiged the Church : both internal and external. One such internal conflict is Montanism - We shall in the next chapter see how the prophecy of Montanus worked and whether it tried at all to exhort the Christians like all the other prophets. We shall also see what it was and how it was taken by the Church.

Notes

- 1 H H Rowley
The revelation of apocalyptic
(Lutterworth London 1955)
- Russell
The method and message of Jewish apocalyptic
S C M Press London 1964
Page 92 ff
- 2 P. Vielhauer
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London 1965)
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- 3 G Van Rad
Theology of Old Testament Volume 2
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Page 303
Fresh presentation of the case of apocalyptic being an unbroken
development of prophecy. See P D Hanson The Dawn of Apocalyptic
(Fortress Press Philadelphia 1978)
- 4 G E Ladd
The Revelation and Jewish Apocalyptic
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- 5 The Apocalypse : an Apocalyptic book?
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Page 69 - 81
- 6 J Comblin
Le Christ dans l'apocalypse
(Paris 1965)
Page 5 f, 85

- 7 A Feuillet
L'apocalypse Etat de la question
 (Paris 1963)
 Page 8
- 8 What you see, what is, and what is to take place here after
- 9 cf Isaiah 32 : 3 Jer 28 : 15, Amos 7 : 16, David 10 : 11 etc
 and the repeated injunction of the prophet Moses Deut 4 : 1,
 6 : 3, 4 (Hear O Israel.....)
- 10 R H Charles
The Revelation of St John
 (Clark Edinburgh 1920)
 The recent commentary on the book in the anchor Bible Series
 Revelation by J M Ford (Doubleday New York 1975) puts forward
 the unusual, but stimulating hypothesis that most of the
 revelation emanates from a John the Baptist school, which
 represented a primitive form of Christianity and inherited the
 baptist's prophetic and apocalyptic tendencies. Dr Ford assigns
 the writing of the book to a period prior to the Gospel of
 Mark and emphasises that it does not fit the apocalyptic
 genre.
- 11 William Barclay
The Revelation of John
 Volume 2
 Page 204
- 12 John Sweet
Revelation
 Page 31
- 13 W H C Frend
The Early Church
 (Philadelphia 1982)
 Page 37
- 14 W J Wilson
The Career of the Prophet Hermas
 Harvard Theological review Volume 20 1927
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- 15 I am still indebted to the same article by W J Wilson already
quoted.
- 16 cf Sim 7 : 4 - 7
- 17 Lake
Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity
Page 91
- 18 Le Long
Les Peres Apostoliques
IV le Pasteur Hermas VII
- 19 P de Labriolle
La Crise Montaniste
Page 247 - 256

CHAPTER IV
PROPHECY OF MONTANUS

THE EVE OF MONTANISM

Before discussing Montanism, it is reasonable that we have a look at the events which helped the spread of Montanism. What factors gave rise to them. It may not be necessary to have a review of the whole history of Christianity up to the time of Montanism, for not only will it be impossible to do justice to it in this short chapter, but it will be stupid for one to claim to get all the facts and figures. However, an attempt will be made to scratch at what can be remembered for thousands of books have been written on that alone.

It suffices to know that the prophetic ministry of the apostolic and immediately sub-apostolic times passed away in the course of the second century. The transformation was due first to the alteration of the organization of the Churches especially the institution of the three fold ministry. The importance of this development may be illustrated by two quotations taken from the writings at the beginning and end of the second century respectively. "Every prophet" says the oldest ecclesiastical manual (didache) "Who speaketh in the Spirit, ye shall not try nor Judge for every sin shall be forgiven but that sin shall not be forgiven"¹. That comes from the time when the prophetic ministry was still the great controlling power. "Wretched men" says Irenæus "who wish to be false prophets;..... holding aloof from the communion of the brethren," and the test of being in communion with the brethren is "to obey the elders who are in the Church."².

The change between the time when the prophet was not to be judged but to be obeyed and disobedience to him being an "unpardonable sin", and the time when the test of true prophecy was obedience to the resident/

/resident office bearers of the local Church amounted to a revolution. The overthrow of the supremacy of the prophetic ministry divided the Church into two. The more close and firm the organization of the local churches became, the less room remained for the exercise of the prophetic ministry which claimed for itself freedom and the power of ruling in some indefinite way over the churches which admitted its exercise among them.

In St Paul's summary of the gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows which when made manifest with the community makes a church, it can be seen that all these gifts may be divided into two classes. Those which enable their possessor to edify the brethren by speaking the word of God and those which fit them for serving the community in more practical ways. Two of these gifts "piloting" (κυβερνησεις) and "aids" (ἀντιληψεις) for shadow in the abstract the concrete offices of the overseer and servant from them the office bearers of the local churches derive their origin. The task of edifying by speech belonged primarily to the first class of gifted persons and the work of edifying by wise counsel and all manners of brotherly service belonged to the two branches of the second class out of which the local office bearers developed. Edification by word of mouth being most important need of the Churches and if the "gifted" apostles, prophets and teachers failed any community, their services had to be supplied somehow.

The Didache or the teaching of twelve apostles³ was a short Christian manual of composite character, containing rules for conduct of individual men and women, and regulations for guidance of Small Christian Community, scores of which were scattered over the face of the empire/

/empire in the second century. It is likely that they formed baptismal instructions administered to the Catechumens before baptism, fasting and prayer and the Eucharist. It may be dated between 100 and 120 AD.

Three sections are devoted to the injunctions which concern the "prophetic ministry". There follow the instructions about the Lords' day services and the selection of office bearers. It concludes with warnings about the last days. It shows us the transition stage between prophetic and priestly pre-eminence, and explains how the need for residential clergy was supplied in an ordinary way when the extra-ordinary involved in the presence of a prophet failed, "Appoint therefore you yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and are not covetous, upright and proven; for they also minister to you for the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore neglect them not, for they are your honoured ones, together with the prophets and teachers." The underlined words show us at once the point of junction between the prophetic ministry and the local one, and how they could fulfil the duties of the latter. This also reveals the possibility of the abolition of the prophetic ministry as a permanent part of the organization of the local churches.

We can see how, when the wave of the spiritual enthusiasm and the illumination which came with the earliest proclamation had spent itself, there was need to supply through the ordinary office bearers of the churches that exhortation and instruction which in the earliest times had been left to the inspiration of those gifted with the power of speaking the word of God. Hence the Didache⁴ counsels the community/

/community to select men for its office bearers in the knowledge that they may be called upon to supply this need. But when the local churches began to have their needs satisfied, within their circle, and the bonds of association grew stronger, it is easy to imagine that the power of the office bearers grew strong enough to withstand the members of the prophetic class unless the prophets were content to take a secondary place. The very fact that the office bearers could render the service of the "prophets and teachers" inevitably tended to place them, the permanent officials of the local churches permanently in the position of exhorters, instructors and the leaders of the public worship of the communities. Hence while we can trace the presence and the power of the prophetic ministry during a great part of the second century, we can also see how complaints against false prophets became more and more common. There was a tendency to make the test of true prophecy subordination on the part of the prophet to the office bearers of the churches⁵. This is not quite unexpected because human nature being what it is, the office bearers would like to wield their authority or ability in the presence of their community.

The early second century marks the transition stage. It is also worthy of note that it is highly probable that some of the office bearers chosen by the brethren to lead them by their gift of governing had also the power of exhortation and instruction. This was probably the case from the earliest times. The *προϊσταμένοι* of I Thess 5 : 12 not only laboured but "admonished" and to admonish (*νουθετεῖν*) seems to imply more than leading. The prophetic gift was to be found among the office bearers of the local churches before the conflict jurisdiction/

/jurisdiction arose and office bearers who possessed it had all the divine authority which was supposed to belong to the prophetic order.

We know of how the divine aflatuſ descended on Ignatius while he was preaching in Philadelphia (Epistle to the Philidelpha 7). From these, it is easy to see how, while the overthrow of the prophetic ministry was sufficient to provoke a disruption of the Church, it would nevertheless be accepted by a great mass of the Christian people. How then did this change take place?

The beginning of the change date from the early decades of the second century. By the end of the century, it was almost complete. The change was two-fold, and concerned both the prophetic and the local ministry. It can be described thus: the "prophetic" ministry passed away, its functions being appropriated by the permanent office bearers of the local churches and every local church came to supplement its organisation by placing one man at the head of the community, making him the president of the college of elders. The one part of change which came about gradually and at different times. In various parts of the empire it was affected peacefully and we hear of no disturbances in consequence⁶.

The other change which meant the overthrow of the "prophetic" ministry of the apostolic and immediately subsequent period was a revolution provoked a wide spread revolt and rent the Church in two.

To understand the change in the ministry of the local churches it is to be kept in mind that at the close of the first century every local church had at its head a college or senate or session of rulers, who were called by the technical name elder and were also known by names/

/names which indicated the kind of work they had to do - pastors, overseers episeopoi. This was the ministry of oversight. To each congregation there were also attached a body of men who rendered "subordinate services" who were called deacons - but whether they formed part of the college of elders or were formed into a separate college of their own, it is not easy to say. The change made consisted in placing of the head of this college of rulers one man, who was commonly called either the pastor or the bishop, elders and deacons. Instead of being as it has been, two fold of elders and deacons it became three fold - of pastors or bishops, elders and deacons.

The evolution of the offices is a complicated process. It suffices to look at some documents to have an idea of the evolution. The epistle of James, I Peter, the Book of Revelation and Acts all mention elders but neither bishops nor deacons.⁷ We may not go into details about the word but it is likely that the system of elders is probably of Judeo-Christian origin (as Zekenim) just as bishops and deacons were first at home with the gentile Christians leaving those epistles aside we come now to our other documents. The Didache which we have already mentioned talks of bishops and deacons. Our remaining documents are :

1. I Clement and Hermas
2. The letters of Ignatius
3. The pastoral epistles
4. The letters of Polycarp

In I Clement and Hermas the leading men⁸ of the congregation are termed both bishops and presbyters⁹. Whether the Church in Rome was governed by a bishop or council of presbyters in circa AD 100, when Clement/

/Clement wrote to the Corinthians we may never know. Support for this view is highlighted by bringing out the two meanings of the Episcopus (bishop) which had survived in Christianity¹⁰. One meaning was that of overseer which included in the synagogue parlance overseers of scrolls but secondly the term could mean "priest" as used regarding Eleazer in Numbers 4 : 16.

In I Clement the essential work of the bishop consists in presenting the gifts as typified by the priests of the Old Testaments. They are the leaders of the worship and at the celebration of the Eucharist, they offer prayers on behalf of the congregation. One trying to understand the letters of Clement must bear two things in mind. The legalism of the Romans and the occasion of the documents. At Corinth tension between a section of the Congregation and their leaders had reached the point of open conflict in which a group of the leaders had been driven out of their position of control and stripped of their liturgical functions. The issues at stake were not mentioned when Clement in the name of Roman congregation demanded that recognition be given to the ejected presbyters this in his eyes is an appeal for peace and concord without which the congregation cannot exist. Clement does not see himself as innovating but rather championing the old valid order against wanton and totally unjustified revolution.

In accordance with this, Clement develops his theory of the apostolic origin of the presbytery system. In his concern with the concrete, Clement only works out more precisely and systematically something which had been taken more or less for granted where the system of elders had gained control. It may be that in Corinth this had not completely/

/completely come about, but in Rome, it must have already done so and in Syria and Asia Minor too the system must have virtually taken over¹¹.

In the Shepherd of Hermas, we hear of 'bishops' looking after hospitality on behalf of the community and therefore acceptable to the Lord (Sim 9 : 27). Hermas is a prophet who by virtue of his visions and spiritual illuminations has received authority to speak to the 'saints' that is, to his own Church and the Churches throughout the world. It is stated that he had already wished at an earlier stage to give his book to 'the presbyters'; now Clement, on whom such duties fell, is to send it to the Cities abroad, while Grapte (probably a deaconess) is to instruct the widows and orphans¹². In the Church of Rome harmonious relationships exist between the men of the Spirit and the officials. Hermas mentions the apostles, of the early days, the bishops, the teachers, and the deacons¹³. In Hermas, there is no mention of liturgical function as in the epistle of Clement.

The next document that we have to consider are the letters of Ignatius. These letters were written on his last journey to Rome as a martyr. His letters reveal an advanced stage of the developed hierachical order which is connected with the fact that they are of the Syrian province and possible also with the particular circumstances of life in the metropolis of Antioch. In Ignatius all important matters are in the hands of the bishop. The Clergy is now sharply divided into grades, the Spiritual garland of the Presbyterate¹⁴. These surround the bishop as a council¹⁵ and below them the deacons¹⁶.

Ignatius' concept of the Church is not legal and constitutional like that of I Clement. He does not attach weight to apostolic origin of/

/of the structure of the Church. For him it is a mystery. In its totality it is united to Christ, who is God's incarnate 'word' to this world¹⁷ and thereby has become both flesh and spirit (Philad 7 : 1, Pal 1 : 2, 2 : 2).

Ignatius's principle concern is Unity. The Union is Union around Christ and his genuine passion endured in the flesh. The passion is celebrated in the sacramental reality of the Church constituted by the assembly of the whole congregation around the clergy and the bishop. He uses various images to describe the Church. Thus the congregation is to follow their bishop as Christ followed the father and the presbyters as they would the apostles and reverence their deacons as they would the Command of God¹⁸. Ignatius attempts to invest all important functions on the bishop. The bishop alone is entitled to lead public worship and to dispense the sacraments¹⁹. If anyone wishes to do so this is only permissible by his commission which is to say by the delegation of his episcopal rights²⁰. On the other hand it is the duty of the bishop to instruct his congregation and thus to save them from false doctrine²¹. Ignatius is not concerned with legal axioms but with the essence of fellowship embodied in the bishop, the clergy and the congregation. The bishop is the apex or the focal point as a whole. No special arguments are marshalled in support of his authority it is true that the congregation is subject to him and to those who are over it (Mayn 6 : 2) it is in harmony with the bishop²². Throughout his letters Ignatius avoids treating the powers, the authority and the 'rights' of the bishop in isolation it is not easy to define the nature of authority in the Ignatian idea of bishop. The congregation is to pay heed to the bishop/

/bishop in order that God will pay heed to them (Pal 6 : 1).

In his thought, it is not a dogmatic tradition which confronts the bishop with the norms binding upon him but equally it is neither a specific commission which he had received nor a clearly defined ministry. For Ignatius all Christians are Christ-bearers like himself and bearers of Holiness (Eph 9 : 2) and they no longer live in a human way if only they meet in the Unity of the congregation submitting to the bishop as to Christ himself²³.

Our next documents are the so-called pastoral epistles. These were supposed to have been written by Paul but this is highly disputed. They may however, as Von Campenhausen suggests have been composed in the first half of the second century in Asia Minor and their author in all probability may have been a presbyter or a bishop²⁴. The pastorals are neither occasional pieces, as to a certain extent the Shepherd of Hermas, nor genuine letters, such as I Clement and the Epistles of Ignatius, they are systematic works incorporating older traditions and possibly even written sources which may be classified as 'writings on the Church Orders'. They are cast in epistolary form and contain a number of passages couched in highly personal terms in which Paul expresses himself on the subject of his situation, his person, his apostolic calling and his anxieties and hopes for the future. In this way the theological warnings against false teaching and the practical instructions for running the congregation, which are the major topics, are given an air of verisimilitude in a warm and urgent tone.

In the pastorals the bishop is always spoken of in singular. The epistles no longer take the form of letters to the congregation but/

/but one directed to individual men. Timothy or Titus figure in them as models of faithful and conscientious Church officers. The tasks which they are to handle fall entirely within the sphere of the individual congregation and they are however entrusted with functions which can be exercised only by a governing bishop, and who are beginning to rise above the level of their fellow elders (ITim 5 : 19).

In the pastorals the apostolic teaching now figures as sustaining power and backbone both of the Church life and the activity of the leaders. The apostolic teaching is that which the office bearer has been entrusted with²⁵ and which they must proclaim and uphold. The Church preacher is also to be her example (I Tim 4 : 12, Tit 2 : 7) her judge (I Tim 5 : 19, Tit 3 : 10f) and the corrector of the recalcetrant (2 Tim 2 : 25) practical and economic affairs also come into the picture²⁶ and warning had to be given about coveteousness²⁷. At the heart of everything however stands out a sound doctrine²⁸. Elders who labour in preaching and teaching are to be prized above the rest²⁹. In this way the pastoral epistles once more give effect to the prophetic function which Paul had formerly set at the very centre of the congregations life. However, preaching convicting and exhorting no longer appear as direct fruit of the Holy Spirit. The official preacher holds fast to the undistorted tradition and to the sacred inspired scriptures which the apostles have left behind them.

Moreover responsibility for the trusteeship of this inheritance is now invested in the bishop and the elders as the professional holders of an established office committed to them for the purpose. The pastoral alongside the description of elders and the virtues which they ought/

ought to possess, considers the question of Spiritual relationship between the office holder and his office thus presenting a new approach. The Spiritual office is no longer for an advantage, it could be aspired to (I Tim 3 : 1). The elders are installed in their office and are clearly entitled if they prove satisfactory to material reimbursement³⁰. In this way Spiritual Office now becomes a profession. Could we not see in this nearness to the Jewish office of elder which called for no Spiritual qualification in the sense of miraculous endowment of divine grace. Now natural abilities are among the qualities required.

That the nature of the office is Spiritual is taken for granted because the early Church knows of no concept of office which is content with secular, legal or practical consideration. This is doubly clear where the office is so decidedly understood as a teaching one. On the work of the man who holds it depends, in view of the pastorals, not only his own salvation but also that of those who listen to him, his congregation³¹. In their interest he will present himself at every turn, invited or not, to teach to admonish to rebut and contest false and corrupting ideas (2 Tim 4 : 2). If anyone would doubt his power to do that reference will be made to his being called and hands layed on him. The laying on of hands is the source of his spiritual power. Close to the pastorals is the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, it reflects much the same stage of development with the pastorals. The epistle supplies us with the first concrete example about a cleric, the presbyter Valens of Philippi who failed to understand the responsibilities of his position and was deposed because of embezzlement³².

The documents we have been discussing fall into three different groups/

/groups from three different provinces in the empire. In Rome the bishop is primarily the supreme cultic official of his congregation as attested to by I Clement and Hermas. In Syria he is its Spiritual example and sacral focus, as attested to by the letters of Ignatius and in Asia Minor the bishop is above all the ordained preacher, of the apostolic teaching. It is possible that different views could have arisen in some of these communities. We must not forget as indicated in the Didache that the systems already discussed may not have been the same in every community.

II and III John whose writer was supposed to be an elder has also shown us how while organization was taking place in the communities, some elders regarded themselves as belonging to all communities. Here we notice how the elder encountered resistance from Diotrepas who was presumably the leader of the community³³. However from our discussion it is certain that local environments and probably other non-theological factors contributed to the different understandings of the the idea of the hierachy.

Three other factors contributed to the consolidation of the powers of the hierachy. One was the need of an authoritative tradition against which Gnostic and Marcionite claims and teachings would be tested. We can see this in the struggle which Irenaeus and Tertullian waged against their opponents who asserted the authenticity of the apocrypal gospels. Detailed study of Gnosticism and the Marcionites may not be necessary here, it suffices to know that a good number of influences were attacking the "Great Church". A lot of things came into dispute including the New Testament. Marcion had his own Canon of the Scriptures and various/

/various gnostics had theirs too³⁴. Confusions arose as to what was to be believed, amidst this medley of beliefs and assertions, Irenaeus assured the faithful that it was easy to know what the simple verities of the faith really were. He goes on to describe what the reply would be if one is asked about the faith and gives a short string of sentences resembling the apostles' creed³⁵.

Irenaeus proposed to give this old and much used method of finding out what were the primary and fixed verities of the Christian faith. Here we meet for the first time, outside the Roman Church, the thought of succession from the apostles in the office bearers of the local churches. Irenaeus was following Hegesippus, a Christian man of letters from the East who in circa 180 wrote a great work in which to quote Eusebius, he presented the undistorted tradition of the apostolic preaching in the simplest possible form³⁶. Arguments about the truths and the falsities of the work of Hegesippus cannot be discussed here. On the other hand, fifteen to twenty years after Hegesippus, Irenaeus was in Rome and he became acquainted with the list of the bishops which he then incorporated into his anti-gnostic work³⁷. This is just a simple way to find out what the real faith of the Church is in a time of more than usual perplexity not the apostolic succession as discussed in both Anglican and Roman Church of today. This is evident from the application Irenaeus makes of his principle, and it is also clear from the manner in which Tertullian who adopts the principles illustrates the use made of it. "Run over the apostolic Churches in which the very chairs (cathedra) of the apostles still guard their places (Sui locis Praesidens) where their own unmutilated (authentic) writings are read uttering the/

/the voice and representing the face of each of them individually. Achaia is near you, you find Corinth, you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have the Thessolonians, you are able to cross Asia, you find Ephesus, you are close to Italy, you have Rome³⁸. In all these churches, they sent epistles which are being read till today." The argument was that from their days till now, men with gifts of leadership and of wisdom had been office bearers in these communities and others founded, if not be the apostles by "apostolic men"³⁹. Each generation had been carefully trained in the apostolic doctrine by their predecessors and they were able to judge what the simple verities of the faith were. Irenaeus proposes that the office bearers who are in succession are to be made judges of what wholesome Christian teaching is. It is the fact of an uninterrupted succession of responsible men that it is natural and historical guarantee that the doctrines once transmitted to the fathers have been retained in the memory of the sons.

Both Irenaeus and Tertullian who wrote twenty years later dwelt much on these ideas. Their main thought is that in the churches, various local churches actual succession go back to the actual times of the apostles, can be said to have known men who knew apostles or apostolic man and who are therefore able to know what the apostles really meant to teach. With both Tertullian and Irenaeus the succession they speak of a a guarantee of correctness of the Churches' Creed. There is also an addition somewhat indefinitely formulated that these men who are office bearers in the succession have a charisma veritatis. Because of this it is evident that this new official task guaranteeing the true apostolic teaching which is laid upon the office bearers in general,/

/general, and in pastors or bishops in particular, must have had a very restraining effect upon the prophetic ministry and on the unlimited freedom of exhortation which characterized the churches in the first century and in many decades of the second century. The office bearers who were now in succession were now made the judges of what ought to be taught to the people in the exhortation and instruction. They were therefore set in the position of judging all who undertook the function which was peculiar work of prophetic ministry. Besides, it was suggested that the peculiar *veritatis* charisma, the "gifts" which gave them their unique position belonged to office bearers of the churches as well as the "gifts" of government. The need to express the dogmatic unity of the Church, and the idea that this authority lay in the office bearers of the churches must have placed the prophetic ministry in an inferior position and tended to destroy it altogether. The office bearers and especially the bishops would inevitably become instructors as well as judges of the instructions that were given.

Development of the Eucharist also helped the consolidation of the hierarchy.

In our treatment of the letters of Ignatius we show the bishop as the uniting force in the community and thus he presides at the Eucharist. One can see also that by Justin's time circa 160 it is assumed that the liturgy is the same in all communities and the liturgy was by no means celebrated by a chairman. In Justin's I apology chapters 61 - 7 is devoted to the description of Christian worship. He took time to explain the Eucharist and to define the bishop as the president of the brethren. He said that the president offered the Eucharist prayer/

/prayer according to his ability. He said that the bishop (president) sends up praise and glory to the father of all through the name of the son and the Holy Spirit and offers thanks giving at some length that we have been deemed worthy to receive these things at his hands⁴⁰.

The third factor was the development of the intellectual defence of Christianity through the apologists. With the rescript of the emperor Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus the proconsul of Asia sometime about 124/5 AD which the Christians regarded as the beginning of the era of toleration, the writings of the apologists began to appear. They demanded on behalf of their brethren to be treated like fellow subjects, free to live, so long as they did not transgress against the laws of morality under the wide spreading pax-Romana. Christianity demanded to be heard pleading for toleration which was granted to all other religions. The earliest of these writers were probably, Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Melito, Athenagoras, and others followed in succession. Tertullian alone seemed to be an apologist for all time.

By the middle of the second century the Christian faith was attracting people drawn from all classes and ranks in the society. Imperial officials, merchants, lawyers, men of culture and leisure; a question of utmost gravity faced the leaders of Christian societies; would the Church accept the new condition of things, and begin to adapt itself to forms and conditions of the world around it, or would it remain what it had hitherto been - communion of persons who hoped for nothing from existing society and who lived altogether apart from it looking only to the coming. There were two ways to the question. On the one hand it could be urged that Christianity held a world wide mission and/

/and if it could lay hold on the organization of the empire and use it for its expansion, it was only taking the part which providence had plainly marked out for its progress. This was the feeling that made possible the writing of the apologies. On the other hand, many Christians especially those who thought of the Church as a gathered community, the successor of the Israeli remnant, discerned the temptation which lay in accepting this view of the Churches' duty.

Except under the stress of persecution much of the early enthusiasm had passed away, for the great majority of Christians unimpassioned conviction took the place of the earlier almost unrestricted passion of faith. Even Tertullian in 197 points to "ordinariness of Christian lives" (Apol 42). The change of moral and intellectual atmosphere did not suit the prophetic ministry which had been the enthusiastic element of asceticism. It was therefore unavoidable that it would lose its old and its ancient power. Pleasant things continued to be said about prophets, provided only they accepted a position under the office bearers of the local churches. Curious regulations appear in some ancient canons enjoining the people to respect their utterances. In the Syrian Collection 'Testamentum Jesu Christi'⁴¹ those who despise prophecy were debarred from coming to the holy supper, but prophets were no longer the superior ministry in the churches. False prophecy also contributed in no small way to the degeneration of prophecy. Warnings against such persons are found within the New Testament writings⁴² and they occur with increasing strength in the writers of the second century. We see them in the Didache⁴³. Justin cites their presence in the Church as proof that Christianity is a true development/

/development of Judaism because Christians have among them false prophets as well as true ones like the ancient Israel⁴⁴. Hermas has given expressive pictures of true and false prophets⁴⁵. These various influences combined to help towards the revolution which excluded the prophetic ministry from its earlier position of supremacy and installed the local ministry in the supreme place of rule. They worked slowly and surely during the second century and especially during the first half. From our discussion on the documents it is clear that in different areas, office bearers were to understand their duty differently. If the pastoral epistles as we have argued originated in Asia Minor and if we are reasonably sure that the view they portray represents the general attitude or understanding of the Church and its office bearers, we need not be surprized that the first major conflict between the prophets and the official ministry was likely to occur in Asia Minor. The idea of the second coming gave life and impetus to the ministry of the prophets with the recession of the second coming into distant future (2 Peter 3 : 3 - 4) the organized ministry was to have more effect than the prophetic ministry.

We can also be reasonably sure that whether in Rome, Syria or Asia Minor the idea of the organized ministry did not kill the prophetic Spirit. We have already said that in Rome there was harmony between the prophets and the office holders. Any wonder then the Christians in Lyons could not quite understand why there should be misunderstanding when the conflict eventually came to open in Asia Minor.

Events in Asia Minor 170 - 200

The conflict which came to open in Asia Minor between the official ministry and the prophetic ministry cannot in all sincerity be said to be unexpected. Expectations of Parousia were fading (2 Peter 3) the office bearers in the urbanized cities of Asia Minor had become conscious of their authority and power. They are now recognised officers whose duties are to teach, exhort and correct. Yet the prophetic ministry had not completely disappeared. This is the understanding of the office bearers and their urbanized Christians. But did the rural communities share the view or were they exposed to the same influence as their urban counterparts. This is difficult to know.

Why should the conflict arise from a remote village of Phrygia?

The answer may not be simple but it could not be far removed from the fact that the urban and the rural Christians were acting from different awareness, nevertheless all in good faith and to the best of their understanding. Why did the bishops run crazy over the issue? The answer may lie in better understanding of the development of the Church in Asia Minor and the relationship between the urban Christians and their rural counterparts?

In all, it may not be easy to give objective judgement because the documents available are one sided.

What precipitated the Montanist movement in Phrygia in 157 or more likely 172 is unknown. A great deal of darkness has been supposed to hang over the chronology chiefly arising in the attempt to reconcile with the chronology of Eusebius that of Epiphanius who is not even consistent with himself⁴⁶. Eusebius in his chronology assigns 172/

/172 for the beginning of the prophesying of Montanus. However, Montanism must have originated between 172 when Montanus had his vision and 179, when prophetess Maximilla is said to have died⁴⁷.

The story of the Montanist movement in eastern province of the empire can be pieced together from three different sets of authorities. First there are five anti-Montanist writers, fragments of whose works are preserved in Eusebius. Three, Miltiades⁴⁸, Claudius Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis Phrygia and Melito of Sardis wrote in the reign of Marcus Aurelius and were contemporary with the outbreak of the movement. Two, the Anonymous and Apollonius wrote towards the end of the century. Secondly Tertullian after 207 and his Carthaginian colleagues including the editor of *Passio Perpetuae* c 203 illustrate the expansion of the "New prophecy" into a western Latin environment far removed from Phrygia. Thirdly there is Epiphanius' *Panarion* composed c 375 but provided with excellent sources of information going back to the origins of the movement.

According to Didymus⁴⁹ Montanus had been originally an idle priest. Jerome may also have believed him to be a priest of Cybele⁵⁰. Montanus taught that there was no reason to believe that God's supernatural revelations came to end with the apostles, but on the contrary, even more wonderful manifestations of divine energy might be expected under the dispensation of the paraclete whom Christ had promised to send to his Church. He claimed to have a prophetic calling the same way as Agabus, Judas, Silas, the daughters of Philip, Quadratus and Ammia or as Hermas of Rome. His idea seems to have been that he had been commissioned by God to gather all true Christians into a community which would be ready by its renunciation of the claim that social life/

/life presented and by absolute self surrender to the requirements of a right Christian life, to meet the Lord who was about to come to inaugurate his millennial Kingdom in the immediate future. He believed that the Church had reached its final term of existence in the world. He and his fellow prophets therefore represent the last stage of prophecy. He claimed that his utterances were those of God himself "I am come", he cried out "neither as an angel, nor as an emissary but I am indeed the Lord God and father" and as an explanation perhaps, "behold a man is like a plectrum, man sleeps while I awake, behold it is the Lord who makes man's heart ecstatic."

Montanus held that the relationship between a prophet and the divine being was the same as between a musical instrument and that which played upon it, thus the inspired word of the prophet was not to be regarded as that of the human speaker. In a fragment of his prophecy preserved by Epiphanius he says "I have come not as an angel or ambassador, but God the father"⁵². Here Montanus was soon out done by two female⁵³ disciples; Prisca (+ 175) and Maximilla (+ 179)⁵⁴.

The two women who had been married left their husbands and were given ranks of virgins by Montanus. The burden of the new prophecy seemed to have been a new standard of moral obligation especially with regard to marriage, fasting, martyrdom.

Montanus wished to organize a special community of Christians to await the Coming of the Lord. They claimed that the new Jerusalem⁵⁵ would be descending in the Phrygian villages of Tymion and Pepuza (probably east of Philadelphia) Prisca asserted that this has been revealed to her by Christ himself. In preparation for this event, Christians must embrace an entirely spiritual life, marriages are to be dissolved, continence to/

/to be observed, a rigorous fast to be undertaken and the name of Christ confessed openly to the point that martyrdom should be courted. As Professor Frend puts it, it was a revival of the Wilderness theory of the Coming and it was heralded gladly. People summoned by the prophets to attend the inauguration of the Millenium abandoned homes, families and work to stream into the countryside⁵⁶. Funds were raised for the new organization and from these the leaders and the missionaries who were to have nothing to do with worldly life drew their pay.

All or most recent authors like K Aland, F Blanchetiere, B J Kidd and a host of others agree that the Phrygian Montanism with its doctrine of the paraclete and its belief in the approach of the great persecution, followed by the second advent, its claim that the age of apostolic revelation had not ended or the fountains of prophecy run dry, its appeal to the revelation of its own prophets as the completion of the Old and the New Testament revelation, its rigorist discipline, stern attitude to the lapsed and its insistence on the duty of confession even at the risk of martyrdom. All agree that in these respects Phrygian Montanism in the early stage represented tendencies which were widely prevalent in the Church as a whole. It is equally clear that an organised group holding such view or opinion was bound to come into conflict with a church which on one hand was beginning to regard the Canon of the New Testament as closed and on the other hand lay under the rule of life which would ensure its survival and growth in the midst of pagan society and under a hostile pagan government. In doctrine, the Montanists were rigidly orthodox and in practice they made no great changes. They accepted the historical traditions of the Church as they found it. Late authors charge them of heresy and foul/

/foul immoralities but the heresies are on questions which were unsettled in their times. In short the churches had too much in common with the Montanists to oppose them very zealously. It was not at first doubted that prophecy might come at any time even to women. The old Israel knew of prophetesses extending back to Deborah and Hulda, and sanctified in the New Testament by Anna (Luke 2 : 36). We know of the daughters of Philip and Ammia. Nor did it seem of itself unlikely that the Holy Spirit should extend the laudable custom of fasting or impose a sterner punishment on gross offenders or forbid the more or less discredited practice of second marriages. No-body doubted that Christ's Coming might be literal. Even the defiant spirit preached by the Montanists would have an enthusiastic admirer in Ignatius. At first because of the decline of prophecy, it seemed answer enough to say that these particular prophets were false prophets. The question of principles only came later and were never fully understood in the early times. The Montanists had a good deal to say about their view of the world. They may have been pessimists, but events of the time couldn't have dictated otherwise. The social condition and events made it look to them as if the end was near.

Eusebius' source tells us that Montanus appeared in Ardabau⁵⁷ whatever is the real name, it could be a local place on the borders of Phrygia and Mysia from Philadelphia to Dorylaeum. Other local names mentioned Pepuza and Eumenia make it highly possible that Ardabau is in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. It was here that the Montanist awaited the descent of the new Jerusalem. Eumenia, Otrous and Hierapolis all lie in the region between Philadelphian and Laodicean road to the plateau. We know that Ignatius passed through Philadelphia between 110 and 118./

/118. A group of martyrs have suffered with Polycarp of Symra in 155. Ammia the prophetess must have prophesied between 100 and 150 AD. Philadelphia was singled out by the author of Revelation as worthy of praise for its zeal and steadfastness (Rev 3 : 7 - 8). For this W M Calder⁵⁸ has suggested that Montanism may have something to do with the letter to the Philadelphian Church as named by the seer in Revelation. From his work one might believe that the letter is a sort of magna carta of Montanism. This view looks interesting but I am tempted to believe that it is a narrow view. No Montanist opponent or proponent talks of the letter to the Church of Philadelphia. To accept such view would be reading the meaning of the twentieth century into the events of the second century. Rather one would say that apocalypticism was a common phenomenon in the early Christian centuries. The Christians mostly in the remote areas interpreted Christianity literally.

At first it does not appear that any offence was taken at the substance of Montanist prophesying, it caught the bishops off balance. The message spread out from Phrygia into Bitynia and Galatia and then to the coastal towns of the Black Sea. Something like panic set in. The first reaction of the clergy was to exorcise the women. Sotas a bishop of Anchialus⁵⁹ in Thrace on the Western Shore of the Black Sea attempted to treat the prophetess Prisca as possessed and tried to cast out the demon from her by exorcism, while Zoticus bishop of Comana in Pamphylia resisted Maximilla⁶⁰. These attempts at exorcism failed and merely produced a vigorous defence by their supporters. Then it was argued that whatever truth the prophets might be uttering, they should not be uttering in ecstasy. Then their way of life did not accord with what was expected of genuine prophets - ?⁶¹ The bishops however/

/however knew they were on thin ice, the tradition of Israel had been a tradition handed on through the prophets. There had been prophets in the New Testament times. Paul had not condemned speaking in tongues in itself. No one willed to be branded as a slayer of the prophets and the gain-sayer of the Spirit. Yet the movement spelt danger. In particular one notices that the principal anti-Montanist leaders were men of position and relative means, such as traveller and bishop of Hierapolis Abercius Marcellus. They believed in the accommodation so far as possible with the empire. Such men had much to lose by conflict, and open profession of the name of Christian leading to persecution and martyrdom was abhorrent to them. The bishops then took concerted measures, and by synodical⁶² action dealt with the situation. Councils of bishops were called, the first evidence for the concerted action by the leaders of the Great Church since the apostolic council of 48. Their weapon was probably effective for all the leading bishops of Asia Minor took part. Maximilla complained 'I am driven away from the sheep like a wolf, though I am no wolf, but Spirit and power'⁶³. The bishops condemned the Montanists, with the exception of Thyatira singled out by Epiphanius the cities of central and southern Phrygia went back to orthodoxy. For twenty years, the agitation seems to have confined itself in Phrygia. But after 177, a persecution of Christians broke out in many parts of the empire. Like every persecution, it was seen as a sign of the end. It would also seem that before this time, Montanus had disappeared from the scene but Maximilla and probably Prisca were working with redoubled effort. Amidst the raging of persecution, attention was attracted towards this movement. The desire for a sharper discipline and a more decided renunciation of the world combined with/

/with the craving for some plain indication of divine will in these last critical times, had prepared many minds for an acceptance of the findings from Phrygia. As the persecution raged, news reached the Gallic churches of Lyon and Vienne⁶⁴ about the events in Phrygia.

From their prison the confessors wrote both to the churches of Asia and Phrygia and also to bishop Eleutherus of Rome; before whom it seemed the case of the Montanists in Asia Minor had come. Irenaeus conveyed the view of the confessors to Rome. The confessors tried to arrive at their own answers as one sees under stress and attempting to pass on their experience to their fellow Christians in far away Asia and Phrygia. Eusebius describes the contents as prudent and most orthodox. However, they could hardly have been unfriendly to prophecy. The resources and liberality of the Roman Church made its friendship a matter of importance to every provincial church. We know of the mediation of Rome in the Corinthian discussion at the end of the first century. An extreme party (the Alogi) arose in Asia minor rejecting all prophecy and the revelation of John, and opposing the prophetic movement.

The story of Montanism in Asia minor after the death of Montanus and the prophetesses and its condemnation by the orthodox party is not very consistent. P De Labriolle in his book *La Crise Montanist* has said that we know nothing of them after the end of the second century.

However from other sources we are told that a community of the Montanists existed in the rustic and the backward part of Phrygia, that they organized themselves and had a notable financial system. With the failure of the coming of the New Jerusalem, the community had their own/

/own hierachy which was open to both men and women. That such a community did exist was made highly probable by evidence collected by Ramsay and Anderson which bears on the Christianity of the region at a later stage⁶⁵. The movement became a religion of the countryside where the message of Christianity was interpreted literally. Archeological evidence has helped to clarify these matters. The important article published by W M Calder called 'Philadelphia and Montanism'⁶⁶, here, he set up fifteen previously published Christian monuments from Phrygia eleven are from the upper Tembris Valley. These are of "Christians for Christians" inscriptions. The space here does not permit us to go into details in these monuments and discussion about sepulchral customs of Asia minor but it suffices to say the Calder believed that those inscriptions were Montanist in character. He based his arguments on the letter to the Philadelphia (Rev 3 : 7), the martyrdom of Polycarp and Tertullian's writing after he had gone over to the Montanists and the presumed character of the upper Tembris valley where rigorist Novatianism flourished in the 4th century. W M Ramsay in his book : Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia had considered the open profession of faith an expression of Montanism but had abandoned this opinion (Page 491, 537) J G C Anderson had agreed with Ramsay's earlier opinion that these epitaphs were Montanist⁶⁷. However, P De Labriolle considered them as merely an indication of the vitality of Christianity in Asia minor during the 3rd century⁶⁸. W Schepelem also expressed that fact that these monuments were not Montanist⁶⁹, H Leclercq followed Calder⁷⁰. Though arguments still rage today especially since the publication of Dr E Gibsons book of 1978⁷¹ many authors believe that the inscriptions/

/inscriptions were Montanist. Whatever is the truth may be difficult to prove or disprove for there are arguments for and against either side. However one thing certain is that after the controversy which broke out between the orthodox and the Montanist in Phrygia, the Montanists, having been worsted in the hellenised educated cities of central Phrygia, found a more permanent home in the heart of old Phrygian Kingdom where Phrygian customs were still untouched by Greek Civilisation - could one see the evidence of the social and economic conditions? So the upper Tembris Valley which formed part of the imperial state was a porous ground for Montanism. Evidence has shown that organized Christianity in line with the Montanist existed in Asia minor as late as 545 AD and beyond. The historian Sozomen⁷² talks of their existence as a sect of the Kataphrygians in the 5th century, and how they were marked out by their use of Solar Calendar for their calculation of Easter. As Professor Ford⁷³ pointed out, they were following the Johannine tradition that used the Solar Calendar and kept the passover on Nisan 14. By this time Montanism has clearly become a regional interpretation of Christianity like the Donatist in Africa in the 4th century.

MONTANISM IN THE WEST

The earliest notice which we possess of any appearance of Montanism in the West was that of 177. In that year, Christians of Gaul acting as ambassadors for the peace of the Churches in Asia minor wrote letters to Pope Eleutherus of Rome and to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia. It cannot be completely ruled out that Rome being the capital of the empire there must have been Montanist propaganda there. It is likely that such propaganda must have also been followed by an orthodox representative in Phrygia and it may be conjectured that Aviricius Marcellus of Hierapolis in the Pentapolis the chief figure in the resistance to Montanism in the later part of the second century⁷⁴ was among those representatives. He certainly visited Rome with a purpose in some way connected with the welfare of the Church and a passage from Irenaeus recalls the labours of the Gallican Christians for the peace of the Churches⁷⁵ and a treatise dedicated to Aviricius almost at the time when his famous epitaph⁷⁶ recording a visit to Rome was recorded. The popes took no immediate action, except to lend a deaf ear to Montanism.

Twenty five years later under Pope Zephyrinus, 197 - + 217 a fresh attempt was made to introduce Montanism into Rome. Proclus⁷⁷ the leader of one section of the disciples of Montanus arrived in Rome, and began to publish their doctrines. Proclus was orthodox in respect of the doctrine of the Trinity; though there was another section of the Montanists headed by Aeschines who inclined to Modalism⁷⁸. Zephyrinus himself had tendencies towards an indiscriminating emphasis on the Unity of God⁷⁹. Proclus held a disputation there with Gaius a/

/a learned Roman Presbyter which was after all published and a fragment of which Eusebius retains⁸⁰.

The Pope actually favoured the new prophecy and had actually put forth letters of peace to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia but in the end under the influence of Praxeas these letters were withdrawn⁸¹. There were doubtless later attempts of the same kind, one is referred to by Jerome⁸². Proclus seems to have urged on behalf of Phrygian prophecy that Philip and his daughters who had prophesied had lived and died at Hierapolis where they had their tombs⁸³. But Gaius used Peter and Paul to push his own argument⁸⁴. Gaius also appealed to Christian Scriptures. He alleged that the Canon of the New Testament was closed. Thus according to Eusebius he curbed the rashness and boldness of his opponents in setting forth new scriptures⁸⁵. Montanism however was never strong in Rome and was not heard of again until after the beginning of the fifth century. It made a foothold in Spain but no serious progress. All we know is that it had some adherents there in the fourth century according to Pacianus⁸⁶. In Asia after the Montanists had separated from the Church, it fell into the hands of lesser men, and under the leadership of Themiso, and according to the anonymous writer who was a strong opponent degenerated into laxity⁸⁷. The opponents taunted them with professional prophecy as found from the days of Balaam⁸⁸ and Gehazi⁸⁹.

In Africa it had more success. By the end of the second century knowledge of the new prophecy had reached Carthage perhaps from Rome and less probably direct from Phrygia. In contrast with its growing disrepute in Phrygia, it redeemed its credit and acquired a name for devotion/

/devotion and austerity due to its martyrs, Perpetua and Felicitas with their companions⁹⁰ and Tertullian.

The martyrs perished at Carthage 7 March 203, and their story belongs to the persecution under Septimius Severus, 193 - + 211. Vibis Perpetua who had a liberal education⁹¹ and spoke Greek⁹² wrote with her own hand in Latin⁹³ the record of her visions and suffering up to the day before her martyrdom⁹⁴. This Passio Perpetuae was supplemented with visions seen and related by Saturus⁹⁵ the priest. He may have been one of the two deacons⁹⁶ of the church of Carthage appointed to attend on Perpetua, but he was certainly known to her and wrote by her last request⁹⁷. The editor gives for his reason for the publication of her passion that the new 'prophecies' and visions were promised at Pentecost⁹⁸ and that these 'we receive with recognition and reverence equal to that paid to ancient examples of Divine Power. From the indication we may conclude that the Martyrs were Montanists. They were however not separated from the Church.

In Carthage the breach between the Catholic Church and the Montanist conventicles was caused by a disagreement on the question of whether or not virgins ought to be veiled. For nearly five years 203 - 207 the Carthagian Montanists strove to remain in the Church which was as dear to them as it was to their opponents. But at last they quitted and formed a congregation of their own. It was at this juncture that Tertullian who has upheld the cause of the Church against pagans and heretics left the Church.

Montanism as presented by Tertullian differs so much from the Montanism of Phrygia. His knowledge of their tenets must have been derived from/

/from books including a collection⁹⁹ of Montanus and Prisca (he never quotes Maximilla by name) which was incomplete. Tertullian accepted the claim of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (the paraclete). Though he speaks of ecstasy¹⁰⁰ there is no hint in his writing of strange phenomena which were normal concomitant of Montanist Prophecy in the East. He tells us¹⁰¹ of a sister who fell into ecstasy during a church service but she was not permitted to communicate the revelation she had received till the congregation had departed. None of the anti-Montanist arguments¹⁰² would have any force against ecstasy so well controlled as this. Tertullian identifies ecstasy with amentia but with such qualification of the meaning of amentia¹⁰⁴ as to bring him very close to the standpoint of Eastern orthodox writers.

Tertullian seems to betray no consciousness of the doctrine of the succession of the prophets from the days of apostles to Montanus. In his view prophecy ended with John the Baptist¹⁰⁵ till it was restored in the prophets of the paraclete. He never mentions Pepuza, he expected the Parousia in the near future but he believed that it would take place in the near future in Jerusalem¹⁰⁶ which indicated that he could not have read the oracles which declare that the new Jerusalem will be in Pepuza. Dr Rendel Harris and Professor Gifford in the introduction to their edition of the acts of Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas¹⁰⁷ direct attention to the difficulty with which any of his writings except a very few tracts, can satisfactorily be labelled non Montanist. They have transferred what previous writers had regarded as probably Tertullian's earliest existing writings¹⁰⁸ to the Montanist period of his life. The fact is that the unquestionably Montanist treatise/

/treatise recognised merely by more or less explicit allusions to the revelations of the paraclete. The doctrines and the practices advocated in his latest works, for the most part, essentially the same as those upheld by in the earliest now extant. If there is any difference between them, it is amply accounted for by the development of opinion which would inevitably take place in a man of Tertullian's character. They are presented from new points of view and under new sanctions, but in their main substance they are unchanged. Of this fact it is superfluous to give a proof and the inference from it is irresistible. Tertullian brought far more to Montanism than he found in it is an inference which might have been drawn if we knew nothing more of the man than his writings reveal of his masterful personality. In Africa Montanism was largely made by Tertullian.

He agreed with the Phrygians in allowing to the prophets authority to absolve from sin though he has some difficulty in reconciling his own opinion that certain sins are unpardonable¹⁰⁹. He is indignant with those who held that martyrs have a like prerogative¹¹⁰. On the question of women speaking in the Church, he is in conflict with the Phrygians here we shall consider the influence of the local environment - He will not permit a woman to speak in the Church nor to teach, nor to assume any function which belongs to a man¹¹¹. He added much in the direction of rigorism of acute opposition to paganism and of avidity to Martyrdom. It would not be assumed that when his later views differ from his earlier views and when he proclaims them taught by the paraclete they were really derived from primitive Montanism. Thus in his 'De Fuga in Persecutione' he denounces flight in persecution as sinful/

/sinful though in his *ad uxorem* (1 : 3) he counts it as lawful. In his *pudicitia*, forsaking the milder teaching of *de paenitentia* he denies the power of the Church to forgive grosser sins, but in the former case he quotes oracles which make no reference to the flight and in the later which flatly contradicts his thesis (*De fuga* 9, *De pudicitia* 21). In both the oracles are more in harmony with his earlier than with his later opinion. Visions also enable him to add now a new doctrine (*De Anima* 9) now a fresh rule of discipline (*De Virg* Vel 17) to official teaching of the new prophecy. Even on subjects in which he was in entire accord with eastern Montanism we find no essential difference between his earlier and later teaching eg he expressed disapproval of second marriage in his pre-Montanist treatise *AD UXOREM*, the arguments used are identical with those of his '*De exhortatione Castitatis*' and '*De Monogamia*' including that founded on the nearness of the end, which is more strongly stated in an earlier work. His description of second marriage as a form of fornication¹¹² occurs in all three. The result of his adoption of Montanist principles is seen merely in the fact that an absolute prohibition takes the place of a strong expression of disapproval or in other words that he draws the logical conclusions from his argument. Here as elsewhere he found in oracles or visions only a new sanction for opinions already formed.

Thus we can see that if the form of Asiatic Montanism was determined by environment and by possibly the influence of individual leaders, the form of African Montanism or Tertullianism was determined by personal force of Tertullian himself and doubtless in some degree/

/degree by the environment which moulded his character. The home of Tertullianism was later to become the home of Novatianism and Donatism. It must be remembered that Tertullian was unaware of most of the features of Eastern Montanism which to eastern opponents caused scandal. There remained the proclamation of the inspiration of the living church burdened with a few corollaries most of which had been anticipated by his own thinking. We accept the answer of Swete¹¹³. For Tertullian the interest in Montanism lay chiefly in assurance which the new prophecy seemed to give that the Holy Spirit was still teaching the Church.

His acceptance of Montanist oracle as embodying the teaching of the paraclete was made easier for him by the support which they seem to give opinions which he maintained in opposition to the other Christians. Tertullian the representative of African Montanism asserted his identity of belief with the Church and took the field against the Modalist Praxeas. In *Adversus Praxean* written in 213, he charges him with Patripassianism. Tertullian had already made similar profession of loyalty to common faith of the Church in *De Virginibus Velandis* of 209 - 211¹¹⁴ and both of these protestations are of value as witness to the creed of the Church of Africa¹¹⁵ as it stood at the beginning of the third century. But Tertullian did more than accept the current orthodoxy. He shaped all subsequent latin theology¹¹⁶. He contributed indirectly to the moulding of the phrase 'Of one substance with the father' into its final meaning in the East¹¹⁷.and owing to the accident that, while Zwingli was promoting the reformation in Zurich, one of the earliest patristic texts to issue from the press/

/press of Johann Freben at Basel was the works of Tertullian, edited by Beatus Rhenanus¹¹⁸ in 1521.

Montanism may have gone beyond, but it did not abandon, the belief of the Church and so it was no heresy.

However in the matter of order relations were not so happy. Montanism was the first schism on record. After its repudiation by the bishops of Asia and Rome and by the martyrs of Gaul, it came into conflict with the Church in three points -

As regards the manner of revelation, it was agreed by the Churchmen and Montanists alike that 'prophecy' was a gift which should continue in the whole Church to the end of time¹¹⁹. But according to her conception of prophecy, the Church held it in objection to Montanism (in Lumine) that Montanist prophets spoke either in ecstasy or in para-ecstasy¹²⁰. There seemed to have been some division of opinion among Catholics as to the mode in which inspiration should operate : nor to this day has the Church any theory on that point; she is only comitted to believe in the fact that the Holy Spirit.... spoke by the prophets¹²¹.

The test would seem to be in accordance with the distinction observable in Holy Scripture between prophecy and divination. The prophets whether of Old or New covenant remained conscious under inspiration and the spirit of the prophets was as St Paul reminded the Corinthians, 'subject to the prophets,'¹²² Balaam, on the other hand, who prophesied in trance¹²³ was a soothsayer¹²⁴. But Tertullian defended trance and urged in reply that St Peter on the mount of transfiguration spoke as in a trance not knowing what he said¹²⁵ and certainly, St Paul, when caught up in the paradise, had revelations/

/revelations made to him under the condition of trance¹²⁶. The Church therefore fell back upon the contention that what was wrong was frenzy and Montanism was no true prophecy but heathen divination.

In regard to the completeness of the Christian revelation, the opponents of Montanism were on much safer ground, for the test of true prophecy lay not merely in the mode of the inspiration but its conformity with the apostolic truth as well¹²⁷. The closing of the Canon of the New Testament already in process enabled Churchmen to refuse a place to the effusions of Montanist prophets on the score that the prophetic succession had ceased. Quadratus and Ammia in Philadelphia were the last of their kind¹²⁸, and now the Shepherd had been rejected because it was recognised that 'prophets were complete in number'¹²⁹. No addition to the subject matter of Revelation, therefore could be entertained. Montanism stood for the legitimacy of accretive developments. But the Church admitted explanatory developments alone¹³⁰.

The third point of collision between Montanism and the Church was in regard to the contents of Revelation. The Montanist development were all in the direction of rigorism; and this no doubt was what attracted Tertullian to it.

The significance of Montanism has sometimes been sought in the supposition that it represents a reaction in favour of an originally enthusiastic Christianity untrammelled by organization¹³¹, this has been regarded as begging the question of the character of the primitive Christianity : and there is no evidence to show that Montanism/

/Montanism was consciously an attempt to recover the past.

The strength of Montanism lay in its grasp of the idea of Christianity as a progressive revelation. Montanism gradually disappeared, after its condemnation by the Churches of East and West c 180. About 230 Synod of Iconium¹³² decreed that converts from 'those who receive the new prophets but appear to adore the same father, and the same son as ourselves' should not be received into the Church without rebaptism¹³³ in spite of their orthodoxy. In the fourth century, Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem¹³⁴ 350 - + 86, and Epiphanius¹³⁵ make vile and baseless charges against them and Basil Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, 370 - + 9, accuses them of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit : Epiphanius, on the other hand pronounces them orthodox on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity¹³⁶. The seventh Canon of the council of Constantinople, 381, refused to regard them as Christians¹³⁷. The Code of Theodosius testifies to their continuance¹³⁸, while providing for their extinction by its penal laws¹³⁹. By the time of Optatus, bishop of Milevis¹⁴⁰ c 370 in Africa they have disappeared, and elsewhere by the sixth century¹⁴¹.

Notes

- 1 Didache XI : 7
- 2 Irenaeus : Contra Haereses
111 XI : 9
and IV XXVI : 2
- 3 The manuscript of the didache was discovered in 1873 in the library of the Monastery of Holy Sepulchre in the Phanar or Greek quarter of Constantinople by Philotheus Brienniois, Patriarch of Nicomedia, it was published by him in 1883
- 4 The didache reveals to us the moments of transition. The underlined sentence explains why permanent officials of the Christian Churches did not possess at first all the functions they possessed later. They did not possess them because the more prosaic duties which they themselves discharged were supplemented by that extra-ordinary wave of Spiritual exaltation which swept over the whole primitive Church. In that age the wish of Moses was well nigh fulfilment, "that all the Lords people were prophets." The difficulty was not to incite to the attainment of Church gifts but to regulate and control them. One by one they became rarer and disappeared. Then prophecy which lasted a little further.
- 5 Perhaps the earliest trace of this is to be found in Clement 1 epistle XLVIII 5 "Let a man be faithful, let him be able to expound a deep saying, let him be wise in the discernment the words, let him be pure, so much the more ought to be lowly in mind in proportion as he seemeth to be greater, and he ought to seek the common advantage of all and not his.
- 6 Ritschl's idea that the dissensions in the Church of Rome witnessed to in the Pastor of Hermas arose from the attempt to force on this change finds little acceptance. Compare Ritschl, Die Entstehung der alt.Katholischen Kirche (1857) Page 403, 535
- 7 Hans Von Campenhausen
Ecclesiastical authority and Spiritual in the Church of the First three centuries
Page 78

- 8 I Clement 1 : 3; 21 : 6
 Hermas Vision II, 2, 6; III, 9,7.
 cf Acts 15 : 22;
 Hebrew 13 : 1
- 9 Bishops I Clem 42 : 4f
 Hermas Vision III 5,1; Sim IX
 Presbyters I Clem 1 : 3 21 : 6 44 : 5 47 : 6; 54 : 2
 Hermas Vis II 4,3; III 1, 8
- 10 W H C Frend
The Early Church
 Page 40
 Here Professor Frend is contrasting Old Israel with the new
- 11 As letters of Ignatius, Polycarp and the pastoral epistles
 indicate
- 12 Vis II, 4, 2f
- 13 Vis III, 5
 In Sim VII 1, 7, 4
 the apostles and teachers appear as ideal figures of the past
- 14 Magn 13 : 1
- 15 Magn 6 : 1
- 16 Trall 2.3
- 17 Magn 8 : 2
- 18 Symma 8 : 1 Magn 6 : 1, 7 : 1 also Trall 2
- 19 Magn 3 : 1, Trall 12 : 2

- 20 Symrna 8
- 21 Pal 1 : 2, 5 : 1
- 22 Eph 4 : 1, Magn 2; 3 : 1 13 : 2 Pal 6 : 1
- 23 Trall 2 : 1
- 24 Hans Von Campenhausen.
opus cit page 107
- 25 I Tim 1 : 11 Titus 1 : 3
- 26 I Tim 3 : 2, 8, 5 : 16ff Tit 1 : 8
- 27 I Tim 6 : 5 - 10, 17
Tit 1 : 11
- 28 I Tim 1 : 10, 6 : 3, II Tim 1 : 13 4 : 3, Tit 1 : 9, 13, 2 : 1
- 29 I Tim 5 : 17
- 30 I Tim 3 : 15, 5 : 17
- 31 I Tim 4 : 16
- 32 Polycarp, Phil 11 : 1
- 33 III John 9f
- 34 Tertullian Adv Marcion i . 1
De praescriptione Haereticorum, 42; Irenaus against Heresies,
III xi 3

- 35 Against Heresies I . X . I
- 36 Eusebius H E IV, 8 , 1
- 37 Irenaeus Adv Haer III 3, 3
- 38 Tertullian.
De Praescriptione Haereticorum XXXVI
- 39 Ibid xxxii
- 40 Justin I Apology 65
- 41 Testamentum Jesu Christi
 Edited by Rahman
 (1899)
 Page 37
 Among the proclamations made by the deacon before the
 Eucharist Service is : - Si quis despicit semet segregat. It
 also says in page 79 Si quis autem verba prophetica dicit,
 mercedem habebit.
- 42 Mt 7 : 15, 24 : 11, 24, Mk 13 : 22, Acts 13 : 6, 2 Peter 2 : 1,
 I John 4 : 1, 3 Rev 2 : 2, 14, 15, 20

- 43 Didache XI, 1, 2, 8
Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 82. Irenaeus against Heresies, 1 xiii 3; III XI 9; Eusebius Hist Eccles V XVII 1-4 apostolic constitution VII XXXII VII : ii
- 44 Dialogue with Trypho Lxxxii
"For the prophetic gifts remain with us even to the present time hence you ought to understand that the gifts formerly among your nation have been transferred to us and just as they were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so there are many false prophets among us, of whom our Lord foretold us to beware.
- 45 Shepherd of Hermas
Mandate 9
- 46 The statement which probably expresses the real opinion of Epiphanius is (Haer 48) that Montanism began in the 19th year of Antoninus pius (ie AD 157). But in the next section fixing the date of his own writing at 374. He says that Montanism had arisen 190 years before. It is natural to suspect corruption of reading and the editors have altered the text accordingly.
- 47 Pe De Labriolle
La crise Montaniste and les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme (Paris 1913)
Page 12
- 48 O Bardenhewer Patrology 61

- 49 Didymus
De Trin iii 4
- 50 Jerome Ep and Marcellam
Vol 1. 86
- 51 Epiphanius
Panarion XLviii 4 . 1, 11 . 1, and 11 . 9 Grants reconstruction
- 52 P G XLI 872 D
- 53 Anon ap
Eus H E V XVI 9
- 54 For the date of Maximilla's death see : Anon ap Eus H E V
XVI 19
- 55 Apollonius ap Eus, H E, V xviii 2
- Epiphanius Haer XLviii 14
P G XLI 877 A
- 56 W H C Frend
The Early Church
(Fortress Press 1982)
Page 6
- 57 Anon ap Eus H E V XVI 7
- 58 W M Calder
"Philadelphia and Montanism"
B J R L 7(1923)
Page 320 - 328
- 59 Now Ankiolu in Bulgaria
- 60 Apollinius ap Eus H E V xviii 13
For this Zeticus see also V XVI 17

- 61 I have deliberately put the question mark because what we know about the Montanists was from their opponents. So anything can be said to discredit them.
- 62 Anon Ap Eus H E XVI 10
On this passage no doubt, are based the statements of the libellus Sybodicus as to anti-Montanist Synods ap Labbe and Cossant Concilia l . 599. They are accepted by C J Hefele councils l. 77f but doubted by McGiffert (Eus H E V XVI 16) and G Salmon ap D C B l 938
- 63 Anon ap Eus H E V XVI 17
- 64 Professor Frend in his Martyrdom and Persecution in the early Church treated the events in Lyons in 177. So for this account see W H C Frend, Martyrdom and persecution in the Early Church Baker Book 1981 Chap 1
- 65 W M Ramsay
Espositor
3rd Series
1888 page 241
- 66 B J R L 7(1922 - 23) 309 - 354
- 67 Paganism and Christianity in Upper Tembris Valley
Page 201
- 68 La Crise Montaniste 489
- 69 Der Montanismus und die Phrygische Kulte
Tubingen Mohr (Siebeck)
1929 80-82
- 70 Montaniste (Epigraphie)
D A C L 11 2 (1934) 2529 - 2544

- 71 E Gibson
The Christians for Christians: Inscriptions of Phrygia
Scholars Press
Missoula Montana
1978
- 72 Sozomen H E 2 : 32
- 73 J M Ford
Was Montanism a Jewish Christian heresy?
J E H xviii (1966)
Page 145 - 159
- 74 Ramsay Cities and Bishoprics
page 709
- 75 Irenaeus Haer IV xxxiii 7
Eusebius H E V iii 4
- 76 Compare Irenaeus Haer IV xxxiii 6 with Eusebius H E XVI 7f
Ramsay Page 709 722 ff
- 77 This proclus is probably to be identified with the anti-gnostic
writer Proclus Noster, Virginis Senectae et Christianae
cloquantiae dignitas, Tertullian Adv Valentinianos CV
- 78 cf Pseudo Tert Adv Omn haer C vii
Didymus de trinitate III XLI para 1

- 79 Sed post nos omnes etiam Praxeas quidam haeresim introduxit
quam Victorinus corroborare curavit Pseudo Tert Adv Omn
Haer C viii
- T H Bindley thinks that Victorinus is, perhaps, a combination of
Victor and Zephyrinus :
Tert de Paesr 167
- 80 Eusebius H E 11 xxv 6f
VI xx 3
- 81 Tertullian Adv Prax I
- 82 St Jerome Ep XLI
- 83 Proclus ap Eusebius H E iii
XXXI paragraph 4
- 84 Gaius ap Eusebius H E 11 XXV 7
- 85 Gaius ap H E VI XX 3
- 86 Pacianus Ep 1. lff
- 87 Anon ap Eusebius H E V XVI 17
- 88 2 Peter 15 Jude 11
cf also W Lock : "The Bible and Christian Life", Page 145, 149
- 89 2 Kings V 20
- 90 The passio, perpetua in the original Latin and Greek
translation is edited by J A Robinson in Texts and Studies
Vol I No 2 (Cambridge 1891) Rendering in English by
A J Mason in his Historic Martyrs Page 87 - 105
- 91 Passio 2

- 92 Ibid 3
- 93 Ibid 2
- 94 Ibid 3 - 10
- 95 Ibid 11 - 13
- 96 cf C Biggs
Origins of Christianity
i 293 n 3
- 97 Passio 16
- 98 Acts 2 : 17
- 99 De fuga 9
- 100 De ieiunio adversus Phychicos 3
- 101 De Anima 9
- 102 See Epiphanius Haer XL viii 3 - 8
- 103 Adv Marc IV 22 V 8
- 104 De Anima 45
- 105 De Anima 9 De ieiunio 12
- 106 Adv Marc iii 24
- 107 Cambridge 1890 Page 28ff

- 108 Dictionary of Christian Biography IV 822
- 109 De pudicitia 19, 21
De pudicitia is a violent attack on what Tertullian considers the laxity of the Roman Church under Pope Callistus 217 - + 22, in remitting sins against the seventh commandment after penance
- 110 Ibid 22
- 111 De Birginibus Velandis 9
- 112 Non aliud dicendum erit secundum matrimonium quam species stupri
De exhort Cast C IX
- 113 H B Swete
Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church
Page 79
- 114 Tert De Virg Vel C 1;
A Hahn, Symbole 7
- 115 A Hahn opus cit 44
- 116 Athanasius Select Works
edited by A Robertson (N & P N F Valiv)
Page 24
- 117 J F Bethune - Baker
The Meaning of Homocousios in the Texts and Studies Vol vii
No 1, Page 23f (Cambridge 1905)
- 118 Of Schlettstadt, 1485 + 1547, whose family came from the Rheinau in the Canton of Zurich. He was a correspondent of Zwingli and a fellow (humanist) of B J Kidd. Documents of the continental reformation No 180.

- 119 Miltiades op Eus H E V XVIII 4
- 120 Anon ap Eus H E V XVI 7.9
- 121 2 Peter 1 . 21, and the 'Nicene' Creed
- 122 I Cor 14 . 32 see also Verse 19
- 123 Numbers XXIV 3, 4, 15, 16
- 124 Joshua xiii 22; cf Num xxiii 3 XXIV 1 he 'divined for money'
Micah iii 11, and what he wanted but did not know how to get
it, without forcing his conscience, was 'rewards of divination'
(Numb xxii : 7)
- 125 Luke IX 33 "Nesciens quid dicerit". Quododo nesciens? Utrumne
simplici errore, an ratione qua defendimus in causa nova
prophetiae gratia exstasin, id est amentiam convenire? In
Spiritu enim homo constitutus, praesertim cum gloriam Dei
conspicit, vel sum per ipsum Deus loquitur, necesse est
excidat sensu, obumbratus scilicet virtute divina, de quo
inter nos (Montanists) et Psychicos (Catholics) questio est.
Tert Adv Marcionem
IV C 22
- 126 2 Cor xii 1 - 3
- 127 Jerome Ep XLI 2(op 1. 189; Pl cii 475) Document No 207
- 128 Miltiades ap Eus H E V xvii 2 - 4 Justin, Dial C Tryph,
C L xxxii and Irenaeus, Adv Haer V VI 1 ap Eus H E V VI 6,
Origen on the other hand denies altogether that there were
'in the days of Celsus' as that opponent of Christianity
affirmed, 'any prophets like those of old times' Origen, Contra
Celsum vii 11(op i 702 P G XI 1437)
- 129 Muratorian Canon 11 77 - 80

- 130 See H P Liddon
The divinity of Our Lord 435 sq
- 131 A Harnack as Summarized by G N Bonwetsch, Die Geschichte des Montanismus 14
- 132 cf Hefele Council 1 89
- 133 Firmilian bishop of Caesarea, in Cappadocia, 232 - + 64 in his letter to Cyprian Cyprian Ep LXXV 19
(ed G Hartel C S E L iii 822 sq)
- 134 Viz the charge of ritual child-murder once made, as Cyril notes, against Christians
Catech I U XVI 8 (op 247 P G xxxiii 929 A)
- 135 Epiphanius Haer XL viii 14 (op 1 . 416 P G XLI 878 C)
- 136 Epiphanius Haer XL vii 14 (op 1 . 402; P G xli : 856B)
- 137 W Bright
Canons and Councils
XXIV 121 f
- 138 See Epiphanius, Haer xlviii 14 (Op I 416 : P G XLI 877 A)
and Sozomen H E ii xxxii 6 who, writing about 430 says
that though reduced by persecution elsewhere, under Constantine
there were still plenty in Phrygia and neighbourhood
- 139 eg Omnes Omnino of Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I
(Cod Theod XVI V 10 of 20 June 383)
Eunomianae of Arcadius and Honorius (Cod Theod XVI V 34 of 4 March 398)
Quid de Donatistis of the same (ed Theod XVI V 40 of 22 Feb 407)
Montanistas of Honorius and Theodosius 11 (Cod Theod XVI V 48
of 21 February 410 and Montanistas of same (Cod Theod XVI V 57
of 31 October 4 15)

- 140 Optatus, De Schismate Donatistarum
1 9 (ed Ziwsa C S E L XXVI 11)
- 141 G N Bonwetsch
Die Geschichte des Montanismus 173

CHAPTER V

PRESENT APPROACH TO MONTANISM

For some time now, attempts have been made by various scholars to understand the nature of Montanism. In the later decades of the 19th Century German scholars like Hilgenfeld, Bonwetsch, Voigt and Zahn led the way in the attempt to understand and explore the causes and the development of the movement.

In 1913, *La Crise Montaniste* and its accompanying book *Les Sources d'histoire du Montanisme* published by P De Labriolle became a classic in the study of the movement.

P De Labriolle saw Montanism as a general movement directed against institutional Christianity. For him it was a general movement of protest that had its counterparts in other parts of the empire including Rome, Lyon and North Africa. For him the Shepherd of Hermas written in Rome c 120 AD was a prototype of Montanism¹. He saw Tertullian the father of African Montanism as one who defended Montanus. He saw African Montanism as directly derived from that of Phrygia.

Earlier W M Ramsay had made important discoveries in Asia Minor which helped to understand the social background of the Phrygian movement. His journeys from 1885 onwards in Asia Minor in quest of proof of the Book of Acts resulted in a number of pre-Constantine Christian funeral inscriptions being discovered. These discoveries and others are contained in Volume I and II of his book "Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia". Ramsay drew attention in particular to a group of inscriptions whose dedication confessed openly to Christianity but which were dated by the Conversion of Constantine - These Christian for Christian inscriptions have intensified research about Montanism. Ramsay's study formed a background to the understanding of Montanism as a social/

/social movement. He showed the reality of Montanism in Phrygia and its firm root in the provincial religious consciousness - a clue to its long survival.

Further work on the discoveries were to be continued by W H Buckler, J G C Anderson, and above all W M Calder. The study of the inscriptions had led to varying arguments about Montanism. In his article 'Philadelphia and Montanism'², Calder concluded that the "Christians for Christians" inscriptions eleven of which were found in upper Tembris Valley were Montanist in character. This article sparked off a lot of debates and a year later H Grégoire adopted Calder's opinion confirming it, he thought, by adding as "argument decisif" an epitaph from nearby Dorylaion which is surely and clearly Montanist³: (ΜΤΠ ΑΟΥΤΛΙΩΝΟΣ ΜΟΥΝΤΑΝΟΥ ΣΥΝΒΙΩ ΧΡΕΥΣΤΙΑΝΩΪ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΩΪ ΜΥΗΜΗΣ ΧΑΡΙΩ).

When in 1929 Calder reiterated his arguments with seven more "Christians for Christians" inscriptions, W Schepelemn disagreed with him saying that the inscriptions were not Montanist⁴. He was convinced of the non-Montanistness of the inscriptions from the same Montanist inscriptions from Dorylaion which Gregoire had used to assent its being Montanist. P De Labriolle in his review of Schepelemn's book speaks of the "fragilite" of Calder's arguments⁵, H Leclercq followed Calder.⁶ C Cecchelli in 1944 in Rome declared that the Cross and the Christian for Christian formula was Montanist, remarking that orthodox Christians called themselves Catholics in order to separate themselves from the heretics⁷. A Ferrua disagreed with C Cecchelli in the long review of Cecchelli's book⁸. He denied the Montanist character of the "Christians for Christians" inscriptions on the grounds that the picture of/

/of Montanism reduced to Northern Phrygia is contrary to the history of the movement showing Montanism flourishing throughout Phrygia.

In 1951 H Gregoire who had once agreed with Calder on the inscriptions changed his mind and argued that the "Christians for Christians" inscriptions were orthodox because "La guerre au Chretiens ne fut nullement, au III me siecle, la regle mais seulement l'expectation"⁹. For Calder, the uniqueness of these inscriptions is an argument for not calling them orthodox¹⁰. In 1964 Gregoire in his book Les persecutions dans l'empire Romain¹¹ maintained his position in 1951.

Worthy of note also is the visit of many scholars to Phrygia in search of archeological evidence. In 1954 Professor W H C Frend was in Phrygia where he met villagers who showed him some of the inscriptions recovered for Calder. Some of these inscriptions were published in 1959 and it included an epitaph of a Montanist leader dated to AD 515 who was described as "a moistes" and a "koinonos"¹².

Discussions on the Christians for Christians inscriptions and its relationship to Montanism cannot be complete without the mention of a recent work by E Gibson. In her book "The Christians for Christians inscriptions of Phrygia"¹³, she surveyed and codified existing materials and from her research she arrived at her own conclusions. For her whether the "Christians for Christians" inscriptions are Montanist is difficult to accept¹⁴. She however, does not doubt the fact that the Montanists after their expulsion from the Church may have retreated to the upper Tembris Valley.

Much work had gone into understanding the nature of Montanism, especially/

/especially that of Phrygia, not least its possible connections with Judaism. In her article "Was Montanism a Jewish Christian heresy?" Professor J M Ford of Notre Dame argued in favour of Montanism being a Jewish Christian heresy¹⁵. Her first premise was the large Jewish population in Phrygia, as attested to by W M Ramsay, and the Reinach in the first two centuries AD it seemed that from literary and epigraphic evidence they and the Christians tended to share some belief and practice. Her arguments are apparently convincing because she cited the fact that the Montanists seem to have followed a Johannine tradition, which used the Solar Calendar of Judaism and kept the passover on the 14th Nisan. She also argued from the fact that Faggiotto¹⁶ and others had concluded that Montanist prophecy more or less breathes the same atmosphere as the apocalypse of John and Schepelemn says that it seems but an exaggeration of that found in the Book of Revelation¹⁷. He ascribed the prominent position of women in the Phrygian movement to the influence of Judaism. Indeed, much of the Montanist ethics and practice seem either that of the Essenes or Covenanting Judaism, yet the fact remains that Judaism was not among the accusations levelled at the new prophets by their opponents, nor by Epiphanius whose background was Jewish, one does not find the sect carrying out other Jewish practices. Yet the links with the apocalyptic as well as prophecy is an area where Judaism was strong and obvious and cannot be explained away easily. Judaism one would suggest made its contribution to the Phrygian sect just as it did to Christianity as a whole, to label Montanism as a Jewish-Christian heresy is more or less an aberration.

About Montanism in North Africa, D Powell in his article Tertullianist/

/Tertullianist and Cataphrygians¹⁸ said that in Tertullian's time, the Montanists formed an "ecclesiola in ecclesia" a ginger group in the Church of Carthage. They regarded others as the people of the flesh while they saw themselves as the people of the Spirit. Tertullian's interest in the universal episcopal council as a means of settling dispute would be strange from one who had thrown away allegiance to the bishop. It is certain that until things got worse he was still within the Church. In the article in *Revue Des Sciences Religieuses*, 'Le Montanisme originel'¹⁹ Francois Blanchetiere accused his predecessors of being too concerned with dogmatic and literary studies. He indicated the fact that the literature of the anti-Montanist arose only after the phase of oral dispute with the prophets between 180-210. The actual date remains undecided, T D Barnes argues in favour of 172, others prefer Epiphanius' date of 157; however, only a dated inscription mentioning Gratus will settle the matter.

Finally, scholars have concentrated on the character of Montanist prophecies, thus Von Campenhausen²¹ has pointed out the fact that at the time of the Montanist controversy the debates between them and their opponents over prophetic succession and ecstasy ranged over passages of scripture whose Canon was still not closed. For him Montanism hastened the definition of the New Testament Canon. Kurt Aland on the other hand, sees the Montanists as heirs to Asian theological tradition that had a high place for Millenarium and for close relationship to the Confessors of the Lord. Research on Montanism is still a long way from being complete. It is likely to yield fruit only if scholars will approach Montanism with an open mind.

In conclusion I have traced the history of the prophetic movement from the Old Testament. Efforts have been made to understand the social and environmental background and other factors that have contributed to the prophetic movement from the earliest times. Was Montanism then a prophetic movement in line of the prophetic movements that we have been discussing? Or was it a heretical movement as branded by the Church.

There is no easy answer to these questions. For me, as heresy seems to be far from the original Montanist movement, a reproach labelled by an institutional Church in its original home, Montanism is nothing other than the continuity of the prophetic mysticism of the early Christians - In other words in its earliest form until its condemnation by the Bishops c 180, showed most features of the prophetic movement which was alive in many Christian communities - condemnation led to conflict between the Church of the Spirit as Montanists came to call themselves and the institutional Church.

The questions posed at the beginning of the thesis are difficult to answer. Whatever views anyone holds depends upon ones understanding of the influence of the environment, social and economic factors in the development of early Christianity as well as the long tradition of prophecy in Judaism which was continued in the life and teaching of the primitive church. And if one is to agree with St Basil's definition of heresy and schism²², then it is obvious that Montanism in the early stage was not a heresy though at the time Basil was writing in 374 it had taken a different turn.

The schism hardens and persists until it becomes the heresy of the "Kataphrygians".

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