

preachers have written excellent hymns. The second volume of "Lectures to My Students" gives on the fly-leaf a list of all his works.

THE OLDEST CHRISTIAN SERMON, PRAYER, AND HYMN.

No. I.

By PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN SERMON.

THE oldest Christian sermon was preached, we all know, by St. Peter from the fullness of the Holy Ghost on the birthday of the Christian Church. No such effective sermon has been preached since. It converted three thousand persons, and founded the mother congregation of Christendom. Now it often takes a number of sermons to convert one man.

The first post-apostolic sermon after the age of inspiration had passed away has only recently come to light, and is a matter of considerable interest. It bears the name of Clement, the first (or third) Bishop of Rome, a pupil of St. Paul and St. Peter, who died in the reign of Trajan between A. D. 98-117, probably about A. D. 100, at the time when St. John, the last survivor of the apostolic age, passed from this world. From this Clement we were long in possession of a Greek epistle to the Church of Corinth in Greece, which in the first four centuries stood in the highest esteem, and was read in public worship, but then disappeared until a copy of it was discovered in 1633 in the celebrated Alexandrian Manuscript of the Bible, which Cyril Lurar, patriarch, of Constantinople, presented in 1628 to King Charles I. of England, and which is one of the greatest treasures of the British Museum. In the same manuscript there was a fragment of a second epistle of Clement to the same church. But it is far inferior to the first in originality, power and unction. Hence some critics have conjectured that it was the production of another writer and the fragment of a homily or familiar sermon, rather than of an epistle.

This conjecture has been proved correct by a recent discovery of the whole document. In 1875 Bryennios, a scholar of the Eastern Church and Archbishop of Serree (now of Nicomedia), found in a convent library of the Greek quarter of Constantinople (the Fauar) an old manuscript which contained a complete copy of both epistles of Clement. The second was found to be twice as large as the fragment previously known. Bryennios published both with learned Greek prolegomena and notes, in Constantinople. A copy of his edition is in the Union Theological Seminary library. The discovery created, of course, a great sensation in the literary world, and elicited a good deal of discussion. Gebhardt, Harnack and Zahn incorporated it in their latest edition of the Apostolic Fathers; and so did Professor Funk, of Tübingen, in the fifth edition of *Hefele's Patres Apostolici*. Bishop Lightfoot, who had published a commentary on the First Epistle of Clement, found it necessary to issue an appendix with the newly discovered portions.

The Second Epistle of Clement turns out to be a sermon from the first half of the second century, written and read probably at Corinth by an unknown Presbyter, or possibly by a layman, for the difference between clergy and laity was not yet sharply drawn at that time. As already intimated, it is not remarkable for strength or depth of eloquence, but it is a pious exhortation to repentance, and suited to the condition of the times when the Christians were a persecuted sect without any legal rights in the heathen empire of Rome. For this reason it has considerable historic as well as homiletic interest. We cannot give the whole sermon (which is composed in Greek), but we offer the first three and the last three chapters as fair specimens of the whole. We avail ourselves of the excellent translation of Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham:

1. Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ, as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead. And we ought not to think mean things of our Salvation: for when we think mean things of Him we expect also to receive mean things. And they that listen as concerning mean things

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