

The fifth book begins the treatment of the heresies proper, which together with the four following books, contain a statement of no less than thirty-two heresies. To give even a brief account of these, much more to treat them in a serious manner, would be an unprofitable waste of time. The wild theories of the ancient enthusiasts, and their absurd conceptions of the heavenly hierarchy make us wonder how such madmen ever attracted so much serious attention. Their speculations concerning the person of Christ were certainly very profane and dangerous, and must have been formidable to those who had little knowledge of the revealed Word. We do not, therefore, wonder that their errors on these points were keenly opposed by the orthodox, and were made the subjects of their prelections and writings. It is perhaps well for us that the battle of Socinianism was fought at that early time. From the armoury of the ancient controversialists we may certainly choose many a handy and well polished weapon for modern warfare.

We can say for St. Hippolytus that he treats the heresies and the heretics both more fairly and more at large than any other ancient writer has done. He clears up some points that were before obscure, he quotes largely from the heretical writings, and he gives much new and valuable information on many of the old controversies.

The facts in Church history which have been brought to light by this treatise are especially noticeable. We find, for example, quotations in it from the writings of Basilides, who lived between the years 120 and 130, which quotations contain extracts from the Gospel of John, and show besides that the whole system of Basilides was professedly founded upon the prologue of John's Gospel. The value of these quotations is, that they refute at once the mythical origin of John's Gospel, which Straus and the German Unitarian School attempt to establish. They complete without a shadow of reasonable doubt the chain of evidence, on behalf of the authenticity of John's Gospel, from the days of the Apostles down to the time of its acknowledged use in the Church. This evidence to the biblical student ranks equal in importance with the recent discoveries at Nineveh.

The portions of this treatise which have most interest to the general reader are those in which Hippolytus relates the transactions of his own time. He appears to have had much keen conflict with the then Bishop of Rome. Of Pope Victor who lived about the year 198, he speaks in terms of commendation, styling him "of blessed memory!" Of Zephyrinus the next Bishop, he says "unfortunately Zephyrinus was not only very stupid and ignorant, but loving money very much took bribes." Of the next succeeding Bishop, Hippolytus gives a long and curious account. "When he comes to this point he raises the tone of his voice to the pitch of indignant anger."

Hippolytus informs us that this so called Pope Callistus was at one time the slave of an indulgent master named Carpophorus. Such was the kindness and confidence of his master that he entrusted him with the administration of a bank in a celebrated quarter of Rome called the *Piscina Publica*. Callistus, however, turned out to be a rogue. He squandered the money entrusted to him and committed many frauds upon the public. He consequently absconded, and betook himself to *Portus Romanus*, a sea-port town at the mouth of the Tiber. There he embarked on board of a ship to escape the punishment of his crimes, but being pursued by his master, he threw himself into the water and was with difficulty saved. Callistus was carried back to Rome and condemned as a criminal to the domestic tread-mill,—the *pistrinum* of the Roman slave owners. After a time, on the pretence that he could recover much of the lost money, and at the solicitations of friends, he was set at liberty. Seeing, however, no way of bettering his fallen fortunes he resolved to do something desperate that would