

the great teachers and writers of the earliest ages of Christianity. Even in that isolated monument, which, as has been well said, "towers grandly over all that surrounds it,"\* the Letter to Diognetus,—even there, though religion is presented to us in the twofold character of a revelation and a *redemption*, the second aspect is but little dwelt upon. The essential object of the Gospel, according to this eloquent writer, and of Him whom the Holy Scriptures set forth to us, is, revelation, the disclosure of truth, the enlightenment of the human mind by wisdom and the knowledge of God.

Even such a great thinker and such an earnest student of the Holy Scriptures as Origen appears to have considered the Scripture far more as a treasury of doctrine than as a history of redemption,—as a revelation, rather than a record of that revelation which was set forth in living words and blessed deeds. With Origen even Christ Himself, even He who spake of His own words as spirit and life, is mainly "the introducer of the saving doctrines of Christianity" (this is his own expression)† rather than Himself the substance and manifestation of them.

And so was it with the early Church generally. The Holy Scriptures were the standard of Truth, ended in every letter with wisdom and knowledge—but not that which now every deeper thinker more especially longs to regard them—as salvation's history, the inspired record of a redemption, long, long waited for, searched for through weary ages, anticipated in hope, shadowed forth in prophecy, but never, never realized till the Gospel was preached, and till the "Come unto me, all that travail and are heavy-laden" was heard from the pitying lips of the Redeemer of the world. This deeper view was *felt*, but it was never developed. Felt, no doubt it was from the very first. Clement of Alexandria, amid all his allegorizing, could speak of Holy Scripture as "working, by means of the Lord, to the benefit of mankind."‡ The spiritually-minded Augustine, though ever loving to dwell upon the Scriptures as the treasure-house of wisdom and knowledge, could feel and declare that that which the Scriptures bring home to us is "the redeeming grace of God."§ The reverential good sense of Chrysostom was never so entirely absorbed in the doctrinal and ethical teaching of Scripture as to preclude his recognising its saving power, and, to use his own words, "its softening influence on the hardened soul."\*

Even in the mediæval Church, when all seemed one dreary waste of barren scholasticism, this living and, so to say, personal power of God's Word was not left wholly unrecognised. Glimpses of this vital truth there have been in all ages of the Church's history, but it was not till the heart-stirring days of the Reformation that Scripture was felt to be what it is—not simply the display of God's thoughts, but the history and disclosure of His loving purposes; not merely the setting forth of doctrines, but of the Person of Him who revealed them—not exclusively light, blessed as is that light, but the warmth of a realized redemption; not truth only, but salvation and love.

And this deeper view, this recognition of the living and personal relation of Holy Scripture to each individual soul, has more and more become realized in these later days. Though many things are against us; though faith with many has lost its first power; though a doubting spirit has of late spread even within the Church itself,—yet, praise be to God, the truth that His Word is a living Word has been felt and acknowledged by the pure and the holy in our own times even more than when that truth was first more distinctly recognised. Even at the time of the Reformation some of the old shadows of intellectualism still lingered. Nay, more; that very quickening and converting power of the Holy Scriptures on which we are now meditat-

\* De Pressense, *Heresy and Christian Doctrine*, p. 227 (Translation). 1873. Hodder.

† The words in the original are, *-εἰσηγητοῦ τῶν κατὰ Χριστιανισμὸν σωτηρίων δογμάτων*. De *Principiis*, Book iii. 1, Vol. i. p. 156 (Ed. Delarue).

‡ Clem. Alex. *Strum.* viii. p. 557 (Ed. Potter).

§ Augustine, *Enarr. in Psalms*, lxx. 1.

\* Chrysostom, in *Matth. Hom.* ii. p. 31 (Ed. Montf.)