

christians. Pardoné by Commodus, he found himself a *freedman*, since by virtue of his condemnation to the mines, he had ceased to be the slave of his master and had become "the slave of his sentence"—*servus pence*—as the legal term had it; and being pardoned that sentence he of necessity became free. On his return to Italy he entered the ranks of the clergy, and lived ten years at Antium, on a pension allowed him by the Church. In 202 Pope Zephyrinus called him to Rome and made him arch-deacon. After the death of Zephyrinus the votes of the clergy and of the people called Callistus to the Papal chair. The disciplinary disputes which troubled the Roman Church during his pontificate made him many deadly enemies. One of these—the author of the *Philosophumena*, has given us the details just cited. He calls Callistus "unworthy"—"fallible"—"fugitive;" he accuses him of heresy; reproaches him with scandalous lenity towards sinners; he criticises each of his acts, questions his intentions and endeavors to the utmost to defame his character—but he nowhere attempts to prove that his elevation to the Papacy was invalid because he had been a slave. Had there been any—even the slightest doubt in those days about this validity, this bitter, this unreasonable, this implacable enemy would undoubtedly have availed himself of it to add another to this already long list of accusations. This silence is the best proof that in the third century, at a time when the Church saw her ranks recruited from the highest classes of Roman society; at a time when Tertullian could cry out "All dignity comes to us," the fact of having been a slave (and that even a *fugitive* one) was no bar to elevation to the Chair of Peter. Does not this prove conclusively our proposition, that the highest dignities of the Church were open to the slave, and that in the Church if no where else, perfect "*egalite*" obtained?

A passage in the catechism of St. Cyril of Alexandria shows priests and clerics who had *originally been slaves* administering the Sacraments to the faithful. "At the time of baptism" he says "when you approach bishops or priests or deacons (for grace is admin-

istered in all places, in villages as in cities, by the ignorant as by the learned, *by slaves as by freemen*; grace does not come by men but from God) when you come near to him who is to baptise, do not look upon the man but upon the Holy Ghost."

But here again in this practice of admitting slaves to her highest dignities, the Church had to act with that prudence which is begotten of her divine mission to *all men*. To have made deacons, priests, bishops, of slaves without the consent of their owners, would have rendered it morally impossible for the master if he was a christian to claim his slave in a court of justice, and would have consequently caused trouble in that civil society, which we have already seen the Church treat so considerately. It would have caused moreover a still greater evil; it would have offered a temptation to the slave to enter the sanctuary from interested motives. To avoid all this the Apostolic Constitutions and the early canons which have preserved for us so much of the early discipline of the Church, forbid a slave to be raised to the priesthood, unless his master has already given him his freedom. They cite as a precedent the example of Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, freed at the request of St. Paul and made priest by that apostle.

These canons however, appear later on to have had to give way before the daily increasing hatred of slavery begotten by the spirit of equality asserted in the Church. In the 4th century the ranks of the clergy were crowded with slaves. The letters of St. Basil and of St. Gregory Nazianzen reveal a curious episode of this period. St. Basil and St. Gregory had consecrated as bishop the slave of a rich Christian matron, called Simplicia, who evidently had not granted permission to her slave to enter holy orders. Pious and very popular our slave was raised to the episcopate against his will. St. Gregory thus defends the consecration, "How could we resist the tears of all the inhabitants of a little village lost in a desert country who long without a shepherd, asked for some one to take care of their souls." Simplicia, with an obstinacy common to pious matrons, claimed her slave and threatened to enforce her claim before the lay