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## Tertullian.

A. D. 160—A. D. 240.

### II.

As we read the writings of Tertullian we do not wonder that the great Bishop of Carthage, S. Cyprian, in the third century admired and revered him. It was his custom, we are told, to read some of Tertullian's writings each day, calling out to his librarian, "Give me the master." Each word of the "master" speaks of vigour and earnestness, and shows more reality than polish. In the endeavour to give utterance to much thought in few words he becomes at times too terse, terse even to obscurity.

But the writings of Tertullian have for us another value, besides their vigorous earnestness. They represent to us the practice as well as the teaching of the early Church. We are admitted to see the various ceremonies of the Services, and we learn what was the teaching connected with each. This is of special importance, as we learn what was the custom of the primitive Church, which is of great value. For we must remember what the Homilies say concerning the Holy Eucharist. "Before all things, this we must be sure of especially that this Supper be in such wise done and ministered, as our Lord and Saviour did, and commanded to be done; as His holy Apostles used it; and the good fathers in the primitive Church frequented it. For, as that worthy man, St. Ambrose, saith, he is unworthy of the Lord that otherwise doth celebrate that mystery, than it was delivered by Him." This is true of all the rites of our religion. We cannot invent new Sacraments, and say that such and such grace is to be attached to such and such outward signs. But it is equally true that we cannot give up without peril such rites and Sacraments as have come down to us from the Apostles. The difficulty generally is to find some contemporaneous account of what was done and what was taught. When anything is a common event of every-day life, then it is not generally described, since no one thinks it worth describing, because everyone sees it frequently happening before their eyes. Then again, though the principle may be the same, there is some variety in the application of details. This at times is puzzling since some writers