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HEBREWS, FIRST CLEMENT, AND THE PERSECUTION OF DOMITIAN

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A complete picture of the growth of early Christianity is not available. While the materials descriptive of certain of the Pauline communities are such as to permit the reconstruction of their backgrounds, the perception of modes of expansion, and the understanding of certain of their situations in the growth of isolated sections of the movement, for other data the sources are disappointingly meagre. In these cases it is for the most part only when some crisis arises that particular reflection of given situations touches streams of tradition so that information is available. It has so occurred that while the usual, unambiguous, habituated, and workaday behavior of Christian groups is taken for granted and does not become the subject for extended description, the untoward, unusual, and unpredictable situations produce literary reflection affording now and again a glimpse of contemporary life; a glimpse which, though it is but fragmentary, is of immense significance. To be sure, the situations of crisis would not be met were it not that the capacity of ordinary life is capable of rising to the occasion, and it follows that from these abnormal situations one is able sometimes to recover to some extent that picture of common life. The New Testament student may consider himself fortunate that, since the sources for the early periods of Christianity are relatively abundant and homogeneous, by the utilization of proper methods he may accomplish much in the recovery of the story of the early days, even though the information is somewhat sketchy.

One of the most poignant of the periods of crisis in early Christianity was that of the persecution of Domitian. Just how critical the situation was for these comparatively weak groups, which had as yet little consciousness of unity, may be inferred from the degree to which the unpopularity of Domitian made its impress upon contemporary life.¹ It is to be expected that so outstanding a factor should receive considerable attention in Christian circles; most directly, of course, on the part of those whose misfortune it was to be in positions where they suffered from the persecution, but not less interested attention from those whose special task was that of the direction of the Christian movement. It is hardly surprising that this critical situation should have furnished the immediate occasion for certain of the books of the New Testament. The science of Introduction to the New Testament, particularly since that science has tended more toward the historical and less toward the literary-critical point of view, has more and more adequately taken this situation into account, and, in view of contributory investigations, is recognizing the influence of the persecution of Domitian upon the New Testament writings. It is not uncommon now to find this event discussed in connection with the books of Revelation, Hebrews, and 1 Peter. Some years ago Professor Goodspeed presented in this Journal² the hypothesis that 1 Clement is to be taken in connection with Hebrews; that 1 Clement was, in fact, called forth by Hebrews. Presently, as the hypothesis of Cadbury (that the purpose expressed in Luke's preface is so definitely apologetic that Luke-Acts is to be taken as a defence designed to instruct, not a catechumen, but an official of the State³) is taken into account in connection with the further good grounds for the Domitianic date of Luke-Acts, the critical relations existing between Christians and the State will be perceived as the effective cause for the appearance of this work in the reign of Domitian. As one interrogates this fairly large *corpus* of

¹ Compare the decisive distinction made at this point in Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*.

² *Journal of Biblical literature*, 30 (1911): 157-160.

³ *The Expositor*, June 1921: 431-441.

literature in relationship to this early crisis, the importance of the situation for early Christianity and the emerging picture of Christianity thus gained are recognized to be of the utmost importance.

It is the purpose of the present study to assemble the materials presented by Hebrews and 1 Clement which reflect persecution, and to observe the function of these works in view of the Domitianic situation. To be sure, no one would attempt to defend the hypothesis that control in persecution is the sole purpose of these works. Perhaps this is not even the main purpose. But it is doubtless defensible that this situation is the element of immediate necessity in their production; the isolating force effecting their precipitate. Doubtless the dogmatic interest in higher instruction accounts for the major volume of Hebrews, and it may be that the ultimate purpose of 1 Clement is to impose the Roman form of government upon an eastern church, but however effective these interests may be, it is unescapable that persecution was the matter of vital and primary importance. The necessity for leadership to make itself felt in this situation can be expressed only in terms of primacy and vitality. The crisis met, instruction and organization might be furthered, but the meeting of the crisis is first necessary. Indeed, in these earlier days there was no essential difference between what must necessarily be accomplished in these experiences and that which had to be accomplished in subsequent persecutions. The leaders had to control their followers. Thus Cyprian, writing his epistles with this primary purpose in mind, was doing what the unknown author of Hebrews was doing, while there is something almost pathetic in the likeness of the response which the Roman church made to Cyprian and that which 1 Clement made to Hebrews, though, to be sure, the likeness does not extend to other particulars.

But what did Hebrews and 1 Clement do in this situation? The background of Hebrews which may be inferred is that of the Roman church, which, in the period following its successful weathering of the storm of the Neronian persecution and its subsequent care for its humble and its notable martyrs,

had become matter of fact and unimaginative in its prosperity and its success. A generation of peace had habituated life into ease and into normal, usual, and steady expansion. It had brought numbers and extension of influence, and with these a distribution of vitality incurring its diminution of depth. It would doubtless be fair also to infer that, in coming to terms with the environment of the great capital city, in capturing its following the church had itself been captured by it. At any rate, the writer of Hebrews views the situation with alarm. Now that Domitian's decrees had involved Christians it was imperative that instruction and exhortation be brought to bear. Quality was to be desired with numbers and Hebrews sets itself to the task of producing this quality; to awaken the sluggish group so that behavior of the desired nobility would be available in the crisis. Evidently the church addressed had a fairly large roster of officials: these must be summoned to leadership. Attitudes of loyalty to the group must be engendered, else in the face of the alternative before the group the weak would abandon their cult fellowship to resume the old loyalty to rites approved by the State. Very likely the greater difficulty of promulgating the imperial cult in Rome made the conflict less severe than in the outlying regions; Revelation can name one martyr from Pergamum and pictures a host of murdered saints in heaven, while Hebrews notes that as yet there had been no death in the group addressed. Nevertheless the action of Domitian had resulted in a sufficiently serious situation for the church that something must be done to control the attitudes with which it was being met and the tendencies which were growing up. It was to such a task that the writer of Hebrews set himself.

God, says the writer, has recently spoken with a voice of special potency. It is necessary to heed this message, which, given through Jesus, was reiterated by them that heard it and was so remarkably confirmed. How might one escape if he neglected so great a salvation? It was by no inconsiderable person that the message was given, so that those at present holding it ought, following the example of the original spokesman, hold fast the confession (*ὁμολογία*). Great as were the

heroes of old Israel, this one was greater. It is, however, of the utmost necessity to check such falling away (*ἀποστήναι*) as was incipient. This is to be done by constant exhortation. So to hold fast is to become partakers of Christ. Were not difficulties always inevitable in the history of a faith? The desired tranquillity is indeed a prize, which was prefigured by the pronouncement of Scripture. But Jesus is the great example, and one must, having him in mind, hold fast the confession (*κρατῶμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν*). The special significance of Jesus as example was that he had in every manner participated in each human trial, being acquainted with all human infirmities. It is in this light that one is to think of him as the great High Priest. He in his days of human experience had faced death; had faced it with prayers, supplications, strong crying, and tears, yet with a son's obedience. Indeed, he learned obedience by his suffering. He thus became the author of the faith which those of today were promulgating. The message of the writer is offered with misgiving, since he is aware that the group to which he writes is dull of hearing—yea, the group which by virtue of its former glory should be a teacher of others actually stands in need of instruction in first principles! Yet the more advanced teachings are undertaken. Items of the faith are cited, with the warning that falling away (*παρὰτεσόντες*) from them will result in impossibility of repentance and restoration, since such behavior amounts to the recrucifixion (*ἀνασταυρούντας*) of Jesus, and putting him to shame. The writer has hope that the readers will keep the faith, and exhorts them to imitate (*μιμηταί*) those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. God's own affirmation is the great sanction and encouragement, which has proven a sure anchor to those who have taken advantage of it, and in so doing Jesus was the forerunner. Now in the Alexandrian manner the inherent superiority is proven. He is the great and ever-abiding High Priest, after a new order, whose blood-offering was none other victim than himself. This is the newness and the superiority of his covenant. It is not so different from the old that it might be accomplished without blood, but the blood was that of Christ, so that his testament is that of his

death, his holy place being heaven. Through his blood he made the necessary sacrifices for sin, so that his follower may through this means enter into that holy place. Indeed, this the readers are exhorted to do; the means being offered them they must will to accept, holding fast the confession of the hope, that it waver not (*κατέχωμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀκλινῆ*), since he is faithful that promised. They are exhorted to provoke one another to good works, not forsaking the fellowship of the congregation. Again the writer warns that falling away renders restoration impossible; it is so serious that it amounts to spurning God's Son and despising the blood covenant. This cannot but be followed by fearful punishment. May not the remembrance of a former similar experience inspire to greater zeal? Then their behavior was exemplary; now they have need of patience. Perhaps examples of olden time may prove to be helpful: note then the succession of heroes from Abel to those of today, see what suffering these willingly endured for the sake of the as yet unrealized reward. More than this, note Jesus as the author and the perfecter of this faith, who for the joy that was before him endured the cross, despising shame, who has therefore gained his reward. There is then a whole company of martyrs (*μαρτύρων*), who ought as examples to incite all patiently to run the course which is set before. After all, no one, as yet, has been forced to resist to blood; such suffering as has been experienced may be regarded as the chastening from God such as every father visits upon his children; it will result in gain if heartened persistence is pursued. Care must be taken that the integrity of the group is maintained. There may be no defilement, for the exacting refinement of God is like unto fire. In a final section practical matters are considered, and again the readers are urged to imitate (*μιμῶθε*) the faith of their former teachers. Again the sufferings of Jesus are cited, and the work closes with a prayer for peace and the good issue of the situation. Appended is a note that Timothy has been set at liberty.

In noting the distribution of these conceptions the valid method is to note their function in view of similar efforts made in the subsequent literature on martyrdom. This voluminous

literature was produced in situations essentially similar, but under the advantage that the issues were perfectly understood, so that methods of dealing with the State in persecution might be applied consciously. Basic in the efforts put forth by the church in meeting persecution is the purpose of control, and control was effected by the definite application of certain effective sanctions (the example of Jesus, the example of apostolic leaders, reward, punishment, etc.), direct exhortation, indirect imagery (apocalyptic), and by the development of sentiments and attitudes. In the process a specialized technique and terminology grew up. In Hebrews all these items appear, although in many to be cited as characteristic the epistle maintains a decidedly primitive position. However, this may be, note the phenomena as they appear in the examples. As in the wide range of the literature whose purpose is control in persecution, there is the use of the sanction of example. *We desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even unto the end, that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience (μυηται δὲ τῶν διὰ πίστους καὶ μακροθυρίας) inherit the promises.⁴ Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spoké unto you the word of God, and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith (μυμείθε τὴν πίστιν).⁵* Now, such imitation was one of the great points of the works on exhortation to martyrdom. For example, compare 1 Clement: *Let us also be imitators (μυηται) of those who went about 'in the skins of goats and sheep' heralding the coming of Christ,⁶ the following being a series of examples in the manner of Hebrews 11. The Martyrdom of Polycarp is written for encouragement to martyrdom; it cites the example of its hero's death as a martyrdom according to the gospel, and Polycarp as a hero whose martyrdom all desire to imitate (μυμείθεαι).⁷ In the rhetorical *Life and Passion of Cyprian* it is said that the martyr thus running through the examples of all good men, by always*

⁴ Hebrews, 6 12.

⁵ *op. cit.*, 127.

⁶ 1 Clement, 17 1.

⁷ *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 19 1.

imitating those who were better than others, he made himself also worthy of imitation.⁸ So, too, the pseudo-Cyprianic *Praise of Martyrdom* says: *He said this* (alluding to Paul's exhortation to imitation of himself) *who suffered, and who suffered for this cause that through him we might imitate Christ.*⁹ So clearly does this attitude toward martyrdom function that it may truly be said, as Krüger points out, that of the elements in the conception of the ἔργα μαρτυρεῖν the idea that the martyrs are μαθηταὶ καὶ μιμηταὶ τοῦ κυρίου is decisive.¹⁰

It may fairly be said that in Hebrews there is a usage of the term ὁμολογία which approaches the technical usage of the word and the conception in the later literature on martyrdom. From this literature it may readily be seen that the crux of the problem which was presented to the church by persecution was the securing of the confession. Once the confession were made there were other modes of maintaining the resolution and of confirming the mind of the confessor; there were modes of entrance into the prisons by means of which encouraging visits might be made and comforts of various sorts obtained for the imprisoned martyrs-designate. The primary effort was to secure the confession, and to this end definite technique was applied. It is not to be supposed that Hebrews marks the fully developed attitude in this tendency, but it does appear that it is in the line of the final process. For example, Jesus is cited as *the apostle and High Priest of our confession.*¹¹ The readers of the epistle are exhorted: *Let us hold fast the confession.*¹² There is an occurrence of the term in such a context as to make it unmistakable that a definite content was intended for the word: *Let us maintain the confession of the hope unwaveringly, for he who has given the promise is faithful. By observing one another, let us arouse ourselves to rival one another's love and good deeds, not abandoning our meeting together, as is*

⁸ *Life and Passion of Cyprian*, 8.

⁹ *In Praise of Martyrdom*, 29.

¹⁰ *Harvard Theological Review*, 14 (1921): 301.

¹¹ Hebrews, 31.

¹² *op. cit.*, 414.

*the custom of some; but let us encourage one another, all the more as you see the Day is coming near.*¹³ Here the confession of the hope is admitted to be at the point of wavering; it is therefore the task of the epistle to bring the readers to the point of steadfastness. In immediate connection the sanction of Jesus' example is used, and the influence of the group upon one another is recognized. The high value of assembly is expressly urged, quite as in the point similarly made by Tertullian: *And when is trust in God more strong, than when there is a greater fear of him, and when persecution breaks out? Then is faith more zealous in preparation, and better disciplined in fasts, and meetings, and prayers. . . There is no room, in fact, for aught but fear and hope.*¹⁴ All this is highly significant as an attempt to control in the situation of persecution. Still stronger is the content of a later item, when, in immediate connection with the use of Jesus' suffering as a sanction, the appeal is made that, since Jesus suffered without the gate, *Let us therefore go out to him without the camp, bearing his reproach. . . Through him let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name* (ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ).¹⁵

It is similarly that the entire method of exhortation in the Epistle operates. The epistolary method readily lends itself to exhortation; the direct application at this point may be noted as a distinction of method from the Apocalypse. Hebrews is hortatory to a high degree. However, the point of emphasis here is upon the particular matter to which exhortation is directed; namely, the preservation of the faith. Not only in the quasi-technical use of ὁμολογία is this to be seen, but also in the various exhortations to faithfulness. There seems to be a definite content assumed for this attitude, and a specific sense attached to its maintenance in such conceptions as represented in the following: . . . *Christ . . . whose house we are, if we maintain our boldness and the glorying of our*

¹³ Hebrews, 10 22-25.

¹⁴ Tertullian, *ad Martyres*, 1.

¹⁵ Hebrews, 13 15.

hope firm to the end.¹⁶ Take heed, brothers, lest perhaps there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away (*ἀποστήναι*), but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called today, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, for we are become partakers of Christ, if we maintain the beginning of our confidence firmly to the end.¹⁷ If it does not appear that the usage of *ἀποστήναι* is quasi-technical, it will hardly be questioned that such is the usage of *ἀποστήναι*, especially when it is recalled that there is a passage of some length in which such "apostasy" is described. In the manner in which partaking of Christ is made conditional upon the steadfast maintenance of the previously begun confidence there is a subtle but effective use of the sanction of reward. It is hardly necessary to call attention to the specific content put into the term *πίστις* in the great passage whose climax is *All these, having had witness borne to them through faith. . . . Therefore let us also, seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, run with steadfastness the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the leader and completer of our faith. . . .*¹⁸ nor its connection with the exhortation to similar experience in maintaining it.

The most significant teaching of Hebrews which functions with special similarity to the martyrological literature is the presentation of Jesus as martyr. This thought is evenly distributed throughout the book. For example, there is the statement that *We behold Jesus. . . crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the favor of God he should taste of death for everyone. For it became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the leader of their salvation perfect through suffering.*¹⁹ Again, it appears that the famous teaching of Hebrews 5 becomes much more enlightening when recognized as having a special purpose as exemplary matter designed to control in persecution: Jesus has just been presented as High Priest of our

¹⁶ Hebrews, 8 s.

¹⁷ *op. cit.*, 8 13-14.

¹⁸ *op. cit.*, 11 29, 12 1 f.

¹⁹ *op. cit.* 2 10.

confession, not a high priest who cannot be touched by the feeling of our infirmities, but one tempted in a manner similar to that of our own test, yet without having yielded to sin. It is the exhortation of the writer that in so presenting him the readers may be encouraged to approach Jesus for the help which they need. Jesus is shown as a High Priest who offered himself for sacrifice, but special point appears from the fact that he did not do so without a struggle; that Jesus was himself in an experience of terrific crisis: *Who, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered.* It was because of this voluntarily accepted discipline that, *having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation.*²⁰ It appears that the teaching here recorded obtains its significance from the point which it has in the situation of persecution. Furthermore, it appears that such is the point of the stress upon the *πενεπαρμένον χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*: may not the *ἁμαρτία* here be the sin which, being a special danger for the readers, is thrown back into the life of Jesus? In the same manner the intimate connection of the section which follows seems to point to the use made of the entire conception as directed to the control purpose; the writer passes immediately to the statement that such conceptions have frequently been proposed, but that the present situation of the readers makes it difficult for the full purpose to be realized. There can be no doubt that this passage reveals the main purpose of the letter: to bestir to activity a church stunned by the opposition with which it is faced. No small element in this plan of the writer is the citation of Jesus as proto-martyr. It is in such a manner also that Jesus is spoken of in another figure; referring to *the hope set before us* the writer mentions Jesus as the *πρόδρομος*.²¹ The mention of the suffering of Jesus has

²⁰ Hebrews, 5 7-9.

²¹ *op. cit.*, 6 20.

already been noted; it is quite after the manner of the citation of an exemplary martyrdom in later literature: *Wherefore Jesus also, in order that he might sanctify the people through his blood, suffered without the gate.*²² But the greatest use of Jesus as proto-martyr is so well known that the mere mention is hardly necessary; in the passage in which many heroes and martyrs of faith are cited as examples, with unquestioned fitness and a high degree of skill, in a context in which such significant terms as *πιστός*, *ὁμολογία*, and *μαρτυρέω* occur and in which martyrological works were indubitably used, Jesus is presented as the greatest example of all. Furthermore, these martyrs have their experiences glorified with the important qualification that without questioning their witness it is nevertheless true that the completion of their confession is dependent upon the participation made by the readers of the epistle. It is in this highly significant sense that the writer, summing up the line of confessions for faith, exhorts the readers to fellowship in the noble army with the words: *Therefore, let us, seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of μαρτύρων, lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run δι' ἰσχυροῦς τὴν ἀγῶνα set before us, looking to Jesus, the leader and completer of faith (πίστεως), who, for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*²³ Now, it is urged that not only is there here usage which is similar to that of the typical martyrological literature, but that the context shows that it is usage in exactly the same function in similar situation. Note that the argument finds its climax in Jesus as the most notable martyr; it is exactly thus that in the later literature on martyrdom various heroes are cited in series with Jesus as the chief. Compare the following from *In Praise of Martyrdom*: *In Isaiah he was sawn asunder, in Abel he was slain, in Isaac he was offered up, in Joseph he was sold into slavery, in man he was crucified.*²⁴

²² Hebrews, 13 12.

²³ *op. cit.*, 12 1-3.

²⁴ Pseudo-Cyprian, *In Praise of Martyrdom*, 29.

But not only is Jesus cited thus in Hebrews, he is cited with immediate reference to the reward which he received: he endured his suffering *for the joy which was set before him . . . and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* But still more eloquent of the writer's purpose is the conclusion to which the series of examples is directed. This is so important as to warrant quotation: *For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as sons:*

*My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him;
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then ye are bastards and not sons. . . For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them, but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby. . . Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.²⁵

This is the author's reference to the oppression of Domitian. It would appear that the action was much less severe in the place to which the letter is directed than was true of the provenance of the book of Revelation. This would agree satisfactorily with the hypothesis that the letter had Rome for its destination; it is quite probable that any reaction to Domitian's bid for deification was much less pressing in Rome than in the provinces. Perhaps the less severe situation might be accounted for by the period in the action when the letter

²⁵ Hebrews, 12 5-13.

was sent; if, as is supposed, Hebrews preceded 1 Clement it would be quite understandable that the more severe pressure in the picture of 1 Clement was a later reflection of the suppression of which Hebrews was the earlier witness. However this may be, the purpose of the writer is manifest. The group to which the letter was directed were badly shaken by the action taken against them, so that the situation was critical. There was wavering, indecision, apathy, and even apostasy. The group which by some virtue of its position ought of right to be exemplary was as though it were formed of babes who needed instruction in the rudiments of faithfulness. When another such situation might be pointed out in which the same group had been a model of endurance,²⁸ certainly such faithfulness ought to obtain in the present circumstance. In consequence the writer proceeds to attack the problem, his purpose being to exercise such control over his readers as shall arouse them from their lethargy and stimulate them to such behavior as will meet the situation.

According to Professor Goodspeed's hypothesis, which seems to the writer to be the key to the understanding of the historical and literary relationships to be perceived in this period of the development of early Christianity, Hebrews was directed to the church at Rome, and one of its responses was 1 Clement. As has been remarked, 1 Clement, in its inclusive voluminousness, is actuated by a variety of interests. One, however, which was paramount, was that of asserting the right of the Roman church to its avowed position of leadership, a leadership which it had achieved in the persecution of Domitian. It had risen to the occasion, and was now carrying on its worthy tradition. The Roman church now purports to be instructing the Corinthian congregation, and in its message it includes not a few notices of its recent struggle. The references which it makes indicate close relationship with the Epistle to the Hebrews, as may be perceived from its contents.

The suppression of Domitian is doubtless that to which the writer refers when he mentions *the sudden and repeated*

²⁸ Hebrews, 10:22-23.

*misfortunes and calamities which have befallen us.*²⁷ Just what the situation was in the church addressed is difficult to determine. It seems to be a condition of internal strife caused by some who dispute the will of others; just how serious it was it is impossible to say. But the writer of 1 Clement fears that at any rate it may develop into a serious situation, and to prevent it he writes his letter, and in a series of examples of those who suffered through jealousy comes finally to his own situation. It is evident that the writer reflects a situation of persecution through which the Roman church had passed; he offers the sudden and repeated misfortunes and calamities as the reason for the delay with which the Corinthian problem has been taken up, calls attention to several martyrs, some of whom may have received their fame from the recent persecution, and notes that his own group are *in the same arena*; that *the same struggle is before us.*²⁸ But it is the method by which this situation is to be met which is most important for the purpose of noting the reflection of the Domitianic persecution in the letter. The similarity of his method to that adopted by Hebrews is striking. The writer cites a long list of examples, beginning, as Hebrews does, with Abel, and ending with *noble examples of our own generation.*²⁹ In the list the central thought is about the ζῆλος which has precipitated the difficulty in the Corinthian church, but the local situation has caused the notice also of *ἰδιώθη*. It is upon those *who contended in the days nearest to us; the noble examples of our own generation*³⁰ that special interest centres. Here Peter and Paul are cited as *the greatest and most righteous pillars of the church who were persecuted and who contended unto death (ἰδιώθησαν καὶ εἰς θανάτου ἤθλησαν).*³¹ Peter *through unrighteous jealousy suffered not one or two but many trials, and having thus given his testimony (ὄντω μαρτυρήσας) went to the glorious place which was his due.*³²

²⁷ 1 Clement, 11.

²⁸ *op. cit.*, 71.

²⁹ *op. cit.*, 51.

³⁰ *op. cit.*, 51.

³¹ *op. cit.*, 52.

³² *op. cit.*, 54.

Paul also through the same jealousy and strife *showed the way to the prize of endurance*.³³ A list of his sufferings is given, with the note that he gained the *noble fame of his faith*, and that at the conclusion of his labors he *gave his testimony before the rulers* (*μαρτυρίας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων*), and thus passed from the world and was taken up into the Holy Place,—the greatest example of endurance.³⁴ These two conspicuous examples are given in response to the transition from ancient to modern examples: *To cease from the examples of old time, let us come to those who contended in the days nearest us; let us take the noble examples of our own generation*.³⁵ As in Hebrews, exemplary suffering is illustrated in a list of ancient and recent examples, but whereas in Hebrews the recent examples are mentioned merely in summary and the special place is given Jesus, in 1 Clement Peter and Paul are cited in detail, and the citation of Jesus comes subsequently to the mention of the greater and the humbler of the persecuted. The writer thus figuratively notices the treatment of many unnamed saints of both sexes: *To these men with their holy lives was gathered a great multitude of the chosen, who were the victims of jealousy and offered among us the fairest example in their endurance under many indignities and tortures. Through jealousy women were persecuted as Danaids and Dircae, suffering terrible and unholy indignities; they stedfastly finished the course of faith, and received a noble reward, weak in the body though they were*.³⁶ Then, showing that these notices are not mere congratulatory reminiscences, the writer brings the entire matter into his own situation: *We are not only writing these things to you, beloved, for your admonition, but also to remind ourselves; for we are in the same arena, and the same struggle is before us*.³⁷ The purpose of the citation is admittedly practical; it is urged that vain and empty cares be put away, that the great rule of the tradition

³³ 1 Clement, 5 s.

³⁴ *op. cit.*, 57.

³⁵ *op. cit.*, 51.

³⁶ *op. cit.*, 61, 2.

³⁷ *op. cit.*, 71.

be attended to, that the goal be that which is pleasing to God, and, to secure this end, it is urged: *Let us fix our gaze on the blood of Christ, and let us know that it is precious to his Father, because it was poured out for our salvation.*³⁸ Thus the list of Examples is completed. Just how purposeful the use of these examples was in Hebrews and in 1 Clement is proven by the manner in which the custom became normative for later works whose purpose was control in situations of persecution. The appeal to the example of Jesus is obvious, and requires no comment. Similarly utilized was the appeal to the example of the apostles; 1 Clement stands at the beginning of the process which early operated to celebrate the fame of apostles as martyrs.³⁹ Clement of Alexandria is an intermediate witness to the tendency, as is Tertullian; the ultimate formulation is the voluminous *Acta* literature, in which with hardly an exception the glorious company of the apostles is chief in the noble army of martyrs. Martyrdom became the guarantee that one attained apostolic rank; Polycarp's constancy won him the fame of *an apostolic and a prophetic teacher*.⁴⁰ 1 Clement is the fountain-head also of one of the famous figures which became a favorite in the later literature in the term *ἀθλία*. Lake notes that the word is almost a technical term for martyrdom; examples are numerous.⁴¹ The use in 1 Clement of the sanction of reward is also notable; to the implicit efficacy deliberately attached to the authoritative citation of Scripture there is added the conscious appeal in the attention to the glorious issue of persecution: as in Hebrews Jesus endured his sufferings for *the joy set before him. . . and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*, so in 1 Clement it is noted that Paul was taken up into the Holy Place, Peter went to the glorious place which was his due, and the larger group of lesser

³⁸ 1 Clement, 74.

³⁹ Cf. Cl. Alex.: *Strom.* 49, Eusebius, *H. E.* 3: 292, Tertullian, *Scorpiae*, 15, Cyprian, *Epistle*, 711, etc.

⁴⁰ *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 172.

⁴¹ Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1: 337; cf. *Mart. Pol.* 182, Tertullian *Scor.* 8, *de fug.* 1, Cyprian, *Ep.* 565, Eusebius, *H. E.*, 5: 110, etc.

martyrs *received a noble reward*.⁴² The authoritative use of Scripture appears throughout the full range of quotations and citations; this is true of the sections which have particular reference to the suppression as well as to other passages, and in this characteristic the letter is closely associated with Hebrews. It appears that 1 Clement alludes to Hebrews in one of the passages in which the similarity is most striking: in section 17 the list of Old Testament heroes is introduced by the phrase which appears also in Hebrews; Lake edits it as a quotation: *Let us also be imitators of those who went about "in the skins of goats and sheep"*;⁴³ the section closes, in Lake's opinion, with an allusion to Hebrews 12 1.

The allusions to persecution do not, to be sure, make up the bulk of the long letter to the Corinthians. But they are rather extensively distributed throughout the various sections, and in their rather wide range a number of interests appear. The suffering of Jesus leads to the extensive quotation of Isaiah 53,⁴⁴ the persecution of the righteous and the reward thereto accruing is discussed in very definite terms in a later paragraph,⁴⁵ in the same section there are other examples of behavior which is proper in persecution,⁴⁶ as in Hebrews the divine chastening is the subject of teaching,⁴⁷ the bitter experiences of the persecuted are touchingly alluded to in the prayer,⁴⁸ and the issue of peace is the subject toward the close of the prayer.⁴⁹

It will not be supposed that persecution functions as the sole or even the chief interest of 1 Clement; the present study isolated this interest simply because it is the interest which illustrates most fully the historical and literary relations with Hebrews. It appears to be reasonable to suppose that the

⁴² 1 Clement, 5 a, 7.

⁴³ *op. cit.*, 17 1.

⁴⁴ *op. cit.*, 16 3.

⁴⁵ *op. cit.*, 45 a, 5.

⁴⁶ *op. cit.*, 45, *passim*.

⁴⁷ *op. cit.*, 56 3-10.

⁴⁸ *op. cit.*, 59 a.

⁴⁹ *op. cit.*, 60 a.

letter does function in this particular manner. The writer of Hebrews does not hesitate to say that the church addressed (it is assumed that it is the Roman church) was in danger lest its apathy and sluggishness unfit it for leadership in the crisis with which it was faced, and the letter written had the purpose of stirring to activity the group which had so splendidly braved the former similar experience. Now 1 Clement writes with authority; the Roman church assumes as rightful its position as leader and teacher. It has suffered, and its experiences have delayed its consideration of the common problem, but, now that circumstances permit, the group takes its place worthily as the possessor of the two great martyrs, and as the church which maintains the standard in the very home of the *Beast* and of the impious man who demands recognition as *Lord and God*.

What are the sources for early Christian life during the last years of the first century? It is not forgotten that the ground involved in the consideration of this question is hotly disputed. A considerable consensus agrees that Revelation is one of the sources. Some think, while others deny, that Hebrews and 1 Peter belong here. The reasons for taking 1 Peter into relationship with the persecution of Trajan are weighty.⁶⁰ However, it appears to the writer that when New Testament Introduction is carried on primarily from the historical point of view the sources for the period of Domitian which bear relationship to the persecution may be grouped and studied with the result that an intelligible picture of early Christianity in that period may be derived. Noting the apologetic function of Luke-Acts, the later date, bringing this work into the period of the Domitianic persecution, becomes not only more probable but much more understandable. Revelation illustrates the application of apocalyptic to this situation. Hebrews likewise brings to bear the epistolary form upon the same problem, and in response to it 1 Clement appears, functioning in a similar manner. To be sure, even the weightiest opinion is

⁶⁰ Cf. the article, "Peter, Epistles of" in *Hastings Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, 2: 301-307 (S. J. Case).

hesitant in positing the Domitianic date for 1 Clement,⁵¹ and any hypothesis will be advanced cautiously; the present study wishes to offer for consideration the materials relevant to the interest in persecution in Hebrews and 1 Clement in order to examine the question of their literary and historical relationships and to adduce their materials as possible sources for the picture of early Christianity in the persecution of Domitian.

⁵¹ Cf. Lake, *Landmarks of Early Christianity*, 83, n.