

earliest of the Epistles, both a stated form of words for use in the administration of the Holy Supper, and also a "form of sound words" [2 Tim. i 13], which was used in baptism at least, if not in the Holy Eucharist, and commonly accepted both as an expression and as a test of the faith of those who were to be received and retained in the holy fellowship of the Apostolic Church; dissent from which was "heresy" in the technical sense, while divisions and contentions among those who were still retained in the Church was called schism; and St. John speaks of some who "went out from" that fellowship as being in some sense "anti-Christ" [1 John ii. 18].

But the Scriptures that have come down to us were all of them, or at least nearly all of them, written for a local—I will not say a temporary—purpose. Thus St. Matthew is commonly held to have written primarily and chiefly for the Christian converts from Judaism who lived in Palestine. St. Mark, though with less unanimity of agreement, is said to have written under the immediate guidance of St. Peter, and at Alexandria for the Christians who were living in that part of Africa; while St. Luke's Gospel is said to have been written at Rome under the special guidance of St. Paul. St. Paul's Epistles, as is well known, and is also manifest from the Epistles themselves, were written to local Churches,—as that at Rome, that at Corinth, etc.,—and were more or less intended for the discussion and settlement of questions which, if not of a temporary nature, were yet specially interesting and important for those to whom the letters were addressed. This remark applies with special force to the Epistles to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon.

Yet doubtless what these holy and inspired men wrote was (for the most part shall I say? 1 Cor. vii. 40) dictated by the Holy Spirit, and remains as of inestimable value as of indicating what was "the substantial deposit of Christian Faith and Order committed by Christ and His Apostles to the Church unto the end of the world," to quote again the declarations of our House of Bishops on this subject. But the fact was and is, that the Gospel was preached for many years before it was written and committed to writing as Holy Scripture at all; and the Church was founded and organized in some form or another, and more or less completely in all the larger cities and countries of the Roman Empire, which then included pretty much the whole world.

The controlling fact is that the Apostles and the ministry themselves were not only to preach the Gospel, but they were also to organize the Church, or local branches of it, one in each city or province. When the writers of the Holy Scriptures speak of this matter at all, it is either by way of allusion to what had been done, or by way of instruction to some one who had been ordained, and received authority for the work of organizing Churches, selecting and ordaining Elders and Deacons, as well as giving directions for their professions of the Faith,—for their worship and the principles of the godly life which they were to observe and enforce.

Herein we have the reason why there is to be found in the New Testament no express or full description of the Church, its organization, and its methods. The people for whom the Scriptures were written, with the exception of the two or three books I have just mentioned, had nothing to do with organizing the Church. It was not their work or duty. They could not do it. It was done for them by the Apostles whom our Lord had chosen for that purpose, and to whom He gave the command to go and teach all nations to observe whatever he had commanded them. And as in the case of Timothy and Titus at least, we find that the Apostles gave like authority to others, uninspired men whom they chose for the work.

The several books of the New Testament Scriptures, thus written, began at a very early date to be collected into a whole, in several at least of the great centres of Christian population, as Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage. But we have no definite information in regard to this collection. We have indeed a few hints in the Holy Scriptures themselves in regard to the circulation of these Scriptures, the desire to get them, and the anxiety to read and understand them [Col. iv. 16; Luke i. 1-5; Acts i.; 2 Peter iii. 16].

But it is most natural that the Christians in any one city should be extremely anxious as soon as they had heard of any writing by one of the Apostles, or perhaps by any one so intimately associated with any one of them as to be specially valuable as a teacher, to get a copy of the work, epistle, or gospel, as the case might be. And thus, as we know, collections began to be made in a large number of places; these collections, at the earliest date at which we can get any certain information concerning them, differed in some less important details from one another. And in some few cases, books not now received into our Canon, as the Epistles of Clement and of Barnabas, were received and read in the public worship; while others that we do now receive had not been received, or at least adopted as part of their sacred Scriptures in some few of the early collections that we know of.

We have, indeed, early lists of the books received, and there were two or three attempts by local and provincial synods to define the Canon. But there was no such action by any one of the General Councils of the Universal Church.

(To be continued)

### BISHOP BILLING ON 'GENERAL' BOOTH'S SCHEME.

The Bishop of Bedford has been interviewed by a correspondent of *The News* on 'General' Booth's scheme, and as will be seen from the following his lordship is against it:—

'Has the Salvation Army,' I asked, 'any real influence in the East-end?'

'Certainly not,' replied the Bishop. 'In the East-end proper it is hardly known. Ask Mr. Robinson, the rector of Whitechapel, and he will tell you that he does not know a dozen people who belong to the Army. My own experience at Spitalfields—in the midst of that great lodging house district—was the same. I lived amongst the roughs in the slums, but I scarcely ever came across anyone who had been reached by the Army. Ask my successor, Mr. Scott, and he will confirm my opinion. The fact is that the Salvation Army pick up those who have been influenced by the mission halls and other agencies. They gather a large number from the Nonconformists. It is quite a mistake to think that their lasses and their other converts are Londoners. They are brought from the country. Very largely the adherents of the Army are imported from villages and country towns. This is my special complaint against the Salvation Army—that they proclaim that they are the people who reach the slums. I say they are not.'

'You think, then, that the Church of England is able to cope with all the distress and degradation of the East-end?'

'Undoubtedly! We can do all that is necessary if the clergy only receive adequate support. We have a number of shelters for all classes, as well as labor yards. Only to-day I have been opening a new labour yard. But then we don't publish sensational reports. The workers who most deserve help and would use it to the greatest advantage are the men who would shrink from issuing sensational statements. When such appeals are written by the clergy it is because they are heart-broken and soul

worn by the burden of the sorrow and destitution which they long to deal with, and which they would promptly and successfully meet if our Church would send them the necessary help. If someone would only send me £2 000 I know I could make good use of it in strengthening and extending our agencies. It is not difficult to 'get at' the East-enders if they once believe you to be honest and straightforward. For instance, I am on the best of terms with the atheists. I met them one night, and we had a vigorous and very useful discussion which lasted over two hours. There was some very hard hitting, of course, but all in perfect good temper. At their invitation I met them a second time, but when I went the leaders had all disappeared, evidently because they did not like to be disconcerted before their followers. Then I have had large mass meetings of working men, and it was a pleasure to preside over their discussions. There were on one occasion a thousand *bona fide* working men present, and after several capital speeches there was an opportunity for free discussion, and at the close I summed up. We talked of the spiritual and social work of our Church—then we took as our subject, 'Why do not people go to Church?' The men gave us their reasons, we replied, and a great deal of good was done.'

'What do you think of Mr. Booth's new scheme?'

'Well, so far as it is good it is not new. My experience of the Salvation Army shelters is by no means in their favour. I am told by those who know—for instance, by the White-chapel Union—that the Army shelters do not attract real Londoners, but only the riffraff of the Kingdom. They come to London, go to the shelter, are turned out, and then come on the rates. The consequence of all this outcry of late is that people are thronging to the East end for the loaves and fishes. After the great strike money poured into the East end in unregulated and indiscriminate charity, and we have not got over it yet. We have to deal with a residuum, it is true, but unorganized charity will only make matters worse. I am persuaded of this, that such a scheme as Mr. Booth has proposed can never be carried out successfully, unless it is backed up by an authority which no voluntary action can exercise. Suppose it is possible to carry out such a scheme—then you must have recognized and magisterial authority.'

'Then as regards Mr. Booth's emigration scheme—what are your views on that point?'

'My dear sir, his proposals are by no means new. Our East London Emigration Society has sent out 24,000 people, and one of my best helpers—a good man, who comes down and works at his own charges—went out and spent his holiday in looking up these emigrants. But then we don't publish details of the various cases, or indulge in puffery. I believe the real remedy is to deal with the people before they come to London, and sink into the great abysses of the East-end. When I was at Spitalfields we used to keep a sharp watch on the lodging-houses. If a family arrived we would try and rescue them at once before they began to deteriorate; and if, after a careful search, there seemed to be no prospect of work, we sent them back to Newcastle or Edinburgh, or wherever they had come from. The residuum Mr. Booth is going to elevate consists very largely of those who won't work and those who can't work. They come to the East-end for the casual labor, and for any charitable relief they can pick up, and for the most part they are physically and morally incapable of continuous labour. The fact is the colonies would not receive them.'

'Then you don't think the new scheme should have the support of our Church?'

'I should not be averse to a conference which should carefully consider the matter, but to commit the whole thing to Mr. Booth is a most unwise thing to do. He very rightly says that