

History

of the Church of God

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Chapter VIII

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM—THE THREE PERIODS OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE—THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE Roman Empire, previously under Divine restraint (2 Thess. 2:6, 7), protected Christianity; but "openly assumed the character of Anti-christ with fire and sword (Rev. 13-18) in the tenth year of Nero's reign, A.D. 64, and by the instigation of that very emperor to whom Paul, as a Roman citizen, had appealed from the Jewish tribunal. It was, however, not a strictly religious persecution, like those under the later emperors; it originated in a public calamity which was wantonly charged upon the innocent Christians." Nero, the last of the family of Julius Caesar, was an unsurpassed monster of iniquity. He murdered his brother (Britannicus), his mother (Agrippina), his wives (Octavia and Poppæa), his teacher (Seneca), and many eminent Romans, and finally himself, in the thirty-second year of his age. On the night between the 18th and 19th of July, A.D. 64, the most destructive fire that ever occurred in history broke out in Rome. It lasted nine days and nights, and destroyed one-third of the city, including multitudes of lives. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation seems to have a primary allusion to this dreadful catastrophe. The cause of the conflagration was unknown, but, as recorded by contemporary historians, the people attributed it to Nero, "who wished to enjoy the lurid spectacle of burning Troy, and to gratify his ambition to rebuild Rome on a more magnificent scale, and to call it Neropolis." Suetonius relates that several men of

consular rank met Nero's domestic servants with torches and combustibles, but did not dare to apprehend them; and Tacitus states that the report was universally current that, while the city was burning, Nero went upon the stage of his private theatre and sang (from Homer) "The Destruction of Troy." "To divert from himself the general suspicion of incendiarism, and at the same time to furnish new entertainment for his diabolical cruelty, Nero wickedly cast the blame on the Christians, and inaugurated a carnival of blood such as heathen Rome never saw before or since. A 'vast multitude' of Christians was put to death in the most shocking manner. Some were crucified, probably in mockery of the punishment of Christ; some were sewed up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the voracity of mad dogs in the arena. The Satanic tragedy reached its climax at night in the imperial gardens, on the slope of the Vatican: Christian men and women, covered with pitch or oil or resin, and nailed to posts of pine, were lighted and burned as torches for the amusement of the mob; while Nero, in fantastical dress, figured in a horse race, and displayed his art as a charioteer. Burning alive was the ordinary punishment of incendiaries; but only the cruel ingenuity of this imperial monster, under the inspiration of the devil, could invent such a horrible system of illumination. It is probable that the Neronian persecution of Christians extended to the provinces; and it is believed that the Apostles Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom about this time or soon after (the dates of their death varying from A.D. 64 to 69). It is generally held that Peter was crucified at Rome, whither he had gone for the first time in the same year; and Paul, being a Roman citizen, and not subject to crucifixion, was beheaded about three miles from Rome, on the Ostian road, on a green spot, formerly called *Aquæ Salviæ*, afterwards *Tre Fontane*. It is thought that the Apostle John was banished by Nero to the lonely island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea (or Grecian Archipelago), where he saw the visions recorded in the book of Revelation about the same time (A.D. 68); though it has heretofore been generally thought that this banishment was under the emperor Domitian, A.D. 95.

"There is scarcely another period in history so full of vice, corruption and disaster as the six years between the Neronian persecution and the destruction of Jerusalem. The prophetic description in the last days by our Lord began to be fulfilled before the generation to which He spoke had

passed away, and the day of judgment seemed to be near at hand. So the Christians believed, and had good reason to believe. Even to earnest heathen minds (such as those of Seneca and Tacitus) that period looked as dark as midnight, according to their own descriptions. The most unfortunate country in that period was Palestine, where an ancient and venerable nation brought upon itself unspeakable suffering and destruction. The tragedy of Jerusalem prefigures in miniature the final judgment, and in this light it is represented in the eschatological discourses of Christ, who foresaw the end from the beginning."—*P. Schaff*.

Intimately connected with the early progress of Christianity was the destruction of Jerusalem, and the entire and final overthrow of the Jewish nation. The Jews crucified the Lord of life and glory, and persecuted His followers in the most cruel manner until their nationality was put an end to—a period of about 40 years from the Savior's death. The Jews asked that His blood should be on them and on their children (Matthew 27:25), and their imprecation was answered. He had already foretold of their overthrow and the certainty that God's vengeance would fall on them. Said He, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:36-38). When the disciples showed Him the buildings of the temple that He might admire them, He "said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:1, 2). And again said He: "The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another" (Luke 19:43, 44).

As the accomplishment of these predictions ended in the utter abolition of the Jewish church and state, a constitution which was originally founded in Divine appointment, and had existed during a period of fifteen hundred years; and as it was unquestionably the most awful revolution in all the religious dispensations of God, and which, moreover, in various ways, contributed greatly to the success of the gospel, it seems to merit especial attention at our hands.

From Nero to Vespasian there were five different Roman emperors, if we include these two, in the short space of eighteen months; and during this period the empire was a scene of confusion, desolation and misery, and not in a mood to persecute Christians, as it was subsequently.

After the death of king Herod Agrippa,ⁱ[1] the particulars of which the reader will find recorded in Acts 12, Judea again became a province of the Roman Empire, and Cuspius Fadus was sent to be its governor. He found matters very much unsettled in Palestine. The country was infested with banditti, and an imposter named Theudas had drawn large numbers after him, promising them to divide the waters of Jordan, as Joshua had done, by his single word, and lead them to pleasures beyond, etc. Theudas was taken and beheaded, and his followers dispersed, the Jews were quelled, and the banditti partially suppressed. Cuspius was succeeded by Tiberius Alexander, an apostate Jew, who very shortly gave way to make room for Ventidius Cumanus, under whose rule the troubles began which ended in the downfall of Jerusalem.

One of the Roman soldiers, at the time of the Jewish Passover, insulted the Jews by exposing his nakedness, and this exasperated them to such a degree that they complained of it to Cumanus, and charged him with ordering the offense to be given. He endeavored to reason with them, but could not succeed by words, so that he ordered his troops to the spot; and this so terrified the Jews that they fled in every direction, and twenty thousand were stifled to death in their flight by running over one another in the confined avenues that led to and from the temple.

Cumanus was succeeded by Claudius Felix as governor of Judea, and under his administration things went from bad to worse. The country swarmed with banditti; Jerusalem became the prey of false prophets and pretended workers of miracles, who were continually inciting discontent and sedition; and numbers of assassins, under the name of *Sicarii*, abounded in all the cities and towns of the country, committing the most horrible murders under the pretext of religious and patriotic zeal. These *Sicarii* could be hired by any one to assassinate an enemy or any person who seemed to stand in the way of another. The Jewish priests, and even the pontiffs, made no hesitation in hiring these assassins to rid them of all such persons as were obnoxious to them. In the meantime Felix went forth with his soldiers in every direction, punishing the innocent with the guilty, and thereby destroyed all confidence in the Roman government as a power for the promotion of justice and equity in the land.

Felix was succeeded in the government by Festus, who, when entering upon the duties of his office, found the very priesthood engaged in war with each other. The high priests claimed their full share of tithes, and those who had been deposed claimed a full share also, while the inferior priests were loath to yield what belonged to them. Thus parties were formed, and, each party hiring a squad of the *Sicarii* to accompany them dreadful encounters often occurred, wherein many were murdered, both in Jerusalem and other towns; and even the very temple itself was defiled with the blood of these victims. Festus, therefore, had a threefold task upon his hands; he had to suppress the violence of the priesthood against each other; that of the seditious Jews against the Romans and such as contentedly submitted to their government; and that of the banditti abroad, who infested the whole country, and robbed, plundered and massacred everywhere without mercy.

Festus dying soon after Paul was brought before him; Nero nominated his successor Albinus, of whom it is related by historians that he was such a cruel and rapacious monster that Felix and Festus, with all their faults, were angels when compared with him. After a two years' tenure of office he was succeeded by Gessius Florus, the last and worst of all the Roman governors. His rapines, cruelties and acts of oppression, his compromising with the banditti for large sums of money, and, in short, his whole behavior, were so

openly flagitious that the Jews were disposed to regard him rather as a bloody executioner sent to torture than as a magistrate to govern them. His great object seemed to be to goad the Jews to open rebellion against the Roman government, and he succeeded well at that.

In the days of Felix a dispute arose between the Jews and Syrians as to the ownership of Caesarea, each claiming it. It was referred to the emperor, who decided against the Jews, and the latter became indignant, and took up arms in defense of their claim. They assailed both Syrians and Romans in all places and on all occasions of their meeting together. Throughout all Judea little else was heard of but robberies, murders, and every species of cruelty—cities and villages filled with the dead of all ages and each sex, and of every quality, down to the tender infant. The

Caesareans fell suddenly on the Jews in their city and massacred twenty thousand of them; two thousand were murdered at Ptolemais, and fifty thousand at the city of Alexandria, in Egypt. At Jerusalem, Florus one day caused his troops to go and plunder the market, and to kill all they met; and they accordingly murdered three thousand five hundred persons, men, women and children, and the streets of the city were day after day deluged with blood. Florus gloated over the carnage, and wrote to Cestius, the governor of Syria, casting the blame of all these horrible cruelties upon the Jews.

This war of open rebellion against the Roman government was fairly inaugurated in the second year of the government of Florus, in the twelfth Nero's reign, A.D. 66.

The Jews next pushed their conquests beyond the river Jordan, took the fortress of Cyprus, razed it to the ground, and put all the Romans to the sword. The governor of Syria then bestirred himself, marched into Judea with a powerful army, burned the towns and villages in his way, massacred all the Jews he could come at, and then encamped before Gibeon about the feast of tabernacles. "The Jews at Jerusalem, hearing of his approach, forsook the solemnities of their religion, and, even though it was on the Sabbath day, flew to arms and proceeded to meet him with such fury, that

had not the cavalry arrived at the moment to the support of his infantry, he had sustained a signal defeat. He lost five hundred men, while the Jews lost but twenty-two." Cestius proffered terms of peace. The Jews killed one of his messengers, and wounded another. Enraged at this, he marched forward, and encamped in order of battle before Jerusalem on the 30th of October, A.D. 66. This put the Jews in great consternation, and they abandoned all their outworks, and retired to the inner cincture near the temple. Cestius fired the former, and laid siege to the latter, and took up his headquarters in the royal palace. He now hesitated; his generals were bribed; the Jews made a sortie and succeeded in repulsing him; they drove him back to his camp at Gibeon, harassed his rear, secured the passes, and attacked his army in flank. "Hemmed in on all sides, the mountains re-echoed with the hideous cries of his soldiers, and having lost four thousand foot and two hundred horse, favored by the intervening night, they on the eighth of November happily found a pass through the narrow straits of Bethoron and escaped."

Milman says that the Romans might easily have made themselves masters of the city of Jerusalem: and it was to the universal surprise that Cestius called off his troops. Though the war continued, Jerusalem was not besieged again till April, A.D. 70. During this interval of about two years and a half the Christians in Jerusalem, remembering Christ's words of warning (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:21), fled beyond the Jordan to Pella, in the north of Perea, in the mountains of Gilead, some sixty miles northeast of Jerusalem, where king Herod Agrippa II. opened to them a safe asylum; and thus they escaped the horrors of the final siege of Jerusalem.

The retreat of Cestius aroused Nero, who sent Vespasian and his son Titus, in the ensuing spring, into Galilee with an army of sixty thousand men, well disciplined and equipped for service. They burnt Gadara, and marched towards Jotapata; but Josephus, the celebrated historian, and at that time governor of the province, threw himself into that place and defended it for a period of forty-seven days. It was finally taken about the beginning of July, with the loss of all its inhabitants—forty thousand slain, and only twelve hundred prisoners; among the latter was Josephus himself.

Josephus predicted the elevation of Vespasian to the throne of the Caesars in three years. Vespasian did not believe it, but treated Josephus kindly as a prisoner, and when he was elected, the next year, emperor of Rome, left the army and Josephus in the care of his son Titus, who gave him much liberty, and sent him occasionally to the Jews to urge them to desist from further rebellion.

Titus took Jaffa, two miles southwest of Nazareth, while his father was besieging Jotapata. All the men were put to the sword, and the women and children taken prisoners. Joppa, which had been re-peopled by a great number of seditious Jews since it was taken by Cestius, was retaken by Vespasian, and about four thousand of its inhabitants destroyed. Tarichea and Tiberias were next taken. The other cities of Galilee then submitted to the Romans, except Gischala, Gamala and Mount Tabor.

Gamala was taken, and four thousand of its citizens were put to the sword, while vast numbers took their own lives rather than surrender to the Romans. Mount Tabor was taken by stratagem, and, after John of Gischala left that city and fled with his soldiers towards Jerusalem, the remaining citizens surrendered. This completed the conquest of Galilee, after which the whole Roman army took a respite at Caesarea before they began the siege of Jerusalem.

While Vespasian was resting his army in winter quarters at Caesarea, the Jews were exhausting themselves in Jerusalem by their factions, and warring against each other. They were at that time, no doubt, the worst population on the face of the globe, and eventually suffered more than any other. The dominant party, which was the war party, consisted of men of the vilest and most profligate characters that perhaps the pen of the historian ever described. They were proud, ambitious, cruel, rapacious and addicted to the most horrid crimes. Josephus says they acted more like infernal beings than men. Yet there were men peaceably disposed within the city, and who would have sought terms with the Romans if they could. These were very few, however, and suffered for their virtues. John of Gischala, who fled from that place to Jerusalem to escape the clutches of Vespasian, had placed himself at the head of the dominant party, and practiced the most unheard-of

cruelties upon the innocent and inoffensive. At one time he and his party put to death twelve thousand persons of noble extraction, and in the flower of their age, butchering them in the most horrible manner. In short, the whole nation trembled at the mention of the names of these men, and did not dare to be seen or heard to weep for the murder of their nearest relatives nor even to give them burial. When the party of John had quelled, as they supposed, all opposition to them within the walls of the city, they began to turn their murderous weapons against each other, all of which was favorable to the Romans, and well known to them. Famine and pestilence also prevailed in the city and made its conquest the easier. Vespasian marched out of Caesarea in the spring of A.D. 70, penetrated Idumea, and plundered and burnt every place through which he passed, except where it was necessary to leave a garrison to keep the country in awe. On receiving intelligence of his election as emperor, he left the army in charge of his son Titus, and repaired to Rome. His advice to his son was to utterly destroy Jerusalem.

Titus lost no time in complying with this command. He set his army in motion in April, marched at once to the walls of that devoted city, and commenced the siege immediately after the passover, when Jerusalem was filled with strangers. It seemed almost impregnable, being on an eminence and surrounded with three walls and many stately towers. The first or old wall, which by reason of its vast thickness was looked upon as impregnable, had no less than sixty of these towers, lofty, firm and strong. The second had fourteen, and the third eighty. The circumference of the city was nearly four English miles. The siege fairly commenced on the 14th of April and ended on the 8th of September, when it was taken and entered by Titus—lasting five months wanting six days. The wonder to us is how a single city could withstand the power of Rome for such a length of time. Unheard of cruelties and sufferings occurred within that period. It was reported to Titus by a deserter that at one of the gates where he was stationed there were carried out to be buried one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty persons from the 14th of April to the 1st of July. Another told him that they had carried out at all the gates six hundred thousand, and that then, being unable to carry them all out, they had filled whole houses with them and shut them up.

One circumstance will suffice to show the deplorable famine that prevailed in the city. An unhappy and starving mother, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Moses (Deut. 28:56, 57), was reduced to the necessity of feeding upon her own child. "This lady's name was Miriam, who had taken refuge, with many others, in this devoted city, from the breaking out of the war. As the famine increased, her house was repeatedly plundered of such provisions as she had been able to procure. She had vainly endeavored, by her entreaties, to prevail upon them to put an end to her miserable existence, but the mercy was too great to be granted her. Frantic at length with fury and despair, she snatched her infant from her bosom, cut its throat and broiled it; and, having satiated her present hunger, concealed the rest. The smell of it soon drew the voracious human tigers to her house; they threatened her with the most excruciating tortures if she did not discover her provisions to them; upon which she set forth before them the relics of her mangled infant, bidding them eat heartily and not be squeamish, since she, its *once* tender mother, had made no scruple to butcher, dress, and feed upon it. At the sight of this horrid dish, inhuman as they were, they stood aghast, petrified with horror, and departed, leaving the astonished mother in possession of her dismal fare."

"When the report of this spread through the city, the horror and consternation were as universal as they were inexpressible. They now for the first time began to think themselves forsaken of the providence of God, and to expect the most awful effects of His anger. Nor were their fears either unreasonable or ill-founded; for no sooner had Titus heard of this inhuman deed than he vowed the total extirpation of the city and people. 'Since,' said he, 'they have so often refused my proffers of pardon, and have preferred war to peace, rebellion to obedience, and famine to plenty, I am determined to bury that cursed metropolis under its ruins, that the sun may never more dart his beams upon a city where the mothers feed on the flesh of their children, and the fathers, no less guilty than themselves, choose to drive them to such extremities rather than lay down their arms.'"—*W. Jones*.

And yet such was the humanity of Titus that he felt reluctant to destroy so many human beings, frequently tendering them forgiveness upon

repentance: and such his regard for the magnificence and value of the temple that it was set on fire, at last, and consumed, against his orders and in defiance of his commands, expostulations, and canings of his soldiers who did the awful deed.

Seeing that all was lost, and his endeavors to save the temple ineffectual, "Titus entered into the sanctuary and Most Holy place, the remaining grandeur and riches of which, even yet, surpassed all that had been told him of it. Out of the former he saved the golden candlestick, the table of the show-bread, the altar of incense, all of pure gold, and the book of the law, wrapped up in a rich golden tissue. Upon his quitting that sacred place some soldiers set fire to it, obliging those who had staid behind to come out also, in consequence of which they all began to plunder it, carrying off the costly utensils, robes, gold plating of the gates, etc., insomuch that there was not one of them who did not enrich himself by it."

"A horrid massacre succeeded to this, in which many thousands perished, some by the flames, others falling from the battlements, and a greater number still by the enemy's sword, which spared neither age, sex nor quality. Among them were upwards of six thousand persons who had been seduced thither by a false prophet, who promised them they should find a miraculous deliverance on that very day.

"The Romans carried their fury to the burning of all the treasure houses of the place, though they were full of the richest furniture, vestments, plate, and other valuable articles, there laid up for security; nor did they cease the dreadful work of devastation till they had destroyed all except two of the temple gates, and that part of the court that was destined for the women."

The temple was burned on the tenth of August, the same day of the year it was said that the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Josephus states that the hill on which the temple stood was seething hot, and seemed enveloped to its base in one sheet of flame; that the blood was larger in quantity than the fire, and all the ground was covered with corpses. The Romans planted their eagles or standards on the temple ruins, offered their sacrifices to them, and proclaimed Titus *Imperator* with the greatest

declamations of joy. Thus was fulfilled Christ's prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.

"The city was now abandoned to the fury of the soldiers, who proceeded forthwith to plunder it, setting it on fire in every direction, and murdering all that fell into their hands—whilst the factious party among the Jews, that had hitherto escaped, went and fortified themselves in the royal palace, where they killed eight thousand of their own countrymen who had taken refuge there.

"Preparations were now making for a vigorous attack on the upper city, and particularly on the royal palace, and this occupied Titus from the 20th of August to the 7th of September, during which time great numbers came and made, their submission to him, among whom were forty thousand citizens of the inferior classes, to whom he gave permission to go and settle where they would. On the 8th of September the city was taken (as has been said) and entered by Titus.

"Josephus estimates that one million and one hundred thousand Jews were slain during the siege; eleven thousand died from starvation shortly afterwards; and ninety-seven thousand were sold into slavery, or sent to the mines, or sacrificed in the gladiatorial shows in different cities.

"It is not a little remarkable that Titus, though a heathen, was frequently obliged, during this war, to acknowledge an overruling providence, not only in the extraordinary success with which he had favored, but also in the invincible obstinacy, through which the Jews, to the last, preferred their total destruction to an acceptance of his repeated overtures of mercy.

"Again and again did he, in the most solemn manner, appeal to Heaven that he was innocent of the blood of this wretched people (Josephus' Wars, b.5, ch.12). In almost every chapter we find Josephus also ascribing these dreadful calamities, and the final ruin of his nation, city and temple, to an overruling power; to the offended Deity; to the sins of the people; but nowhere more pathetically than in that chapter in which he sums up a number of dreadful warnings, sent beforehand, not so much to reduce them

to obedience as to make them discern the Almighty hand that was ever pouring out the awful vials of His wrath upon them (Josephus' Wars, b.6, ch.5, and b.5, ch.13).

"As soon as the Romans had completed their destructive work of fire and slaughter, Titus set them to demolish the city, with all its noble structures, fortifications, palaces, towers, wells and other ornaments, down to the level of the ground; as though he had nothing in view but to fulfill the predictions of Christ concerning its destruction, as contained in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. He left nothing standing but a piece of the western wall and three towers, which he reserved merely as a monument to future ages of what had been the strength of the city, and the skill and valor of its conqueror. His orders were executed so punctually that, except what has been just mentioned, nothing remained that could serve as an index that that ground had been once inhabited; insomuch that when Titus Himself, some time afterwards, passed through it on his way from Caesarea to Alexandria, in order to embark for Rome, he wept profusely at the sight of a devastation so dreadful, cursing the wretches that had compelled him to be the author of it (Josephus' Wars, b.6, chs.8 and 9).

"Such was the dreadful issue of this war, terminating in the utter downfall of the Jewish state and nation, from which it has never recovered to this day; it involved in it the destruction of the temple, and the discontinuance of the services annexed to it. The desolation of the country itself went on increasing; till, from being, for its size, one of the most fertile and populous countries in the world, having about five million inhabitants, it is now become the most barren and desolate, the latest computation of the number of its inhabitants scarcely exceeding three hundred thousand.

"Not only the wisdom but the justice of God is also conspicuously displayed in this great event. A particular Providence had ever attended these people. They had always been favored with prosperity while obedient to God and His prophets; and, on the other hand, calamity of some kind had been the never failing consequence of their disobedience. But the measure of their iniquities was now filled up, and the wrath of Heaven came upon them to the uttermost. Never had the nation in general shown a more

perverse or obstinate disposition towards any of their prophets than was evinced towards Christ and His Apostles, though none of their prophets had ever been sent to them with such evident marks of a Divine mission. Their inveterate hostility to Christianity continues to this day, and so does their dispersion, though they are still a distinct people, and never mix, so as to be confounded, with any of the nations among whom they have settled."

All other ancient peoples blended together in an indistinguishable mass; but the Jews, having disobeyed God, and having, according to the prediction of Moses (Deut. 28:49-68), been plucked up out of their own land by a distant, eagle-like nation, of strange tongue and fierce countenance, and having been scattered among all people from one end of the earth to the other, remain still distinct from all other people, for the purpose of being, to all men, living proofs of the truth of the Old Testament, and for the fulfillment of the prophecies that are still to be accomplished.

"The reader will perceive that the history of the Jewish war, as detailed by their own historian, Josephus, in many instances a witness of the facts he attests, forms a commentary on the prophecies of Christ. Amongst other things, he has given a distinct account of the 'fearful sights and great signs from Heaven' which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem; and Tacitus has confirmed the narration of Josephus (Tacit. Annal, b.5). If Christ had not expressly foretold these things, some might have suspected that Josephus exaggerated, and Tacitus was misinformed; but as the testimonies of these historians confirm the predictions of Christ, so do the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders recorded by the historians."

While Christ made the one essential thing the relation of man to Himself, He did not formally abolish the ceremonial law, but, on the other hand, He was born under the law and lived under it, and strictly and perfectly obeyed it for His people; He said nothing about doing away with circumcision and the temple worship (except in a general manner as in John 4:21); He left the separation of Christianity and Judaism to the Spirit and Providence of God. Even Paul, the great Apostle of Christian freedom, "more than once religiously visited the temple, and accommodated himself outwardly, in various ways, to Judaism. But now the time had come for the church to be

delivered from its Jewish swaddling-bands, and God Himself came down in a terrific providence, and destroyed the house in which He had been worshiped, and gave His cause and people the spiritual emancipation which He had designed for them."

"By terrible events an end was at length put to the Mosaic economy; for, with the destruction of their city and temple, the whole Jewish polity and church state were also subverted. From that time the remnant of that once highly favored nation have been dispersed throughout the world; despised and hated by all; subjected, from age to age, to a perpetual succession of persecutions and miseries, yet under all these disadvantages, upheld by Divine Providence as a distinct people. They have ever since remained 'without a king, without a prince and without a sacrifice; without an altar, without an ephod, and without Divine manifestations;' as monuments everywhere of the truth of Christianity—yet with this promise, that 'the children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days'" (Hosea 3:4, 5).—*W. Jones.*

The Emperor Vespasian reigned ten years. His son Titus, who was superior to his father, reigned only two years, two months and twenty days, when to the great grief of his subjects he was suddenly snatched away, as was supposed by poison administered by the hands of his brother Domitian, who succeeded to the throne in the year 81. In his temper and disposition he seemed to inherit all the savage cruelty of the monster Nero. This was shown toward his subjects generally; for toward the Christians in special he appeared to have no particular hatred, until about the fourteenth year of his reign, when his cruelty toward them showed itself. He had several put to death, and others banished, on account of their religion, both in Rome and in various parts of his empire. Among the number put to death was his own cousin and colleague in the consulship, Flavius Clemens, and among those who were banished were the wife and niece of the latter, both named Flavia Domitilla. The Apostle John is said to have survived the persecution under Domitian, though it is uncertain how long, and to have died in the reign of Trajan, about 98 A.D., at Ephesus, at which city he was buried.

The crime alleged against the Christians at this period was that they were *atheists*, simply because they refused to acknowledge or worship the gods of the heathen, or even throw a grain of incense on one of their altars. And as Christians had neither temples, nor altars, nor sacrifices, it was taken for granted that they worshiped no god, were haters of the gods, and could be nothing better than atheists.

Domitian however, before his end, relaxed his persecution of Christians, and recalled from banishment those who had been driven away. He was at length assassinated in the sixteenth year of his reign, and was succeeded in the empire by Nerva, an excellent prince, and whose reign made the Romans as happy as that of Domitian had made them miserable. "He pardoned all that had been imprisoned for treason, called home such as had been banished, restored the sequestered estates, punished informers, redressed grievances to the utmost of his power, and acted with universal beneficence towards all descriptions of his subjects. He forbade the persecution of any persons for their religious belief, whether Jews or Christians. After an excellent reign of sixteen months and eight days he was taken away by death, January 23, A.D. 98, and was succeeded by Trajan, whom he had previously nominated as his heir, a man well skilled in martial and cabinet affairs. In his deportment Trajan was courteous, affable, humane and just, and perhaps not undeservedly esteemed one of the best princes with whom Rome had ever been favored. And so the first century of the Christian era terminates with the mild and virtuous reign of Trajan."

I shall now give some remarks, taken chiefly from "The Early Years of Christianity," by E. De Pressense, of Paris, on the Petrine, Pauline and Johannine Periods of the Apostolic Age.

"It 'is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15). He also 'came to seek and to save that which was lost,' and 'to call sinners to repentance.' And it is equally true, we think, that He came to restore the kingdom Of God upon earth: to found and establish a holy community, from which, as from a new humanity reconstituted by Himself, filled with His Spirit and living by His life, the gospel should go forth into all the world. This community is the Christian

Church. It differs from all other religious institutions that ever preceded it. It is not limited, like the Jewish theocracy, to one special nation, or bounded by the frontiers of any land. It is finally to conquer all the powers of earth and hell combined against it. Its character is essentially supernatural. Being born of a miracle, by a miracle it lives. Founded upon the great miracle of redemption, it grows and is perpetuated by the ever-repeated miracle of conversion. It is entered not by the natural way of birth, but by the supernatural way of the new birth. The church, resting on no national or theocratic basis, must gather its adherents simply by individual conviction, and such a basis alone corresponds with the breadth of Christianity, because it alone places the church beyond the narrow bounds of nationalities and of territorial circumscription. In truth, setting aside in man the contingent in race and the distinctions of birth, all that remains is the moral personality, the individual soul, to be brought into direct contact with God. Individuality is therefore the widest conceivable basis for a religious community. When Jesus Christ sent forth, to the conquest of the world, the few disciples whom He had gathered around Him and who formed the nucleus of the church, He by that act abrogated the old theocratic distinctions, and implicitly founded the new community, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision."

"The Christian church has a double vocation. It is called first (by the grace of God) to assimilate to itself more and more closely the teaching and the life of its Divine Founder, to be, joined to Him by tender and sacred bonds, to grow in knowledge, in charity, in holiness (Rom. 8:29). It is then, by the same grace, to carry everywhere the light and flame thus kindled and fed in the sanctuary of the soul, to the enlightenment of others, and the glorification of God (Matthew 5:16).

"Of all the periods connected with church history, none is so important or interesting as that of the Apostolic Age. Two gifts are peculiar to this age, viz., that of the Apostolate and of Inspiration. The Apostolate constitutes the direct witness for Christ, and the judgment from which there is no appeal; and the Inspiration, the Holy Ghost given in extraordinary measure, to lay a solid foundation upon which the church in all ages, must be built up. These two great facts of the Apostolic Age claim our attention. They are not at

once developed, but are progressive in their nature. Such is the order in both the Old and New Testament revelations. Every one who admits that the ideal of the new covenant shines forth resplendent in the person of the God-Man must equally admit that the complete blending of the human with the Divine element is the great consummation of the gospel design. This, which is to be the aim in every age, finds its most nearly perfect realization in the age of the Apostles. Their era, therefore, may be regarded as having furnished, as it were, the theme of the history of the church; for that history is but a free and vigorous development of the great results gained in the first century. The first subject, then, for our consideration is this normal and ideal union of the human and the Divine element in the life of the primitive church."

It may be divided into three parts, each designated by the name of the Apostle who exercised the greatest influence upon it. We have thus the period of Saint Peter, that of Saint Paul, and that of Saint John.

FIRST PERIOD OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE—PETER.

In the first the Divine element predominates, almost to the exclusion of the human, which is in comparison reduced to passivity. This is the period of the purely supernatural: it follows the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and precedes the great internal deliberations in the church. In the second and third the human element is more apparent, though always controlled and purified by the Divine; great questions are stated and debated, church organization begins, doctrine becomes more defined, and, if miracles are still many, they are less abundant than they were before. The latter fact, so far from implying any inferiority in the closing periods of the Apostolic Age, seems to us to mark a real superiority, rather. For in truth when the supernatural element is so infused into human nature that it animates it, as the soul the body, it may be said that the union between God and man is fully realized, and the most glorious results of redemption achieved."—*E. De Pressense*.

Connected with and belonging to the supernatural or first period, wherein the Apostle Peter seems to take the lead, may be mentioned the outpouring

of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the preaching of Peter and the addition of three thousand to the church; the healing of the cripple at the beautiful gate of the temple, the preaching of Peter and another gathering of believers amounting to five thousand. Multitudes on another occasion, professing faith in Christ, were added to the Lord, both men and women, consequent upon the numerous hearings by the Apostles of the diseased brought to them, or within range of even the shadow of Peter; the release of the Apostles from prison by the angel of the Lord, and a command to go stand in the temple and preach to the people, all the words of this life; the deliverance of the Apostle Peter from prison, wherein he was chained to two soldiers, the prison doors locked, and four quarternions of soldiers guarding the prison outside, without their knowing anything about it; and, as the angel led him along, the great iron gate of the city opened of its own accord for them to pass through; the healing of Aeneas, a bedridden invalid for eight years in the town of Lydda, at which the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord; the vision of the vessel, like unto a great sheet knit at the four corners, let down from Heaven in the view of Peter, while in a trance on the house top, in which vessel were four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, and a voice commanding Peter to slay and eat, etc., which induced him to visit a Gentile who had sent for him, and preach to him and his kinsmen and near friends, upon whom the Holy Ghost descended, and for that reason were baptized at the command of the Apostle. Well then may this be called the supernatural period; for, with but little labor, physically, on the part of the Apostles, no doubt fully ten thousand people professed faith in Christ, and were baptized in obedience to His command, and added to the church.

Pentecost was spoken of by Josephus as the feast of the great assembly. According to Jewish tradition, it was the anniversary of the promulgation of the Jewish law. Never were there such wonders performed at the celebration of this feast in Jerusalem as when the Holy Ghost came down and filled the hearts of the disciples with the fire of heavenly love, and enabled them to proclaim the gospel in the various languages of the world. "The miracle of Pentecost was an enacted prophecy of the happy time, when all the diversities created by evil (among the redeemed) will be lost in the unity of love. Is not this prophecy receiving a constant fulfillment as Christianity

masters, one after another, the languages of mankind, and makes them the media for conveying its immortal truths? 'The church in her humility,' says the venerable Bede, 'reforms the unity of language broken before by pride.'"

"The Apostles had received the Holy Ghost before the Pentecostal tongues of fire were displayed, in a measure, but on that occasion they were completely filled with His presence. All the barriers between earth and Heaven seemed to be removed.

"Until this time the young church might be compared to a ship, ready to depart, its sails spread for the winds. The breath from on high now blows upon it; it is no longer an inert mass, it is an animated body; it may set forth on its flight over all seas, and, be they stormy or calm, it be ever advancing towards its appointed haven."

The rapid increase of numbers soon brought about an open rupture between the young church and Judaism. The Sadducean party took the lead in the early persecutions, because the point of doctrine mainly insisted on by the Apostles was the resurrection of the dead; which was particularly odious to the Sadducees. "Annas and Caiaphas, who presided over the council before which the Apostles were repeatedly cited, were the well-known leaders of the Roman or Sadducean party. The only judge who showed himself impartial (on one of these occasions) was the Pharisee Gamaliel" (Acts 5: 17). "During all this early time the influence of the Apostle Peter predominates. The part thus taken by him has been urged as a proof of his primacy. But on closer examination it will be seen that he does but exercise his native gifts, purified and ennobled by the Divine Spirit. Peter was the son of a fisherman named Jonas, of the village of Bethsaida, in Galilee (Matthew 16: 17; John 1: 44). He was among the disciples of John the Baptist, and was thus prepared to respond favorably to the call of Jesus Christ. He soon received his vocation as an Apostle. His disposition was quick and ardent, but his zeal was blended with presumption and pride. Living in constant contact with the Master as one of the three disciples who enjoyed his closest intimacy, he conceived for Him a strong affection. His impetuous nature was, however, far from being at once brought under control. He had noble impulses, like that which prompted his grand testimony to the Savior: 'Thou

art the Christ of God' (Matthew 16:16). But he was also actuated by many an earthly motive, which drew down upon him the Master's sharp reproach. Once, under the influence of Jewish prejudice, he repelled with indignation the idea of the humiliating death of Christ. At another time he was eager to appear more courageous than all the other disciples, and, again yielding to his natural impetuosity, he drew his sword to defend Him whose 'kingdom is not of this world.' It was needful that the yet incoherent elements of his moral nature should be thrown into the crucible of trial. His shameful fall resulted in a decisive moral crisis, which commenced in that moment when, pierced to the heart by the look of Christ, he went out of the court of the high priest and wept bitterly. He appears entirely changed in the last interview he has with the Savior on the shores of the Lake Tiberias. Jesus Christ restores him after his threefold denial, by calling forth a threefold confession of his love (John 21:15).

"Nothing but determined prejudice could construe the tender solicitude of the Master for this disciple into an official declaration of his primacy. We are here in the region of feeling alone, not on the standing ground of right and legal institutions. Nor has the primacy of Peter any more legal foundation in the famous passage, 'Thou art Peter.' Jesus Christ admirably characterized by this image the ardent and generous nature of His disciple, and that courage of the pioneer which marked him out as the first laborer in the foundation of the primitive church. The son of Jonas was its most active, and, as it were, its first stone (laid on Christ, the chief corner-stone). He was also the rock against which the first tempest from without spent its fury. Beyond this, the narrative of Saint Luke lends no countenance to any hierarchical notions." The church passed through an experience of three hundred years before any organized body of professed Christians attached the Romish sense to Matthew 16:18. "Everything is natural and spontaneous in the conduct of St. Peter. He is not official president of a sort of Apostolic college. He acts only with the concurrence of his brethren, whether in the choice of a new Apostle (Acts 1:15), or at Pentecost (Acts 2:14), or before the Sanhedrim. Peter had been the most deeply humbled of the disciples, therefore he was the first to be exalted. John's part being at this time inconspicuous, no other Apostle is named with Peter, because he fills the

whole scene with his irrepressible zeal and indefatigable activity.”—
Pressense.

Even if Peter had been made by Christ the primate of the Apostles, there is not a shadow of Bible proof that Peter either had the right or attempted to confer such primacy upon a successor, still less upon the bishop of Rome, where there is no Bible proof of Peter's ever having been. The Catholic traditions about Peter's presence in Rome are irreconcilable contradictions. Peter was married; the popes forbid clerical marriage. Peter had no silver or gold; the popes have their millions. In the council at Jerusalem Peter assumed no special authority, much less infallibility, while James presided and his judgment prevailed; the popes claim infallibility. Peter was publicly rebuked for his inconsistency by Paul, a younger Apostle, at Antioch; the popes are the lords of Catholicism. Peter in his epistles shows the deepest humility, and “prophetically warns against filthy avarice and lordly ambition, the besetting sins of the papacy.” Peter emphatically teaches “the general priesthood and royalty of believers, obedience to God rather than man, condemnation of mental reservation in Ananias and Sapphira, and of simony in Simon Magus, opposition to the yoke of legal bondage, salvation in no other name but that of Jesus Christ.”

“From its very birth the Christian church is called to defend itself against the attacks of its adversaries, and to contend for the claims of truth. The opposition to Christianity assumes from the outset various forms. The first to be encountered is that of scoffing unbelief. This foe has not yet sharpened and polished the weapons with which in subsequent times it will wound by the hands of a Celsus and a Lucian. But was not the laugh of the scorner heard on the very day when the Holy Spirit descended upon the church? Did not his voice cry, ‘These men are full of new wine?’” And from the scorner's point of view it was a fair conclusion. The supernatural is absurd to those, who discern nothing beyond the circle of the visible; and herein is its peculiar glory. The laugh of unbelief has never ceased in all these eighteen centuries to ring through the world. But ridicule alone was not enough. Calumny and false, insinuations must be enlisted in the same cause. The miracles of the primitive church were incontestable; they could not be brought in question, but they might, like those of Jesus Christ, be ascribed

to witchcraft and to the powers of darkness. The arts of magic were much believed in at this epoch, as in all periods of religious crisis. There was, therefore, profound subtilty in likening the Apostles to common magicians. Such an idea is evidently present in the question of the Sanhedrim to Peter and John, after the healing of the impotent man: 'By what power or by what name have ye done this?' (Acts 4:7). The enemies of the Apostles did not admit that they were the organs of Divine power. The influence, then, by which they made so much stir, must be diabolical or magical. Side by side with this open unbelief, the primitive church had to encounter the ignorance and prejudices of a people of formalists and materialists. They had, with the Divine blessing, to establish the claims of Jesus Christ; that is, of a humble and crucified Messiah before a nation which was ready to believe only in a glorious king—a new Maccabeus.

"To meet all objections, the church had ready a simple and popular method of defense. We at once admit that they appealed without hesitation to the testimony of reason for all the facts coming within its competence. Thus in reply to the absurd charge of drunkenness brought against the disciples, Peter urges that it is but the third hour of the day—the hour, that is, of morning prayer, before which the Jews never presumed to eat or drink (Acts 2:15). But the advocates of Christianity do not pause long on such vindications. They have a line of argument peculiarly their own.

"It is to be observed that the miracles are rather the occasion than the cause, of them defense which accompanies them. Peter does not say, 'Believe because of this amazing gift of tongues, or these miraculous cures.' He says, on the contrary, 'Believe, in the reality, the divinity, of the miracles on the scriptural and moral grounds, which show their necessity and establish their lawfulness.' These miracles certainly contributed to the rapid spread of the new faith by the impression they produced upon the people; but so little are they the pivot on which the defense of the Apostles turns, that they are, not the proof, but rather the object of the proof. We except one miracle, which is the essential miracle of Christianity. The resurrection of Christ is not merely a marvel; it is also a great religious fact. It is the glorious seal of redemption. Therefore it occupies the first place in the preaching of the Apostles. Peter constantly appeals to it, both before the

people and before the Sanhedrim (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30). The Apostles regarded themselves, pre-eminently, as the witnesses of the resurrection. Nothing in fact gave so solid a foundation to the new religion as this splendid triumph of Jesus Christ over death. It was the proof of His Divine mission and of that of the church, and the seal affixed by the hand of God to teaching in His name. 'Between us and you,' the Apostles seem to say, 'God has judged; by raising up Jesus, He has sovereignly declared that He was indeed Christ the Lord.' Next to the proof drawn from the resurrection of the Lord, that which is most prominent in the discourses of Peter is the evidence from Scripture. He sets himself to show the harmony of the facts, in process of accomplishment, with Jewish prophecy. The first defender of the church could take no other ground. An appeal addressed to Jews by Christians of Jewish extraction must be made to a tribunal recognized by all, and this was no other than Holy Scripture. If the Apostles at Jerusalem succeeded in showing that the facts of which they were the witnesses had been foretold in the Scriptures, every upright Jew must be enlisted on their side. The Christian defense did not rise, in this its first stage, to the height to which it was carried by St. John and St. Paul. In form and spirit it was limited and characterized by the views so prominently set forth in the first Gospel."—*Pressense*.

In his discourses Peter quotes freely from the Old Testament Scriptures, pointing to the scenes occurring then and there in his day; and while he charges home upon the people their guilt in murdering the blessed Savior, he fails not to urge repentance for that great crime, with a promise of forgiveness on the part of the offended Majesty of Heaven. The transition from the Old Covenant to the New was gradual and admirably accomplished. While it is true that the Apostles declared the truth of Christ in all its essentials, it is equally true that they enveloped that truth in Jewish forms. They had their own organization and held their meeting separately from the synagogue or the temple, yet they attended the stated worship of the temple during the supernatural period, circumcised their children, and observed many formalities appertaining to Judaism. The bonds between the Old and New dispensation were not suddenly snapped asunder, but suffered to become weaker and weaker, until they entirely disappeared; and upon

the destruction of the temple the new church found herself standing alone, unconnected with any of the forms of the Levitical worship.

SECOND PERIOD OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE—PAUL.

“Every great truth which is to win a triumphal way must become incarnate in some one man, and derive, from a living, fervent heart, that passion and power which constrain and subdue. So long as it remains in the cold region of mere ideas, it exercises no mighty influence over mankind. The truths of religion are not exceptions to this law. God, therefore, prepared a man who was to represent in the primitive church the great cause of the emancipation of Christianity, and whose mission it was to free it completely from the bonds of the synagogue. This man was St. Paul, and never had noble truth a nobler organ. He brought to its service an heroic heart, in which fervent love was joined to indomitable courage, and a mind equally able to rise to the loftiest heights of speculation and to penetrate into the deepest recesses of the human soul. All these great qualities were enhanced by absolute devotedness to Jesus Christ, and a self-abnegation such as, apart from the sacrifice of the Redeemer, has had no parallel upon earth. His life was one perpetual offering up of himself. His sufferings have contributed, no less than his indefatigable activity, to the triumph of his principles. Standing ever in the breach for their defense—subject to most painful contradictions, not only from the Jews but from his brethren—execrated by his own nation—maligned by a fanatic and intolerant section of the church, and threatened with death by those Gentiles whose claims he so boldly advocated—he suffered as scarcely any other has suffered in the service of truth; but he left behind a testimony most weighty and powerful, every word sealed with the seal of the martyr.” With the exception of Peter in the case of Cornelius, Paul was the first Apostle to the Gentiles, and being more especially called to that work, he devoted his noble life to it, and visited many countries, and that repeatedly—preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and thus inaugurating, as it were, the universal triumph of Christianity.

“It was needful that the door of the church should be opened to the thousands of proselytes from Corinth, Athens, Ephesus and Rome, who came

up to it and knocked. But the great Apostle of the Gentiles was not satisfied with this irresistible argument from facts; he added to it reasoning equally able and eloquent, and, armed with dialectics perfectly adapted to the habits of mind of his opponents, he victoriously established his principles.

“The epistles in which these reasonings have in part come down to us, bear on every page the impress of his heart and mind; they show us the whole man, and the very style depicts in vivid characters his moral physiognomy. His polemics are especially admirable, because with him a negative always leads to a weightier affirmation; he never destroys without replacing, and, like his Master, only abolishes by fulfilling. He is not only an incomparable dialectician in the subversion of error, but he is able also to discern all the consequences of a truth, and to grasp its marrow and inner substance. This great controversialist is, therefore, at the same time, the first representative of that true Christian mysticism which St. John was so fully to develop. St. Paul triumphed over Judaism only by putting in its place Christianity in all its breadth and beauty. What holiness, strength, nobleness of character he displayed in the course of his ministry, his history shows. St. Paul is the type of the reformer in the church; in every fresh struggle for the church’s freedom, his will be the track in which courageous Christians will follow. No true reformation can be wrought in any spirit other than that of Paul—a spirit equally removed from the timidity which preserves that which should be destroyed, and the rashness which destroys that which should be preserved.

“When God is forming a powerful instrument for the accomplishment of His designs, the process of preparation is long and gradual. Every circumstance was brought to bear on the education of the chosen witness, and every experience, even of wrong and error is made to enhance the power and completeness of the testimony rendered. When a man is called to effect some great religious reformation, it is important that he should himself have an experimental acquaintance with the order of things which he is to reverse or transform. The education of Saul the Pharisee was to him what the convent of Erfurt was to Luther. It was well that he who was to break the yoke of Jewish legalism should himself have first suffered under its bondage. Thus while the question of the emancipation of Christianity had

been stated by men belonging, like Stephen, to the most liberal section of Judaism, the Hellenist Jews, it was to receive its final solution from a man who had himself felt the full weight of the yoke.

“Saul belonged to a Jewish family rigidly attached to the sect of the Pharisees. His name, which signifies ‘The desired one,’ has led some commentators to suppose that he being born like Samuel, after hope long delayed, was, like him, specially consecrated by his parents to the service of God, and therefore sent from his early childhood to Jerusalem to study the sacred writings in the most famous school of the age. However this may be, it is evident that his mind had a natural bent toward such studies. He may have received some intellectual development in his own city. Strabo tells us that literary and philosophical studies had been carried so far at Tarsus that the schools of Cilicia eclipsed those of Athens and of Alexandria. It appears, however, from the evidence of Philostratus, that a light and rhetorical school of learning predominated at Tarsus; more attention was paid to brilliance of expression than to depth of philosophical thought. The life of the East there reveled in boundless luxury, and the corruption of manners reached its utmost length. The young Jew, endowed with a high-toned morality, may well have conceived a deep disgust for this Pagan civilization; and these first impressions may have tended to develop in him an excessive attachment to the religion of his fathers.

“We may, probably, attribute to his abode at Tarsus the literary culture displayed in his writings. He familiarly quotes the Greek poets, and poets of the second order, such as Cleanthes or Aratus (Acts 17:28), Menander (1 Cor. 15:33) and Epimenides (Titus 1:12). According to the custom of the rabbis of the time, he had learned a manual trade, and, as the Cilician fabrics of goats’ hair were famous for their strength, he had chosen the calling of a tent-maker.ii[2]

“Jerusalem was the place of his religious education. He was placed in the school of Gamaliel, the most celebrated rabbi of his age (Acts 22:3). We know how fully the scholastic spirit was developed among the Jews at this period. To the companies of the prophets had succeeded the schools of the rabbis; the living productions of the Divine Spirit had been replaced by

commentaries of minutest detail, and the sacred text seemed in danger of being completely overgrown by rabbinical glosses, as by a parasitic vegetation. The Talmudic traditions fill twelve large folios and 2,947 leaves.

“Whilst an ingenious and learned school, formed at Alexandria, had contrived, by a system of allegorical interpretation, to infuse Platonism into the Old Testament, the school at Jerusalem had been growing increasingly rigid, and interdicted any such daring exegesis. It clung with fanatic attachment to the letter of the Scriptures; but, failing to comprehend the spirit, it sank into all the puerilities of a narrow literalism. Its interpretations lacked both breadth and depth; it surrendered itself to the subtleties of purely verbal dialectics. Cleverly to combine texts—to suspend on a single word the thin threads of an ingenious argument—such was the sole concern of the rabbis. Gamaliel appears to have been the most skilled of all the doctors of the law. He is still venerated in Jewish tradition under the title of ‘Gamaliel the Aged.’ The ‘Mishna’ quotes him as an authority. We are inclined to believe that he may have been less in bondage than the other doctors of his day to narrow literalism, and that he may have maintained a spirit more upright and elevated. His benevolent intervention on behalf of the church at Jerusalem distinguishes him honorably from those implacable Jews who were ready to defend their prejudices by bloody persecutions. The fact of his having had a disciple like Saul of Tarsus, who must have been through his whole life characterized by a grave moral earnestness, leads us to suppose a true superiority in the teaching of Gamaliel. He had not got beyond the standpoint of legalism, but this he at least presented in its unimpaired and unabated majesty. He was not a man to delude the conscience with subterfuges, and his disciples were therefore disposed to austerity of life, and were distinguished by a scrupulous fidelity to the religion of their fathers.

“Saul of Tarsus embraced the teachings of his illustrious master with characteristic earnestness and ardor, and, it must be added, infused into it all the passionate vehemence belonging to his nature. At the feet of Gamaliel he became practiced in those skillful dialectics which were the pride of the rabbinical schools, and he thus received from Judaism itself the formidable weapon with which he was afterward to deal it such mortal

blows. Here he gained a profound knowledge of the Old Testament. Gifted with a strong and keen intellect, he in a few years acquired all the learning of his master. He thus amassed, without knowing it, precious materials for his future polemics; but his moral and religious development in this phase of his life is of more important, to us than his intellectual acquirements. With all his knowledge he might have become, at the most, the first of Jewish doctors, surpassing even Gamaliel, and shedding some glory on the decadence of his people; but he could never have derived from that vast learning the spirit of the reformer, which was to make him immortal in the church. It is in the depths of his inner life that we must seek the distinctive character of his early religion; he has himself accurately described it when he says, that being 'taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers,' he 'was zealous toward God'" (Acts 22:3).

Saul was no hypocrite, and, therefore, the burning words of rebuke spoken to his sect in general by our Lord did not apply to him. He was conscientious and honest in all his devotional exercises, and verily thought that salvation was attainable by the strict observance of the Judaistic rites and ceremonies. He says himself that he was "as touching the law blameless" (Phil. 3:6). And he again says: "I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals (in years) in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14). Yet this is the same man who, by the grace of God, was made willing to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord. For, says he, "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death" (Rom. 7:9, 10). After his baptism he conferred not with flesh and blood, but went forth immediately preaching Jesus to the heathen (Gal. 1:16). Yea, saith he, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). The spirit that was mighty in Peter to the circumcision, was powerful in Paul to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:8). He was the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and he magnified his office. He could not adduce any external connection with the Savior in the days of his flesh, as could the other Apostles; he had not seen the historic Christ, so to speak, but he had seen the ascended and glorified Christ. "This sight of Him, however, was not a mere vision; it was

miraculous and positive, and it confers on St. Paul an authority in no way inferior to that of the twelve Apostles. But it is equally true that, in this respect, he more nearly represents the numerous generations of Christians who have had no outward relations with the incarnate Savior. Again he stands apart from that symbolic number of the twelve, which points to the ancient tribes of Israel. He is the Apostle of the church as it bursts the confines of Judaism; the Apostle of mankind rather than of a nation.ⁱⁱⁱ[3] Lastly, he did not receive his office by transmission: Ananias, who laid his hands on him, was a simple believer. His Apostolate was conferred on him by a direct revelation. It stands in no relation to any positive institution, but it carries its own glorious witness in its results." The revelation "which he received in the temple at Jerusalem bore directly on his mission to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21); and thus presupposed an enlargement of his religious views."—*Pressense*.

His journeys were extensive and ranged in different and distant portions of the Roman Empire. He was usually accompanied by one or more brethren in these travels, and the labors, exposures and persecutions that they experienced were wonderful indeed. Paul made four principal journeys in the discharge of his Apostolic and ministerial duties among the Gentiles.

"First Journey.—From Antioch in Syria to Seleucia; by sea to Salamis in Cyprus; by land to Paphos; by sea to Perga; to Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe; back from Derbe to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Perga, Attalia; by sea to Seleucia and Antioch in Syria (Acts 13, 14).

"Second Journey.—From Antioch in Syria by land to Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia; through Phrygia, Galatia and Mysia, to Troas; by sea to Neapolis; to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea; by sea to Athens; by land to Corinth; by sea to Ephesus; by sea to Caesarea; by land to Jerusalem; back to Antioch in Syria (Acts 15:40-18:22).

"Third Journey.—From Antioch in Syria, through Cilicia and Cappadocia to Galatia and Phrygia; through the province of Asia to Ephesus; from Ephesus to Macedonia (probably by sea); to Corinth (probably by land); back to Macedonia (probably by land); by sea to Troas; by land to Assos; by sea

along the coast of Asia to Miletus, Rhodes, Patara; by sea to Tyre; by land to Caesarea and Jerusalem (Acts 18:22-21:15).

“Fourth Journey.—From Caesarea by sea to Sidon and Myra (in Lycia); by sea round the south side of Crete, across the sea of Adria to Melita; by sea to Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli; by land to Rome.”—*E. Stock*.

Have the ministerial labors of any man ever surpassed those of the Apostle Paul? Because he was not chosen an Apostle by the other Apostles, and did not derive his authority as such from them or any institution in Judea, many doubted his Apostleship and caused divers accusations to be preferred against him; but it was absolutely certain that the signs of an Apostle attended his labors and ministry, and there were no reasonable grounds for disputing the same.

The first Apostles could point to the work in Jerusalem and in Samaria, but he could point to that which was done at Antioch, Paphos, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Philippi, Corinth, and to all the churches founded by him in various parts of the world. The council held by the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem sanctioned the authority of Paul's Apostolate, his doctrine preached unto the Gentiles, and their release from the burdens of the Jewish ritual. Of this council it may be said that it was purely democratic. It was no autocratic college of Apostles, assembling by themselves and sending forth their infallible decrees as their *pretended successors* presume to do, but it was an assembly in which all present had a voice—Peter no more than any other, and the one who spoke last and to whom all gave heed was not an Apostle, for he was James the Lord's brother. James, the brother of John, had been slain by Herod before this time.^{iv}[4] This council, after all, appeared to be only a compromise in the interest of the peace of the church at that time. It was not a final settlement as to the relation of the two covenants. Jewish Christians were required or allowed to observe the law for a season, and Gentile Christians, in the course of time, ate of meats offered to idols and things strangled. Not the slightest authority was given by this council, either in precept or example, to those held under the authority of Constantine the Great, and all those held subsequently under the influence of Romish authority. The decrees of the council in Jerusalem were passed in

a free conference of Christians in the behalf of Christian freedom. Those of Rome were held in behalf of worldly interests, human passions, and pride, tyranny and oppression.

After the council of Jerusalem the Apostles and brethren separate, never to meet again in council upon the shores of time. Paul goes off to his labors among the Gentiles, and some in one direction and some in another. If we inquire into the peculiar character of the work, labors and preaching of the Apostles to the Gentiles, we shall find them to differ somewhat from those of the foregoing period.

"The Divine Spirit works not less mightily in Paul than in Peter, but the apostolic office is more distinctly observable. The thousands converted on the day of Pentecost and in Solomon's porch were acted upon together by a sudden and irresistible influence, produced by the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Conversions in masses like these do not occur in this second period of the church. The proselytes are many, but they are made personally, one by one. When we come to examine Paul's teaching, we shall see how wise he was in the adaptation of his discourse to the circumstances of his hearers, and how admirably he sought and found the point of contact between those he addressed and the gospel he preached. His ministry is accompanied with miracles, but he has less frequent recourse than earlier preachers to this method of persuasion. In many places he founded churches without the aid of external miracles. In these missions of the Apostle to the Gentiles, therefore, the Divine Spirit works more directly upon the conscience and less by external manifestations. Man cannot derive any glory to himself from this fact; for though God's method of intervention assumes a different form, it is none the less to this sovereign intervention of grace that the most beautiful fruits of the Apostle's labor are to be ascribed."—*Pressense*.

THIRD PERIOD OF APOSTOLIC AGE—JOHN THE APOSTLE AND PROPHET.

"As in the first period of the Apostolic age, the principal part is enacted by St. Peter, and in the second by St. Paul, so in the third period the

paramount influence is that of St. John. His natural disposition and peculiar gifts account for this delay in the exercise of his Apostleship. With a soul meditative and mystical, he had neither the impetuous zeal of Peter nor the indefatigable activity of Paul. On him Christianity had wrought most intensively; he had penetrated into the deepest meaning of the teaching of Christ, or rather he had read the very heart of the Master. It was his vocation to preserve the most precious jewels in the treasury of Christ's revelations, and to bring to light the most sacred and sublime mysteries of the gospel. In order to fulfill this mission, he must needs wait until the church was ready for such exalted teaching. The first storms of division must subside. Just as the prophet heard the still small voice which was the voice of God, only after the sound of the tempest and the roar of the thunder; so the Apostle of supreme love could not speak till a calm had succeeded to the storm stirred up by the polemics of St. Paul. His work was not more important nor attested with a diviner seal than that of the great controversialist of the apostolic age; the two are closely connected, and the latter is the natural sequence to the earlier. The revelation of love could not be complete till Judaeo-Christianity had finally succumbed, and had carried with it in its fall all the barriers within which it had sought to limit the grace of God. So true is this that we find St. Paul himself sounding the first notes of the hymn of love, and thus inaugurating the work of St. John. The former sowed in tears, the latter reaped in joy. The one resisted to blood; the other received for the church the prize of the well-fought fight. This diversity in the missions of the two Apostles is manifested in the diversity of the methods employed by them in order to establish the truth of which they are the organs. While St. Paul wields the weapons of warfare in big irresistible and impassioned dialectics, St. John is satisfied with expounding doctrine. He does not dispute; he affirms. It is clear that he has been led into the possession of the truth by a path widely divergent from that of St. Paul—by the path of intuition, of direct vision. His language has the calmness of contemplation. He speaks in short sentences, strikingly simple in form; but that simplicity, like a quiet lake, holds in its depths the reflection of the highest Heaven. 'He has filled the whole earth with his voice,' says John Chrysostom, 'not by its mighty reverberations, but by the Divine grace which dwelt upon his lips. That which is most admirable is, that this great voice is neither harsh nor violent, but soft and melting as harmonious music.'

“It is very far from the truth, however, to regard St. John as the type of feminine gentleness, as he is represented in legend and in painting, which is only another form of legend. The ancient church had a far worthier conception of him when it gave to St. John the Evangelist the symbol of the eagle soaring to the sun, as though to signify that the mightiest and most royal impulse—that which carries farthest and highest—is love. The soul of the Apostle of Ephesus is as vigorous as that of Paul. He was called the Son of Thunder before grace had subdued his natural vehemence; and something of this early ardor always remained with him. In proportion to his love of truth was his hatred of error and heresy. Such love is a consuming fire, and, when it sees its object despised or wronged, it is as ardent in its indignation as in its adoration. The truth which St. John loved and served was no mere abstract doctrine; it was to him incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. He was ever the beloved disciple of the Master, the disciple admitted to His most tender and ultimate friendship; and the church has ever pictured him in the attitude in which he is represented in the Gospels at the Last Supper, leaning on the bosom of the Lord. It was by the power of love so strong and deep that he was enabled to fulfill his mission of conciliation, and to harmonize all the apparent contradictions of the apostolic age in the rich synthesis of his doctrine. Let us now inquire how he was prepared for this glorious vocation.

“John was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman of the Lake of Gennesaret, who dwelt at Bethsaida (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19; Matthew 10:2). It is not proved that he was actually poor, as Chrysostom maintained, for his father had ‘hired servants’ (Mark 1:20); his mother was among the women who ministered to Jesus of their substance (Luke 8:3); and John himself had a house of his own (John 19:27). Be this as it may, however, he was of obscure and humble origin. His mother was among the earliest followers of the Savior. John, as well as Peter, was a disciple of the Forerunner; the preaching of John the Baptist answered to the needs of his heart, which was eagerly waiting for the hope of Israel.

“Peter and John did not at once leave all to be Christ’s disciples (John 1:35-42). The Master gave time for their first impressions to deepen before

He called them to forsake family and fishing-nets and to come after Him (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:19, 20; Luke 5:1-11). John appears to have been very young at this time; his grave and thoughtful nature peculiarly fitted him to receive the education which Jesus Christ imparted to His disciples, and which consisted in impressing on them the features of His own likeness.

“John, Peter and James were, as we know, admitted to special intimacy with the Savior. There is no reason to suppose that John had, at first, a much clearer comprehension than the other disciples of the doctrine of Christ. He shared their carnal conceptions of the earthly kingdom of the Messiah (Matthew 15:20-28), and exhibited sometimes the narrow spirit of the sectary (Luke 9:49, 50). His invocation of wrath upon the Samaritans displays an alloy of human passion, blended with his affection for the Savior (Luke 9:54). But this affection was so real and true that it was sure to lead to all the developments of the religious life. He proved his love in a way not to be mistaken at the time of Christ’s passion. He followed Him into the court of the high priest, and even to the foot of the cross (John 19:26). He is the only one of the Apostles who witnessed the last sufferings of Christ; and probably for this reason he was chosen to render the most emphatic testimony to His eternal glory in the bosom of the Father.

“We can well imagine what an ineffaceable image of unparalleled love and sorrow would be left on the soul of John by this scene. Who can tell with what feelings he caught those last words of the God-Man spoken almost in His parting agony, which committed to him the mother of his Lord as a sacred legacy? (John 19:27). He was also one of the first to see the risen Christ (John 20:8). All these memories, and many more connected with them, were to be successively illuminated by the Holy Spirit till they should form in the mind of John a perfect whole. But he was not himself capable, immediately after the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, of receiving, in all its fullness, this Divine revelation.

“During the earlier period of the apostolic age we see John by Peter’s side, lending him efficient help, but leaving to him the initiative in speech and action (Acts 3:1; 8:14, 25). He enjoyed much consideration, but did not exert a preponderating influence; nothing is recorded of his share in the

council at Jerusalem, though he appears to have been present (Gal. ii. 9). At this time he still adhered to the Mosaic law (for Jewish converts), as did Peter and James—a course of conduct confirmed by the decisions of the council at Jerusalem. There are no means of ascertaining in what year he left that city; but he was no longer there in the year 60, when Paul made his last visit (Acts 21:17,18). Nicephorus asserts that he remained in Jerusalem until the death of Mary; but this gives us no exact information, inasmuch as the date of that event is entirely unknown. There is one whole period of the life of the Apostle of which we possess no details (that are to be implicitly relied on). But if we have no precise records of his life during these years, his writings give evidence that the time was not lost in reference to his own development. He learned to contemplate one aspect of the person and doctrine of his Master, which had not presented itself to any of the other Apostles with equal distinctness; this was the profound mysterious fact of His eternal Divinity, His pre-existence and incarnation.

“We are free to suppose that the period of his life about which we have no information was devoted (under the directing grace of God) to climbing that spiritual Tabor, on the summit of which the only and eternal Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, was to appear to him in all the glory of His Divinity. The Apostle, like Mary, pondered in his heart all that he knew of his Master; in the silence of devotion he listened to His living voice, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit discerned more and more of the mystery of His being. Augustine says, ‘While the three other evangelists remained below with the man Jesus, and spoke little of His Divinity, John, as though impatient of treading the earth, rose from the very first words of His gospel, not only above the bounds of earth, air and sky, but above the angels and celestial powers, into the very presence of Him by whom all things were made. Not in vain do the Gospels tell us that he leaned on the bosom of the Savior at the Passover Feast. He drank in secret at that Divine spring: *De illo pectore in secreto bibebat.*’

“All the life of St. John, during the period when scarcely a trace of him is to be found in the apostolic church, is summed up in these words: ‘The time was to come when the Apostle would emerge from his obscurity and would in his turn exert a wide and deep influence over the churches of the first

century. According to the testimony of Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus, St. John, after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul, took up his residence at Ephesus. No city could have been better chosen as a center from which to watch over the churches, and follow closely the progress of heresy. At Ephesus the Apostle was in the center of Paul's mission-field in Asia Minor, and not far from Greece. Christianity had achieved splendid conquests in the flourishing cities of that country; but it had also encountered dangerous enemies. 'It was there that false Gnosticism,^v[5] first of all, showed itself, and perpetually sought new adherents. The Apostle Paul had spoken before his death of its rapid progress (1 Tim. 6:20, 21). In his second epistle to Timothy (1:15-18) he seems to point out Ephesus as the city most threatened with heresy, where consequently the presence of an Apostle would be especially needed. St. John made this city his settled abode, without, however, devoting himself exclusively to the important church there founded. Ephesus was the center of his apostolic activity, but that activity extended over a wide area. Clement of Alexandria tells us how the Apostle visited the churches, presiding at the election of bishops (or pastors) and restoring order where it had been disturbed,' etc.

"It is not possible to determine accurately at what date St. John suffered for the gospel. The 'Fathers' differ as to the time of his banishment to Patmos. We are inclined to place it shortly after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul. His exile may have been protracted during some years. The Revelation appears to us to have been written long before the gospel. It carries us back into a period very little removed from the fearful persecution under Nero, which was the great typhal war of Anti-christ against Christ. The mode of thought, the form of language, the prominent ideas, the historical allusions, all suggest this date; and, in the absence of any decisive external evidence, we are free to give full weight to the internal.

"With reference to the gospel and epistles, tradition is agreed in the date affixed to them. These writings are the slowly ripened fruit of all the labors of the apostolic age; but at the same time, like every other good gift, they come down from Heaven, and bear the undeniable seal of inspiration. They clearly belong to a period when heresy was rife, and especially those forms of heresy which, denying the corporeal reality of the Savior's sufferings,

contained the first germ of Docetism.vi[6] John did not indeed design his gospel to be a systematic refutation of the errors of Cerinthus or of any other heretic. He was satisfied with setting forth true Christian Gnosticismvii[7] in opposition to false Oriental or Judaizing Gnosticism; and his Gospel is beautifully characterized by Clement of Alexandria as pre-eminently the gospel of the Spirit. We should do injustice to the fourth Gospel were we to regard it as a mere polemical writing, or as only the complement of the synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke). The latter supposition cannot be reconciled with the admirable unity of composition to be observed in the Gospel of John. It is full of a creative inspiration. The style is altogether unlike that of a mere commentator who is completing by a gloss a text already given. John epitomises in his Gospel the substance of his preaching at Ephesus and in the other churches of Asia Minor. According to Jerome, he had no intention at first of preserving his discourses in writing, but agreed to do so at the express request of the churches.

“We have no detailed information of the last years of the Apostle. Two incidents have come down to us which agree perfectly with what we know of him. Irenaeus relates that, going one day into the public baths at Ephesus, and hearing that Cerinthus was also there, he immediately went out, exclaiming that he feared the house might fall, because of the presence of so great an enemy of the truth. Jerome tells us how the aged Apostle, no longer able to preach at any length, would be carried into the assemblies of the Christians to speak the simple words, ‘Little children, love one another.’ To his brethren and disciples who asked him why he thus repeated himself, he replied, ‘It is the Lord’s commandment, and when it is fulfilled, nothing is wanting.’ This hatred of error and this holy love give us the perfect portraiture of John. It does not appear that he died a violent death. He fell asleep in Christ at a very advanced age, at the commencement of the reign of Trajan (about A.D. 98 or 99).

“Augustine tells us that in his time there was a very current belief that the Apostle was not dead, but was only sleeping in his grave. Evidently, this impression arose from a wrong interpretation of the words of Christ spoken to Peter with reference to John: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?’ (John 21:22). Perhaps also the Christians may have found it

hard to believe that the Apostle, whose influence was still so great, had really passed from the world. They were not altogether wrong. As Lucke has said, 'He lives, and will ever live, by his writings, and the future belongs to him even more than the past.'"—*Pressense*.

"Paul is, in his statement of doctrine as in his life, the man of contrasts and antitheses. He aims to show how deep is the gulf between human nature and God, that he may the more exalt the grace which has bridged the chasm; and he traces vigorously the line of demarcation between the Old Covenant and the New. It is not so with John. Having attained gradually, and without any sudden shock, the highest elevation of Christian truth, he starts from the summit and gently comes down again. He does not even pause to establish the superiority of the gospel over the law. With him that is a settled point, an admitted principle, from which he deduces the consequences. John does not commence, like Paul, with man and his misery, but with God and His perfections. His doctrine, by this character of sustained elevation, and by the part assigned in it to love and to the direct intuition of Divine things, bears the impress of mysticism, but of a mysticism which is essentially moral, in which the great laws of conscience are always maintained, and which is as far removed from Oriental pantheism as from Pharisaic legalism.

"At the summit of his doctrine St. John places the idea of God. God is the Absolute Being, the great I Am, whom no eye hath seen or can see. He is a Spirit (John 1:18; 4:24). All perfection dwells in Him; He is at once light, life and love. As He is Absolute Being, so He is Absolute, Eternal Life, the inexhaustible source, the sole principle of every being (1 John 5:20). But this life is at the same time light (1 John 1:5). Light represents perfect knowledge and spotless purity (1 John 3:20). God knows all things; God is holy. But John does not pause at this abstract conception of moral good. He gives us a concrete notion of it when he tells us that God is love (1 John 4:16). This He is as essentially as He is life and light. Love is not only a manifestation of His being; it is His very essence. Never before had this sublime thought been expressed with such clearness; it had been discerned only by glimpses. Under the Old Covenant the love of God was subordinate to His justice. Under the New, this limited view had for a long time prevailed.

St. Paul insisted with much force upon the love of God, but he considered it rather in its historical manifestation for the salvation of men than in its eternal principle. It is on this eternal principle that St. John dwells. He sees in the cross not only reconciliation between man and God, but also the revelation of the true name of God, of His very being. He is love; the God who is love is the true God (1 John 5:20). Love is so assuredly the absolute truth, that he who loveth is 'of the truth.' He is a partaker of the nature of God (1 John 4:7). Thus truth or light is inseparable from love; it is not simple knowledge or mere theory. St. John does not recognize the ray of light which has no flame. Truth is, as it were, full of life; it is life as it is love. To be of the truth is to be born of God, to possess Him, to be what He is: it is, therefore, to have love in one's self. The object of knowledge being the God who is love, it is natural that true knowledge should be inseparable from love. To the Apostle, love is not one of the attributes of God (simply); it is God Himself. The metaphysical attributes are the attributes of the Divine love. God is holy, infinite, almighty love, knowing everything, everywhere present. John delights, therefore, to give Him the name of Father—that wondrous name which commands at once tenderness and reverence (John 1:14, 18; 1 John 3:1)."

This eternal and invisible Being is revealed to the world by the doctrine of the Word, by whom the worlds were made, and who came into this world to reveal the Father to His people and to lay down His life for them (John 10:15). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:1, 2, 14, 18). The Father and the Son are one (John 10:30). The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is recognized by John also as God. He is the author of the new birth (John 3:8). He takes up His abode in the church and abides with her forever. He brings all things to her remembrance, whatsoever the Savior hath said to her. He testifies of Christ. He glorifies Him, and takes the things of Jesus and shows them to His saints

(John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15). He also convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8).

“John recognizes the intrusion of a principle of discord into the world. The power of sin has been let loose. He does not enter into any argument on the origin of evil. He affirms the fact, and is content without proving it. A kingdom of darkness has set itself in opposition to the kingdom of light, of which God is the Sun. The devil has had a great influence upon man, seducing him into evil. He is not, indeed, to be regarded as Ahriman the eternal, confronted with the eternal Ormazd; no, the principle of light was before the principle of evil. Satan himself was born (or created) in the light, for it is said, ‘He abode not in the truth’ (John 8:44). It is evident that John supposes a fall in his case, no less than in ours, and that, consequently, in the origin of things, all was light and purity, as became a creation called into being by the Word. The cause of evil is entirely moral. ‘Sin,’ says the Apostle, ‘is the transgression of the law’ (1 John 3:4). There is a law for the creature. It is this law which John calls the old and new commandment, the commandment of love based upon the very being of God (1 John 2:5-10). The blessed destiny of the moral creature is to become like his Creator, conformed to His nature. The creature, soon after being made, voluntarily took part against God; that is to say, he rejected life, love and light. Thus the world became dark from the day in which it turned from God. It is now plunged in moral night; all the higher elements are stifled in man; the outward and sensible life predominates; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, enshroud it in threefold darkness (1 John 2:16, 17). It is given over to a lie, because it has set itself against good and love—that is, against God and the Word. Its prince is he who was a liar and murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), and who, having fallen himself, has dragged after him in his descent all those who have freely, and under no external constraint, followed his suggestions.”

“The Word, which was the organ of creative love, is also the organ of the compassionate love of the Father. The whole work of salvation rests upon Him. This work is twofold. It is both internal and external; for it is to effect the reconciliation between God and man. It is not enough that God should draw near to man by a series of revelations; it is also necessary that man

should be inclined toward God. In truth, that he may come to the fountain of living waters, man must be athirst (John 17:37). He must be born from above in order to receive the Redeemer, who comes down from Heaven. Only 'he who is of God heareth the words of God' (John 8:23-49). The voice of the good Shepherd is known only by His sheep (John 10:27). In other words, the soul must have recovered the sense of Divine things, and there must be an affinity between it and the truth, in order that it may come to the light.

"The incarnation is the only reparation of the fall. We know with what emphasis St. John insists upon the reality of the incarnation in opposition to the heresies of his time, which, by a spurious spiritualism, regarded the body of the Savior as a sort of delusive semblance. 'Every spirit,' he says, 'that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God' (1 John 4:2, 3). Writing his Gospel and epistles in presence of those dualistic tendencies, which identified evil with the corporeal element, he felt himself called upon to magnify this glorious aspect of His incarnation. He does not dwell on the humiliation of Christ as St. Paul does, but there is no contradiction on this point between the Apostles. If the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father is apparent to John through the veil of mortal flesh, that glory is, nevertheless, revealed in shrouded splendor. He shows us Jesus Christ as subject to the weaknesses and suffering conditions of human life; He is weary, He groans, He weeps, He dies. His death is undoubtedly a lifting up, in a spiritual point of view (John iii. 14); and it was important to prove this in contradiction to Cerinthus, who regarded His death as only illusory. St. John gives emphasis to the truth, that it is both glorious and real: 'This is He that came by blood.' But death is still death—that is, the depth of humiliation. He is subject to a certain abasement: but He is subject to it voluntarily; it is an act of His Divine freedom. The Son has power to lay down His life, and has power to take it again (John 10:18); thus, in our aspect, He is glorious in His humiliation. Yet more, to the Apostle of love the highest glory is that which comes from love. For him, as for Pascal, this is the supreme order of greatness. Thus regarded, what glory can be compared with the glory of Him who gave His life for His brethren on the accursed tree? "After so much suffering and strife, endured from the beginning of the world, Divine love will at length win a glorious victory on the very scene of

its conflicts. Even the brilliant colors of the Apocalypse fail to depict this triumph, for St. John exclaims in his first epistle: 'It doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' (1 John 3:2). To be made like God—is not this the highest possibility of the development of the creature? Is it not the realization of the sublime purpose of the redeeming Word? Is it not the fulfillment of the prayer of Christ, 'That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us?' (John 17:21). Having ascended to these heavenly heights, the theology of John is complete; no mysticism can soar above it, however bold its flight. The perfect union of the creature with the Creator through the Word is the ultimate expression of the doctrine of love; beyond it there is nothing. This is, therefore, the closing utterance of the apostolic age; the conclusion and not the refutation of all that has gone before; the conciliation of all contradictions in the church; in a word, the last revelation from Heaven, absolute truth, God Himself. Freed from all error, comprehended in all its depth, it will ever be the grandest result wrought out by the historian of theology, who, bending over the book in which it was inscribed by the aged saint of Ephesus, seeks to decipher it from age to age."—*Pressense*.

THE REVELATION.

Says *Pressense*: "So far from being in opposition to the other writings of St. John, this book comprehends all the essential points of his theology, but in the condition of germ not yet fully developed. There is no stronger evidence of this agreement than the place given in the Revelation to the person of Jesus Christ. Everything centres in the Savior. He is called the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah,' and the 'Root of David'—expressions which point to His humanity (Rev. 5:5; 22:16). His Divinity is no less distinctly recognized. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13). Clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, He is called the Word or the Word of God, and He is followed by the armies of Heaven. The Revelation is full of the idea of redemption. It delights in representing the Savior under the image of the Lamb slain, whose blood cleanses from all Sin (Rev. 5:9). The heavenly hosts adore Him. The King of humanity, as He was once its victim, He holds the keys of hell and of death

(Rev. 1:18; 3:21). He is the Divine Head of the church, its guide and defense (Rev. 3:19). The church, in spite of a Jewish symbolism, which is of easy interpretation, is clearly distinguished from the synagogue. It comprehends a 'multitude of every nation and kindred and people and tongue' (Rev. 5:9). It is composed of those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and who are walking in the way of holiness (Rev. 7:14, 15; 14:3, 4). The Apocalypse rests, therefore, on the same doctrinal basis as the fourth Gospel.

"The Revelation is not a recital of doctrine—it is, primarily, a book of prophecy; it opens a wide and glorious horizon to Christian hope and paints it with glowing colors. It bears the impress of the age in which it was written. It raises the events of that time to the height of solemn symbols; thus it is at the same time the book of revelations and an important historical record. It was written during a time of persecution, and in it, as has been well said, we breathe the very atmosphere of martyrdom; while, at the same time, it is illuminated throughout with the certainty of triumph. Contrasting the glory of the church above with the indignities heaped on the church below, the Revelation seems to drown the cries and the blasphemies of earth in the songs of the blessed and of the angels. After depicting the conflict and the sufferings of the saints, and the terrible judgments of God upon their persecutors, it opens a vista of the heavenly places. It is one of the grandest conceptions of the sacred writer, perpetually to link together earth and heaven, and to show in the events of religious history the counterpart of other events, of which the abode of the blessed is the scene. The sealed book which contains the mystery of the destinies of humanity, is at the foot of the throne of God. From thence resound the seven trumpets which declare the doom of the wicked; from thence do the angels pour forth their vials of wrath. While for the visible church, all is humiliation and suffering or weary waiting, all is glory for the church invisible; yet never was the mysterious link uniting the two more plainly manifested. 'These which are arrayed in white robes, whence came they?' 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any

more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes' (Rev. 7:13-17).

"But the sacred writer is not content with proclaiming in a general manner the suffering and triumph of the church. The further he proceeds in his delineation of the struggle between Christianity and Anti-christ, the more definite does he become in detail, though he makes use of a stately symbolism, sometimes strange and always full of variety. Just as ancient prophecy was subject to rhythmical conditions, and uttered its most passionate inspirations in conformity to the rules of Hebrew poetry, so the prophet of the New Testament arranged his abundant materials in harmonious order. The Apocalypse has a rhythm of its own, taking the word in its wide acceptance. The seven trumpets follow the seven seals, and these again are succeeded by the seven vials. In the three cycles of revelations there is always a pause after the sixth link of the series to prepare for the last link, which is itself destined to bring in a new series. This series is not immediately introduced. The prophet seems to be lost for awhile in meditation on the history of the world and of the church. After the three series, intended to be all prophetic of the same visitations, we have the descriptions of the great conflict, which is itself divided into three acts: 1st. The fall of Babylon (Rev. 18, 19) 2nd. The combat with Antichrist and Satan, terminated by the reign of Christ over His own (Rev. 20:1-6). 3rd. The last struggle and the last victory, the new Heaven and the new earth (Rev.20:11; 22) Such is the plan of the Apocalypse. We find in it the same gradation as in the prophecy of Christ referring to the last times (Matthew 24:3-51). Thus the agonies and convulsions of nature which are to precede the final judgment, the wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, the darkening of the sun, the falling of the stars, the universal terror—all these signs, given in brief touches by the Master, are dwelt upon by the inspired disciple in bold symbolism. The terrible rider on the red horse who comes forth at the opening of the second seal to take peace from the earth, is the personification of war; as the man mounted upon the black horse, and with the pair of balances in his hand, represents famine. The earthquakes and the darkening of the sky are heralded by the opening of the sixth seal.

“The first trumpets and the first vials announce the same order of judgments, and both have reference to the commencement of the prophecy of Matthew’s Gospel. Jesus Christ, after predicting the chastisements and judgments of God in nature, declared His judgments in history, and first of all, the destruction of Jerusalem. St. John, looking beyond this terrible event, proclaims another judgment of God. Sentence is to be passed now, not upon Jerusalem, but upon Rome, the impure and bloody Babylon, the incarnation at that time of the genius of evil. What a grand delineation does the evangelical prophet give of this diabolical paganism—now as the beast with seven heads and ten horns, opening its mouth to pour out blasphemy against God; now as the great whore, robed in purple and scarlet, making the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornications, herself drunk with blood of the martyrs of Christ, having ascended out of the bottomless pit and going into perdition! What an impression was such a prophetic cry calculated to produce, uttered as it was in the presence of the Roman Colossus, still standing in all the pride of its great power! ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city!’ (Rev. 14:8). ‘Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her,’ etc., etc.

“But the church has not only to fight against Antichrist without; it has also to resist Antichrist within; to do battle, that is, with heresy and false prophecy. ‘Many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many,’ said Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:11). St. John represents false prophecy under the image of a beast coming up out of the earth, in appearance like a lamb, but speaking as a beast, doing great wonders, and deceiving them that dwell on the earth by his miracles (Rev. 13:11-14). Behind this visible opponent, the Apostle shows us the invisible enemy, the dragon, the old serpent, which gave power to the beast (Rev. 13:4). The conflict is unto blood alike in the prediction of the Savior and in the Apocalypse. The two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, are types of all the confessors of Christ; though put to death, the Spirit of life from God enters into them again, and they triumph (Rev. 11:9-11).

“Thus in the Revelation, as in the prophecy of Jesus Christ, are unfolded the judgments of God as manifested in nature and in history, and the sanguinary and victorious struggles of the church with her many adversaries. The inspired writer has added in his picture new features, drawn from the historical events of the time, and interpreted by the Spirit of prophecy; but the words of St. John have not, any more than the words of Christ, an application restricted to his own age.”

The seven churches of Asia Minor addressed by Christ through John in the second and third chapters of Revelation are properly regarded as a miniature of the whole Christian church at all times. “There is no condition, good, bad or mixed, of which these seven short epistles do not present a sample, and for which they do not give suitable and wholesome direction. Here, as everywhere, the written word of God and the history of the apostolic church evince their applicability to all times and circumstances, and their inexhaustible fullness of instruction, warning and encouragement for all states and stages of religious life.

“By the ‘angel’ of each church cannot be meant holy heavenly beings, who cannot be charged with doctrinal and practical errors, but, in accordance with the enigmatic symbolism of the book of Revelation, the pastor of each church, as representing the entire membership. Pastors are thus reminded that, like the angels above, they below should fulfill God’s commission to them zealously and efficiently.

“Each of the seven epistles commences with, ‘I know thy works’—living faith will show living works, and dead faith dead works. Each epistle contains a promise ‘To him that overcometh.’ Each ends with, ‘He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.’ The title of our Lord in each accords with the special address, and is mainly taken from the imagery of the vision in chapter first. Each of the addresses has a threat or a promise, and most have both. Their order seems ecclesiastical, civil and geographical: Ephesus first, as the Asiatic metropolis, nearest to Patmos, where John received the epistles to the seven churches; also being that church with which John was especially connected; then the churches on the west of Asia; then those in the interior. Smyrna and Philadelphia—outwardly

poor, small, persecuted and afflicted, but very faithful and spiritually flourishing—alone receive unmixed praise; they are exhorted to continued faithfulness. Sardis and Laodicea—the most wealthy, having a name to live but being dead, saying that they are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, while being really wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked—receive almost solely censure and terrible warning; but there were a few even in Sardis who had not defiled their garments; and with the truly penitent ones in Laodicea Christ promised to come in and sup. Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira have a mixed character, and receive both commendation and censure; Ephesus is commended for her orthodoxy, but censured for leaving her first love and her first works; Pergamos is commended for her martyr faith, but censured for her lack of discipline, not excluding those who held licentious doctrines and practices; and Thyatira is commended for her faith, and love, and patience, but is also censured for her looseness of discipline, retaining in her communion those who held Satanic principles and practices."—*P. Schaff*.

We learn, therefore, that *Christ requires His churches to be faithful in doctrine, in practice and in discipline*. Many suppose that the seven churches prophetically represent the seven successive ages of the general church. Vitringa regards Ephesus as representing the church from A.D. 30 to 250; Smyrna from 250 to 311; Pergamos from 311 to 700; Thyatira from 700 to 1200; Sardis from 1200 to 1517; Philadelphia from 1517 to 1617; and Laodicea from 1617 to the present time. Laodicea, it may be remarked, used to be the capital of the greater Phrygia, and a place of great size, splendor and luxury; but it is now a perfect mass of ruins.

The book of Revelation has earlier, clearer and ampler testimonies for its apostolic authorship than any other book in the New Testament. It was evidently intended to complete the volume of inspiration, no further or additional revelation to be given for the use of the church until Christ shall come (Rev. 22: 18-20). "Scripture is one organic whole, its books, though ranging over 1,500 years in their date of composition, being mutually connected. The end is the necessary sequence of the middle, as the middle is the sequence of the beginning. Genesis represents man in his innocence and bliss, followed by man's fall through Satan's cunning, and man's

consequent dooming to death and exclusion from paradise and its tree of life and delightful rivers. Revelation represents, in reverse order, man first sinning and dying, then conquering sin and death through the blood of the Lamb; the first Adam and Eve represented by the Second Adam, Christ, and the church, His spotless bride, in paradise, with access to the tree of life, and the crystal waters of life flowing from the throne of God. As Genesis foretold the bruising of the serpent's head by the woman's Seed, so Revelation declares the accomplishment of that prophecy (19, 20)."—A. R. Fausset.

"While John, in the Revelation, had in view, primarily, the overthrow of Jerusalem and of heathen Rome, the two great foes of Christianity at that time, his vision was not confined to these momentous events. It extends even to the remotest future when death and Hades shall be no more, and a new Heaven and a new earth shall appear. Although the fulfillment is predicted as being near at hand, he puts a Millennium and a short intervening conflict before the overthrow of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet. We have an analogy in the prophecy of the Old Testament and the eschatological discourses of our Lord (in Matthew 24, 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21), which furnish the key for the understanding of the Apocalypse. He describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the general judgment in close proximity, as if they were one continuous event. He sees the end from the beginning. The first catastrophe is painted with colors borrowed from the last, and the last appears as a repetition of the first on a grand and universal scale. It is the manner of prophetic vision to bring distant events into close proximity, as in a panorama. To God a thousand years are as a day. Every true prophecy admits of an expanding fulfillment. History ever repeats itself, though with new variations. The Apocalypse is not a prophetic manual of church history and chronology in the sense of a prediction of particular persons, dates and events. This would have made it useless to the first readers, and would make it useless now to the great mass of Christians. It gives, under symbolic figures and for popular edification, an outline of the *general principles* of Divine government and the *leading forces* in the conflict between Christ's kingdom and His foes, which is still going on under ever-varying forms. In this way it teaches, like all the prophetic utterances of the Gospels and epistles, lessons of warning and encouragement to every age.

We must distinguish between the spiritual coming of Christ and His personal arrival, or *parousia*. The former is progressive, the latter instantaneous. The spiritual coming began with His ascension to Heaven (see Matthew 26:64, 'Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven'), and goes on in unbroken succession of judgments and blessings (for the history of the world is a judgment of the world); hence the alternation of action and repose, of scenes of terror and scenes of joy, of battles and victories. The personal arrival of the Bridegroom is still in the unknown future, but is as certain as the first advent of Christ. The hope of the church will not be disappointed, for it rests on the promise of Him who is called 'the Amen, the faithful and true witness' (Rev. 3:14)."—*P. Schaff*.

There are three methods of interpreting the book of Revelation—the Preterist, the Futurist and the Historical (or continuous). The Preterist maintains that the prophecies in Revelation have already been fulfilled—that they refer chiefly to the triumph of Christianity over Judaism and paganism, signalized in the downfall of Jerusalem and of Rome. Against this view it is urged that if all these prophecies were fulfilled some 1,400 years ago (the Western Roman Empire fell A.D. 476), their accomplishment should be so perspicuous as to be universally manifest, which is very far from being the case. The Futurist interpreters refer all the book, except the first three chapters, to events which are yet to come. Against this view it is alleged that it is inconsistent with the repeated declarations of a speedy fulfillment at the beginning and end of the book itself (1:3; 22:6, 7, 12, 20). Against both these views it is argued that, if either of them is correct, the Christian church is left without any prophetic guidance in the Scriptures, during the greater part of its existence; while the Jewish church was favored with prophets during the most of its existence. The Historical or Continuous expositors believe the Revelation a progressive history of the church from the first century to the end of time. The advocates of this method of interpretation are the most numerous, and among them are such famous writers as Luther, Sir Isaac Newton, Bengel, Faber, Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Alford, Fausset and Lee. The ablest living expositors of this class consider the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders and seven vials as all synchronous, or contemporaneous, or parallel, a series of cyclical

collective pictures, each representing the entire course of the world (as connected with the church) down to the end of time; just as the seven churches in the first three chapters represent the universal church, the message to each pointing to the second coming of Christ. So the introduction in the first chapter, and the conclusion in the last chapter, refer to the beginning and the end of time, and to the second coming of Christ. Three times in the last chapter is His quick coming predicted. For these reasons the book of Revelation has been called the "Book of the Prophecy of Christ's Coming." It is the most difficult and sublime book of the Bible. While foretelling the righteous and terrific judgments of God upon the sins of man, it shows that all things are absolutely subject to the Divine foreknowledge and control (Acts 15:18; Ps. 76:10; 46:6; Matthew 24:22); and it abounds in the strongest consolation to the tried people of God, revealing the certainty of their final triumph over all their enemies, and their sure entrance into eternal bliss. Hence, it has been impressively remarked that "the book spreads itself out before us like the mantle of dusky night, brodered over with brilliant stars like jewels—enlivening the hope, patience, perseverance and love of the church of God, and affording her sufficient light concerning the future to enable her to find her way in situations of the greatest obscurity, while presenting an impenetrable veil to the profane gaze of the worldly mind." Scarcely are any two leading interpreters agreed as to the exact events alluded to by each prophecy; no doubt many of the prophecies are still future, and cannot be understood until their fulfillment. While the prophecies may have one, or more than one, typical, imperfect, historical fulfillment, there can be no question that they also imply a higher spiritual fulfillment.

It is unfortunate that King James's, or the Authorized Version of the Bible, always translates by the same term "*beast*" the two different Greek words *zoon* and *therion* in the book of Revelation. *Zoon* occurs twenty times in the Revelation (4:6-9; 5:6, 8, 11, 14; 6:1, 3, 5-7; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4), and should be rendered *living being*; in classical Greek it denotes man and the nobler animals below him, and also it denotes a symbolical figure. *Therion* occurs thirty-seven times in the book of Revelation (6:8; 11:7; 13:1-4, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:3, 7, 8, 11-13, 16, 17; 19:19, 20; 20:4, 10), and is properly rendered *wild beast* or *monster*. There

are four living beings (or *Zoa*) mentioned in Revelation. *Four* is the emblem of creation as revealing the glory of God (Gen. 2:10; Isa. 11:12; Ps. 107:3; Luke 13:29; Matthew 24:31, etc.). The four living beings are most probably of the same character as the cherubim of the tabernacle and temple and in Ezekiel, and the seraphim in Isaiah. They have one, two or four faces, and two, four or six wings, and contain parts of one or more of four leading animal forms, man, ox, lion and eagle, and especially represent *man* as the summation (microcosm) and lord of the terrestrial creation, concentrating in himself the highest created energies, and testifying to the power, majesty, omnipresence and omniscience of God, as manifested by the universe of created Life. Instead of being angels, or spirits that were never embodied, they are, in Revelation, emphatically distinguished from "all the angels" (Rev. 5:11; 7:11); and it is plainly set forth in Revelation 5:8-10, 19:4, 5, that the four living beings denote not only men, but the same class of men as the twenty-four Elders, *redeemed men, men endowed with true or spiritual or eternal life*, who are to live with God and worship Him forever.

On the other hand, the wild beasts or monsters (*theria*) of the book of Revelation represent the Satanized everlasting enemies of God who are to be cast into the lake of eternal fire (19:20; 20:10). As God has His two witnesses, so Satan or the Dragon has his two, the First and Second Apocalyptic Beasts (Rev. 13:1, 11). The term *beast* denotes man severed from God, resting on his own physical or intellectual strength, or material resources—the combination of sensual, lawless, God-opposing elements (Psalms 73:22; 49:12; 68:30; 2 Peter 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:32). The four successive world empires are represented in Daniel (7) as beasts coming up out of the stormy sea of political commotions (Rev. 17:15). The First Apocalyptic Beast rises out of the sea (13:1) or out of the bottomless pit (17:8), and has seven heads and ten horns, each horn having a crown upon it, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy; he has the power and authority of the Dragon, and makes war upon the saints and overcomes them; and all the world wonders after the beast, and worships him, except those whose names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (13:1-10). The First Beast shows himself to be the direct representative of the Dragon, who also has seven heads and ten horns (12:3), and who, first in human history, assumed the lowest beastly

nature, that of the serpent (Gen. 3). The First Beast represents the World-Power opposed to God—the *seven* heads implying the assumption of Godhead, and caricaturing the seven spirits of God (Rev. 1:4); and the ten horns implying the whole cycle of worldly opposition to the Divine perfections. The seven heads seem to be the seven world-monarchies—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Germanic Empire (the German hordes that conquered Rome); though many scholars think the last or seventh is not yet developed; it is certain, from the interpretation of the angel to John, that at least six of these heads have already appeared (17:10), and that the sixth was Rome, which reigned over the earth while John was living. Pagan Rome deified her emperors, and worshiped, it is said, 30,000 idols, and dominated the civilized world, and massacred the saints of God in ten persecutions. Christianity seemed, for a brief period, to give its idolatry a deadly wound, in the fourth century; but that wound was healed, that is, the idolatry was restored by the apostasy of Papal Rome to picture-worship, Mariolatry (the worship of Mary), and the adoration of the Pope and the eucharist. The ten horns of the First Beast seem to be ten kings who are to be subordinate to this world-power in its last development (17:12). The Second Apocalyptic Beast is the same as the False Prophet (13:11-18; 19:20; 20:10); and also seems, in most respects, identified with the great, richly-dressed, blasphemous, murderous whore, Mystery Babylon, who rides upon the First Apocalyptic Beast, and is drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (17:1-18); the same as the “little horn” on the fourth beast in Daniel vii., and the “man of sin,” or “son of perdition,” predicted by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2; and, in its full development, is the chief and last of the “false christs and false prophets” foretold by Christ (Matthew 24:24), and of the “Anti-christs” foretold by John in his first epistle (2:18). He rises out of the earth, that is, out of civilized and consolidated and peaceful society, and is of the earth, earthy, worshiping earthly idols and not the God of Heaven—it is a *beast*, all the time, notwithstanding that it has two horns like a lamb, mocking Christ, and appearing mild and innocent, yet really having the spirit of the Dragon, and, out of the abundance of its heart, speaking and acting like the Dragon. While the First Beast was a political power, this adds to the features of the First Beast hypocrisy and deceivableness, and is a pseudo-spiritual power, prophesying and working deceptive miracles for the First Beast, and making an image to the First Beast, and commanding all to

worship the image, and killing those that refuse, and setting a mark in the right hands or foreheads of the idolatrous worshipers, and letting none buy or sell except such as have the mark or name of the beast, or the number of his name. The Second Beast (or False Prophet), although assuming the garb of religion (see Matthew 7:15), is more oppressive than the first. The Dragon, Beast and False Prophet, "the mystery of iniquity," form a hellish Anti-Trinity, counterfeit of "the mystery of godliness," God manifest in Christ, witnessed to by the Spirit. "The Dragon personates the Father, assigning his authority to his representative, the Beast, as the Father assigns His to the Son; while the False Prophet, like the Holy Ghost, speaks not of himself, but tells all men to worship the Beast, and confirms his testimony by miracles, as the Holy Ghost attested Christ's Divine mission. The mark in the right hand and forehead implies prostration of the body and intellect to the Beast; or the mark in the forehead shows profession, and in the hand shows work and service for the Beast. The mark may be, as in the sealing of the saints, not visible, but symbolical of allegiance." The number of the Beast is said to be the number of a man, and is 666. Countless attempts have been made to solve this enigma. Before the invention of the Arabic digits, numbers were generally represented by letters; so that every name, by the addition of the values of its letters, had a certain numerical value. From the language of the angel to John (Rev. xvii. 18), it seems certain that Rome was at least primarily meant; and the most scholarly solutions point to Rome. The language in which John wrote the book of Revelation, like that of the remainder of the New Testament, is Greek; and the numerical value, in Greek, of each of the following words, or phrases, is 666: *Lateinos* (Latinus, said to have been the first king of the Roman aborigines, from whom they derived their name of Latin); *E Latine Basileia* (the Latin kingdom); *Italike Ekklesia* (Italian church); *Paradosis* (tradition); *Euporia* (wealth). *Vicarius Filii Dei* (a Latin phrase, meaning Vicar of the Son of God, blasphemously assumed by the Pope); *Vicarius Generalis Dei in Terris* (Vicar General of God on earth), have the numerical value, in Latin, of 666. Also the word *Romiith* (Roman), in Hebrew, has for its numerical value 666. Latin is Rome's language in all official acts.

Let it be especially remembered that "the only two Greek nouns in all the New Testament, whose numerical value is exactly 666, are *Paradosis* and

Euporia, precisely the two expressing the grand corrupters of the church, *Tradition, the corrupter of doctrine*, and *Wealth, the corrupter of practice*. The only unquestionable 666 in the Old Testament is the 666 talents of gold that came in yearly to Solomon, and were among his chief corrupting influences (1 Kings 10:14; 2 Chron. 9:13). The two horns of the earth-beast represent the two phases of idolatry which ever corrupt the church, literal and spiritual, image-worship and covetousness. In Pelletan's 'Profession of Faith in the Nineteenth Century,' Wealth is addressed 'Divine Son-Messiah-Redeemer-dumb confidant of God—begotten by mysterious conception, who hast saved men from misery, redeemed the world,' etc." As the woman divinely clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, and persecuted by the Dragon (Rev. 12), represents the true church, so the woman humanly arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, and sitting upon the scarlet-colored beast, and having upon her forehead the name *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth*, and drunken with the blood of the saints, represents the false or apostate church with her daughters, whether Roman, Greek or Protestant, not loving Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, but giving its affections to worldly idols—corrupted by tradition and wealth. The name Babylon given to the head of the image of the world-powers in the second chapter of Daniel is given in Revelation to the harlot. This connects her with the fourth kingdom, Rome, the last part of the image. Her sitting upon seven mountains or hills (Rev. 17:9), and her being the city which in John's time reigned over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18), also prove her to be Rome. Babylon means confusion, and well describes the rival claims of apostate Rome and her apostate daughters, and the "confused noises and blood-rolled garments" of their many wars upon each other and upon the followers of the Lamb, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:5, 6); but all these persecutors shall stumble, and their "confusion" shall be "everlasting" (Jer. 20:11). The harlot is at last to be deprived of all her carnal possessions by the world-powers (Rev. 17:16), and to be visited with the righteous and eternal judgment of God (Rev. 18, 19). And then it is probably that some infidel supplanter of the papacy, the fully developed false-prophet, under a false spiritual guise, will assume even more blasphemous pretensions than the pope, (still, however, identified with Rome), and will openly avow atheism, and deify Satan in himself, and

combine in himself worldly wisdom and worldly power, and endeavor to destroy all who will not worship him, and he will be met by the King of kings and Lord of lords, and be cast with the beast *alive* (not annihilated) into the lake of eternal fire (Rev. 19). Even in Babylon God has a people, and they are exhorted to come out of her, lest they partake of her sins and plagues (Rev. 18:4); just as the believers in Christ came out of Jerusalem before its terrible destruction by the Romans (Matthew 24:15, 16).”—*A.R. Fausset*.

In regard to the *time* when all these events shall take place, it is *altogether uncertain*. Christ told His Apostles that it was “not even for them to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power” (Acts 1:7); and that the day and hour of the coming of the Son of man were unknown to any man and to the angels, and even to Himself in His humanity, and known only to the Father (Mark 13:32). Therefore all His people are to watch (Matthew 24:42). What is called the Year-Day theory is popular with many writers, though rejected by several recent and able scholars. This theory is sought to be based upon such passages as Leviticus 7:5; Deuteronomy 16:9, 10, 16; Numbers 14:33, 34; Ezekiel 4:5, 6; Daniel 9:24; and maintains that a day in prophecy means a year in history. It is replied that prophetic numbers are symbolical, and can hardly be thought to be also literal; that the above passages are irrelevant, especially the main passage in Daniel 9:24, where the word translated *weeks* simply means *sevens*; that the theory is contrary to the words of Christ about our not knowing the times or the seasons; and that if it is applied to any prophetic numbers, it should be applied to all, and that would make the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-7) last 360,000 years. Scarcely any Year-Day theorist applies his theory to the Millennium. Still, he insists that, in the latter days, many were to run to and fro, and knowledge was to be increased, and the book of prophecy was to be sealed only to the time of the end (Dan. xii. 4); and that, as the beginnings of the periods are uncertain, although we know the periods themselves, their ends are also uncertain, so that Christ’s words would still be true. The three years and a half, or time, times and dividing of time, or 42 months, or 1,260 days, so often mentioned in prophecy, are the same period; and, if the Year-Day theory be true, they denote 1,260 years. As for the fall of Mystical Babylon, we cannot tell the exact date, even if she were to continue 1,260 years. Pope Boniface III., in A.D. 606, received from

the Emperor Phocas the title of "Universal Bishop;" Pope Theodore I., in A.D. 648, assumed the title of "Sovereign Pontiff," and was the last pope whom a bishop dared to call brother; Pope Stephen III., in A.D. 754, by acknowledging the usurper Pepin as the lawful king of France, received from him the three territories of Rome, Ravenna and Lombardy, the beginning of the *temporal power* of the popes. Reckoning the 1,260 years from these dates, we should reach A.D. 1849, 1891, and 1997. If the latter date were correct, and there was then to be a persecution of God's people, unprecedented in horror, and lasting a literal period of three years and a half, as many suppose, it would make the fall of Romish Babylon about A.D. 2000. (All future dates are, of course, except to God, uncertain.) As shown by Revelation 19:17-21, "the world, at its highest development of material and pseudo-spiritual power, is but a decorated carcass round which the eagles gather," as literal Jerusalem was at its destruction by the Romans (Matthew 24:15-28). The one was a lively type of the other.

"The destruction of Satan's representatives, the beast and the false-prophet, to whom he gave his power, throne and authority, is followed by the binding of Satan himself a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7). The Jewish rabbis thought that, as the world was created in six days, and on the seventh God rested, so there would be six millenaries (or six thousand years), followed by a Sabbatical Millennium" (one thousand years). If there were exactly 4,000 years before the birth of Christ, this opinion, if true, would make the dawn of the Millennium about 2000 A.D.; but, as we have stated before, there are 200 different opinions of the exact interval between the creation of Adam and the birth of Christ, so that the matter is, as to its date, quite uncertain. Whether the thousand years of Satan's confinement in the bottomless pit, mentioned six times in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, are to be before or after the second advent of Christ, does not very plainly appear from the Scriptures, and is still a warmly contested point with the ablest Bible scholars. As the Old Testament Scriptures predicted the first coming of Christ—not only spiritually, in mercy or judgment, but also literally, personally and visibly; so, in the most unmistakable language, do the New Testament Scriptures foretell His second coming—not only spiritually, in mercy or judgment, but also literally, personally and visibly (Acts 1:11; 3:20, 21; Matthew 16:27; 25:31; 26:64; Mark 7:38; 1 Cor. 4:5;

11:26; 15:23; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7). By many ancient Jewish Christians, and by the church generally from 150 to 250 A.D., during a period of great persecution, and by some learned individuals and some transient parties since, it was and has been believed that there would be *two* future personal advents of Christ, one *before* and another *after* the Millennium, or thousand years' confinement of Satan. John Gill (A.D. 1697-1771), perhaps the most learned, able, sound, upright and humble Baptist minister since the days of Paul, was thoroughly persuaded that Christ would come personally upon the earth again just before the Millennium, and destroy His enemies, and reign personally with His saints on earth a thousand years; and, in the second volume of his *Body of Divinity*, he advances a large number of powerful Scripture arguments in support of this position. And, in the present age, such distinguished Bible scholars as Alford, Ebrard, Auberlen, Birks, Elliot, Fausset, Lange and others, advocate the same opinion. This belief is based chiefly on "these two classes of passages: 1st, Those which seem to connect the future advent with the restoration of Israel, the destruction of Antichrist, or the establishment of a universal kingdom of righteousness on earth, such as Isaiah 11, 12; 59 (compared with Rom. 11:25-27); Jeremiah 23:5-8; Ezekiel 43; Daniel 7:9-27; Joel 3:16-21; Zechariah 14; Romans 11:1-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-18; Acts 3:19-21. 2nd, Those passages which speak of the coming of the Lord as imminent (in connection with those which declare that there is to be a period of generally diffused peace and righteousness preceding the first consummation), such as Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; Titus 2:11-13; James 5:7,8." Mr. E. R. Craven, American Editor of Lange's *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, believes that, as in the earlier Old Testament prophecies, only one advent of Christ seems to have been contemplated, but in the later (compare Dan. 9:25, 26 with 7:13, 14) there was a prediction of two such advents, separated, as we now know, by millennia; so, while in the earlier portions of the New Testament, only *one* future advent of Christ seems predicted, in the later portions (compare Rev. 19:11-16 with 20:11-15) there are indications of *two*—one to establish a universal kingdom of righteousness on earth, and the other to terminate the present order of things in a general judgment.

But it is the opinion of the great majority of Bible scholars that there will be but *one* more personal advent of Christ, and that it will be *after* the Millennium. They maintain that the idea of a pre-millennial advent is Jewish in its origin, and Judaizing or materializing in its tendency; that it disparages the present, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost; that it is inconsistent with the Scriptures, which teach that Christ comes but twice, to atone and to judge (Heb. 9:28); that the Heavens must receive Christ until the times of the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21); that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, but spiritual (Matthew 13:11-44; John 17:36; Rom. 14:17); that it was not to be confined to the Jews (Matthew 8:11, 12); that regeneration is the essential antecedent of admission to it (John 3:3-5); that the blessings of the kingdom are purely spiritual, as repentance, pardon, faith, etc. (Matthew 3:2, 11; Acts 5:31; Gal. 5:22, 23, etc.); that the kingdom of Christ has already come, He having sat upon the throne of His Father David ever since His ascension (Acts 2:29-36; 3:13-15; 4:26-28; 5:29-31; Heb. 10:12, 13; Rev. 3:7-12), so that the Old Testament prophecies predicting this kingdom must refer to the present dispensation of grace, and not to a future reign of Christ on earth in person among men in the flesh; and that the church is to be complete at His next coming (1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:10). These scholars believe that the very difficult passage in Revelation 20:1-10 has the following meaning: That "Christ has in reserve for His church a period of universal expansion and of pre-eminent spiritual prosperity, when the spirit and character of the noble army of martyrs shall be reproduced again in the great body of God's people in an unprecedented measure (as Elias is said to have lived again in John the Baptist), and when these martyrs shall, in the general triumph of their case, and in the overthrow of that of their enemies, receive judgment over their foes, and reign in the earth; while the party of Satan, called 'the rest of the dead,' shall not flourish again until the thousand years be ended, when it shall prevail again for a little season. Three considerations favor this interpretation: It occurs in one of the most highly figurative books of the Bible; this explanation is perfectly consistent with all the other more explicit teachings of the Scriptures on the several points involved; the same figure, that of life again from the dead, is frequently used in Scripture to express the idea of the spiritual revival of the church (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; Hosea 6:1-3; Rom. 11:15; Rev. 11:11). And three considerations bear

against the *literal* interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10: The doctrine of two literal resurrections, first of the righteous, and then, after an interval of a thousand years, of the wicked, is taught nowhere else in the Bible, and this passage is a very obscure one; it is inconsistent with what the Scriptures uniformly teach as to the nature of the resurrection—body, that it is to be spiritual, not natural, or ordinary flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:44), whereas this interpretation represents the saints, or at least the martyrs, as rising and reigning a thousand years in the flesh, and in this world as at present constituted; and the literal interpretation of this passage contradicts the clear and uniform teaching of the Scriptures that all the dead are to rise and be judged together at the second coming of Christ (John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:11-15; Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:6-10), which is to be immediately succeeded by the burning of the world, and the revelation of the new Heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (Ps. 102:26, 27; Isa. 51:6; Rom. 8:19-23; Heb. 12:26, 27; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 20 and 21)."

"The Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, clearly reveal that the gospel is to exercise an influence over all branches of the human family, immeasurably more extensive and more thoroughly transforming than any it has ever realized in time past, which end is to be gradually brought about by the Spirit of Christ in the present dispensation (Matthew 13:31, 32; 28:19, 20; Ps. 2:7, 8; 22:27, 29; 72:8-11; Isa. 2:2, 3; 11:6-9; 60:12; 66:23; Dan. 2:35, 44; Zech. 9:10; 14:9; Rev. 11:15). The period of this general prevalency of the gospel will continue a thousand years, and is hence designated the Millennium (Rev. 20:2-7). The Jews are to be converted to Christianity (but not probably restored to Palestine) either at the commencement or during the continuance of the Millennium (Zech. 12:10; 13:1; Rom. 11:26-29; 2 Cor. 3:15, 16). At the end of these thousand years, and before the coming of Christ, there will be a comparatively short season of apostasy and violent conflict between the kingdoms of light and darkness (Luke 17:30; 2 Peter 3:3, 4; Rev. 20:7-9). Christ's advent and the general resurrection and judgment will be simultaneous, and then will follow the conflagration of the earth, and the introduction of a new and higher order of things, adapted to the resurrection-bodies of the saints (Dan. 12:1-3; John 5:28, 29; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:11-15; Matthew 7:21-23;

13:30-43; 16:24-27; 25:31-46; Rom. 2:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-11; Acts 22:31; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2 Peter 3:7-13; Rev. 21:1).”—A. A. Hodge, in *Outlines of Theology*. Such has been the general belief of the Christian church from the close of the Scripture canon to the present time. Mr. Charles Hodge (in his *Systematic Theology*), however, makes the wise remark: “Experience teaches that the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy is exceedingly precarious. There is every reason to believe that the predictions concerning the second advent of Christ, and the events which are to attend and follow it, will disappoint the expectations of commentators, as the expectations of the Jews were disappointed in the manner in which the prophecies concerning the first advent were accomplished.”

In reference to the highly important discourse of Christ in Matthew 24 And 25, it is to be observed that Christ is answering *three* distinct questions of His Apostles: 1st, When the temple and city of Jerusalem were to be destroyed; 2nd, What were to be the signs of His coming; and 3rd, What was to be the time or the sign of the end of the world (Matthew 24:3). The questions, perhaps, amounted to but one in the minds of the disciples at that time, because they probably supposed that these three events were to be simultaneous. It is in accordance with the entire analogy of Scripture prophecy to understand that these predictions had a primary and lower fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem, but will have a final and higher fulfillment in the destruction of this sin-polluted world. So the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah were intended to foretell, not only the deliverance of national Israel from Babylonian captivity, but also the far more important redemption of spiritual Israel from the bondage of sin and Satan.

For the declarative glory of God, the righteousness and mercy of His dealings are to be displayed before the assembled universe on the most solemn and final day of judgment (Matthew 11:22, 24; 25:31-46; Luke 10:14; Acts 17:31; Heb. 6:2; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7-13; 1 John 4:17; Rev. 20:11-15). The time and place and duration of that momentous scene have not been revealed to mortals. Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the Savior of sinners, He who loved and gave Himself for His chosen people, embracing every truly humble soul, is to be the judge (Matthew 25:31, 32; 28:18; John 5:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 14:10; Phil. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:1);

otherwise His little ones “would sink in despair before the terrible bar.” The persons to be judged are men and angels (Eccl. 12:14; Ps. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10; Matthew 12:36, 37; 25:12; 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4).

“The saints will be present, not to have their portion *assigned* (for that was fixed long before, Matthew 25:34; Eph. 1:3, 4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1-5; John 5:24), but to have it *confirmed* forever, and that God’s righteousness may be vindicated in both the saved and the lost (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10), before the universe.” The books that are to be opened are the book of the law (Gal. 3:10), the book of conscience (Rom. 2:15, 16), and the book of God’s omniscience (Heb. 4:13); and, besides these, another most precious book, the book of God’s fatherly remembrance, mentioned at the close of the Old Testament (Mal. 3:16-18; 4:1-3), which is the same as the Lamb’s book of life, mentioned at the close of the New Testament (Rev. 13:8; 20:12-15; 21:27)—a book containing the names of all those redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9, 10; 1:5, 6; 17:14; Isa. 35:10; 53:5-11; Jer. 23:6; Matthew 1:21; John 10:15, 27-30; 17:2, 3, 9, 10, 20-24; Acts 13:48; Rom. 5:19-21; 8:28-39; 1 Cor. 1:26-31), their names being written therein, not for their works, but for *Christ’s work for and in* them—the *Lamb’s book of life* (Rom. 3:10-20; 6:23; 11:6). The saints are justified freely by God’s grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24), or justified by faith, the gift of God (Rom. 5:1 ; 4:16 ; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 1:19; Phil. 1:29; Heb. 12:2). Faith being appreciable by God and the believer alone (Rev. 2:17), and works being appreciable by all, the saints’ “works of faith and labors of love” are published as the external and *evidential* test to indicate their preparedness for glory, and to vindicate the righteousness of God (1 Thess. 1:3, 4; Matthew 25:34-40; 7:16-20; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 2:1-10). Acquitted by the free mercy of God, while humbly feeling their own utter unworthiness, the saints are shown to be the children of God by their divinely inspired deeds of mercy to His people (Matthew 25:34-40; James 2:13-26; Eph. 5:1, 2). True faith worketh by love, which is the fulfilling of the law, and the proof that we have passed from death unto life, and are the justified children of God (Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 13:13; 1 John 3:14-18; 4:7, 8, 11, 13, 20; 5:1; Rom. 3:24-26 ; 5:1-5). As for their sins, while they themselves can never forget them, and can never cease to be deeply grateful to Him who loved them and washed them

from their sins in His own blood (Rev. 1:5), their covenant God has long since promised, not only to forgive, but to *remember their sins no more* (Jer. 31:31-37). Being thus accepted in the Beloved, and freely justified by His grace (Eph. 1:6, 7; Rom. 3:24), the saints will become assessors with the Judge, and heartily indorse His righteous judgments (Ps. 149:5-9; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20:4; 19:1-5). In the light of the "Great White Throne" (Rev. 20:11) all deception will be banished, the secrets of all hearts will be revealed, every individual will appear in his true character (Eccl. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:5; Mal. 3:18); the wicked, though seeking to justify themselves, will be justly condemned by the holy law of God and by their own consciences (Rom. 3:19; 2:12-16; Gal. 3:10), and will be sentenced to everlasting misery, while the righteous are welcomed to everlasting blessedness (Matthew 25:46).

"The chief objections to the doctrine of endless punishment," says Prof. W. G. T. Shedd, "are not Biblical, but speculative. The great majority of students and exegetes find the tenet in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Sin is voluntary; and endless sin must receive endless punishment. The unsubmissive, rebellious spirits of the lost go, with like-minded companions, to 'their own place,' which they prefer to Heaven. History shows that the disbelief of the doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked is most prevalent in the most corrupt times-itself being both a sign and a cause of the corruption."

God said to our first parents in the garden of Eden that in the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they should surely die; but Satan afterwards came in the form of the serpent, and flatly contradicted God, telling them that they should *not* surely die. So, in the present age of widespread infidelity, Satan, in the hearts of both the professing and non-professing "Christian" world, assures men that, though they go on in sin and impenitence and unbelief till temporal death, they will not die everlastingly—thus meeting with point-blank contradiction the repeated, multiform, emphatic, indubitable assurances of God in the Scriptures. This soothing, infernal poison, a combination of Arminianism and Universalism, is pervading and leavening the great masses in the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican communions. In the minds of multitudes, a

terminable purgatory is taking the place, *for all men*, of an interminable hell—the idea being derived, not from the inspired Scriptures, but from the ancient Persian heathens, from whom the Jews obtained it and incorporated it in their Apocrypha and Talmud; the Catholics derived it from the Jews, and Protestants derived it from the Catholics. According to this insidious deception, men after death are to be sent into purifying fires, chastened for their sins, instructed in Divine truth, and given another chance to repent and save themselves, and go to Heaven. High ecclesiastical office, pretentious scholarship, splendid eloquence, soul-moving rhetoric, and encyclopedic erudition, followed by countless hosts of lesser lights, zealously array themselves against the plainest declarations of the written word of God and in defense of this Satanic delusion. They urge that the doctrine of eternal punishment is by far the most objectionable part of the Bible to skeptics; and, unless this harsh and cruel doctrine is toned down, the infidel world never will receive the Bible. But there are other teachings of the Scriptures that are intensely offensive to the carnal mind—such as the total depravity of man, salvation by grace alone, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, the atonement, the resurrection, the holiness of God, etc. All these and all other peculiar features of Christianity must be removed from the Bible, or explained away, before the unregenerate world will be willing to receive it. It will, therefore, be much better for all who profess the name of Christ never to begin the work of toning down and explaining away the Scriptures.

The present writer has read, with deep attention, the most recent and elaborate arguments advanced against the Bible doctrine of the everlasting duration of future punishment; he has compared these reasonings with themselves, with the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and with the latest and most authoritative lexicons, and he is constrained to declare his belief that, for the very *perfection of sophistry*, these infidel treatises have no equal in the entire range of human literature. The *same methods of explanation would make anything mean nothing*.

The terms *almost invariably* used in the Scriptures to denote *everlasting duration* are *olam* in the Old Testament and *aion* and *aionios* in the New Testament. While these terms, both in and out of the Bible, sometimes

certainly signify *indefinite duration*, it is admitted by the best lexicographers that their common meaning is *everlasting*; *they are the most frequent terms used in the Bible to denote the everlasting duration of God, and the everlasting duration of the happiness of saints in glory; it is therefore most scriptural to understand that, when they are applied to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, they also mean everlasting.* The Scriptures, being addressed in the main to God's people, dwell more upon the perfections of God and the future happiness of His saints than upon the future punishment of the wicked. In the Old Testament *olam* is used 40 times in reference to God, 94 times in reference to the future happiness of His people, and 11 times in reference to the punishment of the wicked. In the New Testament *aión* is used 14 times and *aiónios* 3 times in reference to God; *aión* 9 times and *aiónios* 51 times in reference to the happiness of the righteous beyond the grave; and *aión* 5 times and *aiónios* 7 times in reference to the future punishment of the wicked. In all these cases the reference is to the future duration of God and of the human race; and the making of a radical distinction in the meanings of these same terms, so that they shall denote *infinite* duration in reference to the *righteous*, and *finite* duration in reference to the *wicked*, is, says Professor Moses Stuart, "without a parallel in the just principles of interpretation. The conclusion is plain, and philologically and exegetically certain. It is this: either the declarations of the Scriptures do not establish the facts that God and His glory and praise and happiness are *endless*, nor that the happiness of the righteous in the future world is *endless*, or else they establish the fact that the punishment of the wicked is *endless*." In Matthew 25:46 the very same Greek word, *aiónios*, is used by Christ, in the same sentence, in reference both to the duration of the punishment of the wicked and the duration of the happiness of the righteous. The plurals and reduplications and supplementations of these three terms are used several times in the Scriptures to express the duration of the existence and glory of God, and of the future happiness of His people; so also are they sometimes used to express the duration of the future punishment of the wicked (Ps. 9:5; Rev. 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10). The extreme position has even been taken that *aiónios* has no reference to duration whatever, but simply means *spiritual, supra-sensuous, beyond and above time*; and that aionian (or eternal) life may last *but ten minutes*, and aionian (or eternal) death may last *but ten minutes*. Now the Lord Jesus

Christ is, on this and on every other subject, a higher authority than any creature; and in John 10:28 He defines aionian (or eternal) life to be imperishable or indestructible life; and in Matthew 25:41, 46, He defines aionian (or eternal) fire or punishment or death (Rev. 20:14, 15) to be the same as the punishment of the devil and his angels, which, in Jude 6, is declared to be *aidios*, a term never meaning anything but *everlasting*; and in Mark 9:43 Christ declares that this "fire" is *asbestos, unquenchable, inextinguishable*; and in Mark 9:44, 46, 48, the "worm" is described as *ateleutetos, undying, endless*. In Mark 9:43-48 "the fire" signifies the wrath of God, and "the worm" signifies remorse of conscience. The "great gulf fixed" between the righteous and the wicked after death is declared by Christ in Luke 16:26 to be *impassable*. Not a particle of all the quibbling about *olam, aion* and *aionios* will apply to such unmistakable passages as Mark 9:43-48, John 3:3, 36, Luke 16:26; Revelation 21:8 and 22:11.

The Scriptures everywhere represent the doomed state of the wicked after death as a FINALITY; they contain not one syllable to justify the belief that there is any repentance, or forgiveness, or radical change of state in the world beyond the grave. Even the eye of the Apostle, of love, as he stands upon the last and loftiest heights of inspiration, sees only endless misery for the wicked. The filthy and unjust then will remain guilty rebels against God and wretched sufferers forever. The severe punishment inflicted by an avenging Judge, instead of softening and reconciling, will harden and exasperate the criminal. That a Most Holy God has an infinite hatred of sin is shown by the Noachian deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Pharaoh and his host, and of Jerusalem, by the numberless and indescribable miseries of men in all ages of the world, and by the awful summons that *one soul every second* receives to quit these mortal shores and appear in the presence of its God. And the infinite hatred of a Most Holy God against sin is shown infinitely more than it could have been shown by all the sufferings of all the human race forever, by the BLEEDING UNUTTERABLE AGONIES OF THE MEEK AND LOWLY AND SPOTLESS LAMB OF GOD IN GETHSEMANE AND ON CALVARY WHILE HE EXPIATED THE SINS OF HIS SPIRITUAL ISRAEL. *"It is far less possible that the bitter cup should pass from the lips of the finally impenitent than that it should have been taken from the trembling hand of the holy and harmless Son of God."*

The unanswerable refutation of the entire body of argument used by the infidel "restorationist" is that this feeble, carnal, heathen and ungodly system wholly does away with the atonement of Christ and the sanctification of the Spirit, the most fundamental truths of Holy Writ, and substitutes, in their stead, satisfaction rendered to Divine justice, and purification obtained by each human being, by the actual individual sufferings of each sinner in this and the future world. If this doctrine be true, there is *no salvation*, in the true sense of the term, for any member of the Adamic race.

The Scriptures and arguments already adduced thoroughly refute also the position of those who advocate the annihilation of the wicked at or after death, or what they call a conditional immortality.

More fully, clearly and emphatically than all the prophets and Apostles does the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate God of eternity, the Savior of men, the last Supreme Judge of the human race, describe to us the awful state of the impenitent dead. May we have the wisdom, by Divine grace, as well upon this as upon every other subject, to turn from all other masters and to HEAR HIM.

It seems, according to the Scriptures, that the sufferings of the lost will arise: "from the loss of all earthly good; from exclusion from the presence and favor of God; from the unrestrained dominion of sin; from the operations of conscience; from despair; from evil associates; from bodily tortures; and from the everlasting duration of their sufferings."

"When Christ comes again it will be to be admired in all them that believe. Those who are then alive will be changed in the twinkling of an eye; their corruptible shall put on incorruption, and their mortal shall put on immortality. Those who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth to the resurrection of life, their bodies fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God. Thus changed, both classes of believers shall be ever with the Lord. The place of the final abode of the righteous is sometimes called a house, as when the Savior said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions' (John 14:2); sometimes 'a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Heb. 11:10). Under this

figure it is called the new or heavenly Jerusalem, so gorgeously described in the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse. Sometimes it is spoken of as 'a better country, that is an heavenly' (Heb. 11:16); a country through which flows the river of the water of life, and 'on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever' (Rev. 22:2-5). Sometimes the final abode of the redeemed is called a 'new Heavens and a new earth'" (2 Peter 3:13).

"As to the blessedness of this heavenly state we know that it is inconceivable: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9)."

"We know not, O we know not
What joys await us there;
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare."

"We know, however: (1.) That this incomprehensible blessedness of Heaven shall arise from the vision of God. This vision is beatific. It transforms the soul into the Divine image; transfusing into it the Divine life, so that it is filled with the fullness of God. This vision of God is in the face of Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the plenitude of the Divine glory bodily. God is seen in fashion as a man; and it is this manifestation of God in the person of Christ that is inconceivably and intolerably ravishing. Peter, James and John became as dead men when they saw His glory, for a moment, in the holy mount. (2.) The blessedness of the redeemed will flow not only from the manifestation of the glory, but also of the love of God; of that love, mysterious, unchangeable and infinite, of which the work of redemption is the fruit. (3.) Another element of the future happiness of the saints is the

indefinite enlargement of all their faculties. (4.) Another is their entire exemption from all sin and sorrow. (5.) Another is their intercourse and fellowship with the high intelligences of Heaven; with patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, and all the redeemed. (6.) Another is constant increase in knowledge and in the useful exercise of all their powers. (7.) Another is the secure and everlasting possession of all possible good."—C. *Hodge*.

"The everlasting duration of the happiness of the righteous is shown by its being called eternal or everlasting life, eternal glory, a house eternal in the Heavens, an eternal inheritance, an everlasting kingdom, a continuing city, a better country, a being ever with the Lord, in accordance with the eternal purpose of God and the everlasting covenant of grace; were there any fears of its ever ending, it could not be perfect happiness.

"As to whether there will be any degrees in the final happiness of the saints, those passages of Scripture usually brought to support it usually belong to the militant, not to the triumphant, state of the church. The arguments against degrees in glory are: (1.) That all the people of God are loved by Him with the same everlasting love. (2.) They were all chosen together in Christ before the foundation of the world. (3.) They are all equally interested in the same everlasting covenant of grace. (4.) They are all equally redeemed with the same precious blood of Christ. (5.) They are all *freely* justified by the same righteousness of Christ. (6.) All are equally the predestinated and adopted children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. (7.) They are all raised up from the same low and lost estate by Christ to be kings and priests unto God."—*John Gill*

The church is a unit, and must ultimately triumph over all opposition.

The Apostle Paul represents the church as the body of Jesus Christ, as may be gathered by reference to the following Scriptures: Romans. 12:5; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 10:17; 12:27; Ephesians 1:23; 4:12; 5:23, 30; Colossians 1:18, 24; 2:17. "He thus represents it as an organic living system of various members, powers and functions, and at the same time as the abode of Christ and the object of His redeeming and sanctifying influence upon the world. Christ is, in one view, the ruling head; in another the invisible, all-

pervading soul of this body. Christ without the church were a head without a body, a fountain without a stream, a king without subjects, a captain without soldiers, a bridegroom without a bride. The church without Christ were a body without soul or spirit, a lifeless corpse. The church lives only as Christ lives or works in her. At every moment of her existence is dependent on Him, as the body on the soul, or the branches on the vine. But on His part He perpetually bestows upon her If is heavenly gifts, and supernatural powers, continually reveals Him—self in her, and will dwell in her during her entire, militant state, when at last all the principalities and powers of earth will yield free obedience to Him, and adore Him as the eternal Prophet, Priest and King of the regenerate race”—*Schaff*.

Such is the character of that society, of that church, of that kingdom that was ushered into the world in the days of the Caesars, and which has never taken one step backwards, but amidst fires and faggots, prisons and deaths, has marched steadily onward, conquering and to conquer, through the great Captain of her salvation, and will eventually fill the world with the glory of God.

ENDNOTES:

viii[1] This was Herod Agrippa I., the grandson of Herod the Great, who sought the life of the infant Savior, and the nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist, and the father of Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul made his defense recorded in Acts 26 Josephus says that the characteristics of Herod Agrippa I. were devotion to Judaism, gentleness, beneficence, and love of popularity. The twelfth chapter of Acts illustrates his Judaism and love of popularity.

ix[2] By this occupation Paul supported himself during his Apostleship. His churches, like the Christians in general of the first and succeeding centuries, were of the lower and poorer classes in society; and he chose not to burden them, but to labor for his own necessities, as well as for those with him. He collected money for the poor Jewish Christians in Palestine, but not for himself. “Only as an exception did he receive gifts from the Philippian

brethren, who were peculiarly dear to him." Yet he enjoins upon the churches to care for the temporal needs of their spiritual teachers.

x[3] It is, however, thought by many that Paul was specially chosen of God to fill the place vacated by the treason of Judas; the selection of Matthias by the eleven (Acts 1:26) being regarded as of no Divine sanction or validity.

xi[4] The James mentioned in Acts 12:17, 15:13 and 21:18 was undoubtedly the same person; and it is evident that he was the same with him whom Paul calls "James the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1:19), and whom Mark (6:3) mentions as being, together with Joses, Jude and Simon, a brother of Jesus. But it is the most difficult question in church history to decide whether he was the same with the Apostle James, the son of Alpheus (commonly called James the Less, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee and brother of John). From the latest and most thorough investigations it is most probable that James the Lord's brother was a different person from James the Apostle, the son of Alpheus. The former was also called James the Just, and was the first pastor of the church of Jerusalem, and wrote the epistle of James, and suffered martyrdom just before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was noted for his morality and wisdom.

xii[5] This was an aggregation of corruptions from all the countries where Christianity was disseminated—a combination of Platonic philosophy, Alexandrian Judaism, dualistic Parsism, pantheistic Buddhism, and phantasmal Christianity. A false Gnosticism exalted knowledge above faith, hope, love, humility, and every other Christian virtue. It represented God as an infinite, unfathomable, unnamable abyss, eternally and unconsciously evolving attributes or eons, the lowest of which, falling combined with dead, empty, eternal matter, and produced a weak or evil Demiurgus or Artificer who made this world; it represented Christ as the most perfect of the eons, but declared his human life an illusion; and it represented the Holy Spirit as a subordinate eon. The system degenerated into utter infidelity and sensuality, especially with the Ophite Gnostics. It originated in the first century, flourished in the second, and gradually lost importance after the

middle of the third, but was to a great degree revived in the Manichaeism of the fourth and fifth centuries.

xiii[6] While the Judaizing Ebionites of the first century, like the modern Socinians and Unitarians, denied the Divinity of Christ, the pseudo-spiritualistic Docetae, a branch of the Gnostics, considering matter essentially evil, denied His real humanity, regarding His entire earthly life and death as a deceptive show or a mere vision.

xiv[7] Instead of the term *Gnosticism* Mr. Pressense should here have written *knowledge*. The term Gnosticism (now properly restricted to what Mr. P. calls *false gnosticism*) is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning *knowledge*. A true Scriptural knowledge of Divine things is highly false *gnosis*, opposing inspiration, is denounced (1 Tim. 6:20, 21).
