

**THE HISTORY OF
THE ORIGINS
OF CHRISTIANITY
BOOK IV.**

THE ANTICHRIST.

BY

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	i- xvi
<hr/>	
CHAPTER I.	
PAUL CAPTIVE AT ROME	1
<hr/>	
CHAPTER II.	
PETER AT ROME	13
<hr/>	
CHAPTER III.	
CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF JUDEA—DEATH OF JAMES	22
<hr/>	
CHAPTER JIV.	
FINAL ACTIVITY OF PAUL	35
<hr/>	
CHAPTER V.	

THE APPROACH OF THE CRISIS	53
CHAPTER VI.	
THE BURNING OF ROME	60
CHAPTER VII.	
MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS—THE ÆSTHETICS OF NERO	76
CHAPTER VIII.	
DEATH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL	91
CHAPTER IX.	
THE DAY AFTER THE CRISIS	98
CHAPTER X.	
THE REVOLUTION IN JUDEA	111
CHAPTER XI.	
MASSACRES IN SYRIA AND IN EGYPT	125
CHAPTER XII.	
VESPASIAN IN GALILEE—THE TERROR AT JERUSALEM—FLIGHT OF THE CHRISTIANS	134
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE DEATH OF NERO	154
CHAPTER XIV.	
PLAGUES AND PROGNOSTICS	165
CHAPTER XV.	
THE APOSTLES IN ASIA	174
CHAPTER XVI.	
THE APOCALYPSE	193
CHAPTER XVII.	
THE FORTUNE OF THE BOOK	229

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ACCESSION OF THE FLAVII	244
------------------------------------	------------

CHAPTER XIX.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM	255
---------------------------------	------------

APPENDIX	282
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THE ANTICHRIST.

INTRODUCTION.

REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS USED IN THIS WORK.

AFTER the three or four years of the public life of Jesus, the period which the present volume embraces was the most extraordinary [in] the whole development of Christianity. We shall see by a strange play of that grand unconscious artist who seems to preside over the apparent caprices of history, Jesus and Nero, the Christ and the Antichrist, opposed and facing each other, if I dare say it, like Heaven and Hell. The Christian conscience is complete. Up till now it has scarcely known to do ought but love; the persecutions of the Jews, although bitter enough, have been unable to change the bond of affection and recognition which the budding church keeps within its heart for its mother the synagogue, from which she is scarcely separated. Now the Christian has somewhat to hate. In front of Jesus there appears a monster who is the ideal of evil even as Jesus is the ideal of good. Reserved like Enoch or like Elias to play a part in the final tragedy the universe, Nero completes the Christian mythology, inspires the first sacred book of the new canon, founds, by a hideous massacre, the primacy of the Roman Church, and prepares the revolution which shall make Rome a Holy City, a second Jerusalem. At the same time, by one of those mysterious coincidences which are not rare in the moments of the great crises of humanity, Jerusalem is destroyed, the temple disappears, Christianity, disembarassed from what has been irksome to it, emancipates itself more and more, and follows outside of conquered Judaism its own destinies.

The last epistles of St. Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the epistles attributed to Peter and James, and the Apocalypse among the canonical writings [are] the principal documents of this history. The first epistle of Clemens Romanus, Tacitus and Josephus furnish us also with valuable indications. On a large number of points, notably on the death of the Apostles and the relations of John with Asia, our picture will remain in semi-obscurity; upon others we shall be able to concentrate real rays of light. The material facts of the Christian origins are almost all obscure; what is clear is the ardent enthusiasm, the superhuman boldness, the sublime contempt for

reality which makes this movement the most powerful effort towards the ideal whose memory has been preserved to us.

In the introduction to our *St. Paul* we have discussed the authenticity of all the epistles which have been attributed to the Great Apostle. The four epistles which are connected with this volume, the epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and the Ephesians are those which suggest certain doubts. The objections raised against the epistle to the Philippians are of such little value that we need scarcely dwell upon them. We have seen and we shall see in what follows that the epistle to the Colossians gives much more ground for reflection, and that the epistle to the Ephesians, although well authenticated, presents a separate aspect in the work of Paul. Notwithstanding the great difficulties which can be raised, I hold the epistle to the Colossians as authentic. The interpolations which in these last times some skilful critics have proposed to see there are not clear. The system of M. Holtzmann on this point is worthy of its learned author; but what dangers are there in this method too much accredited in Germany, where they start from an *a priori* figure which must serve as a fixed criterion for the authorship of the works of a writer! That the interpolation and supposition of apostolic writings had been often practised during the first two centuries of Christianity cannot be denied. But to make in such a matter a strict discernment between the true and the false, the apocryphal and the authentic is a task impossible to carry out. We see with certainty that the Epistle to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians are authentic. We see with the same certainty that the Epistles to Timothy and Titus are apocryphal. In the interval, between these two poles of critical evidence we hesitate. The great school led by Christian Baur has as principal defect, its representing the Jews of the first century as complete characters, fed upon dialectics and obstinate in their arguments. Peter, Paul, Jesus even, in the writings of this school, resemble some Protestant theologians of a German University having all one doctrine, having but one, keeping always the same. Now, what is true is that the wonderful men who are the heroes of this history changed and contradicted themselves much. They accepted during their lives three or four theories; they made borrowings from those of their adversaries

against whom at another time they had been most severe. These men, looked at from our point of view, were susceptible, personal, irritable, mobile; what makes fixity of opinion, science, and rationalism was foreign to them. They had among them, like the Jews, in all times, violent disagreements; but, nevertheless, they made up very solid body. To understand them we must place ourselves at a great distance from the pedantry inherent in every scholastic; we must study rather the little coteries of a pious society, the English and American congregations, and, principally, what has passed since the foundation of all the religious orders. Under this view the faculties of theology in the German Universities, which can alone supply the amount of work necessary to arrange the chaos of documents relative to these curious origins, are the places, in all the world, in which the true history of it could be written. Now, history is the analysis of a life which develops itself, of a germ which expands, and theology is the inverse of life. Only attentive to what confirms or weakens his dogmas, the theologian, even the most liberal, is always, without thinking it, an apologist; he seeks to defend or to refute. The historian only seeks to recount. Facts materially false, documents even apocryphal, have for him a value, for they paint the soul, and are often more true than the dry truth itself. The greatest error in his eyes is to transform into factors of abstract theory those good and artless missionaries whose dreams have been the consolation and the joy of so many centuries.

What we are about to say of the Epistle to the Colossians, and especially of the Epistle to the Ephesians, must be said with stronger reason of the first epistle attributed to St. Peter and the epistles attributed to James and Jude. The second epistle, attributed to Peter, is certainly apocryphal. We recognise at the first glance an artificial composition, an imitation composed of scraps of apostolic writings, especially from the Epistle of Jude. We do not dwell upon this point, for we do not believe that II. Peter has among true critics a single defender. But the falseness of II. Peter, an epistle whose principal object is to encourage patience among the faithful who are wearied by the long delay of the reappearance of Christ, proves in a sense the authenticity of I. Peter. For, to be apocryphal, II. Peter is a writing old enough;

now the author of II. Peter thoroughly believed that I. Peter was the work of Peter, since he refers to it, and represents his writing as a "second epistle," making a sequence to the first (iii., 1-2). I. Peter is one of the writings of the New Testament which are most anciently and most unanimously quoted as authentic. One grave objection only is drawn from the borrowings which may be remarked there from the Epistles of St. Paul, and in particular from that to the Ephesians. But the secretary whom Peter used to write the letter, if he really wrote it, might well be allowed to make such borrowings. At all times preachers and publicists have been unscrupulous in appropriating to themselves those phrases which have become public property, and which are in a sort of way "in the air." We see, likewise, Paul's secretary, who has the epistle called to the Ephesians copying largely from the Epistle to the Colossians. One of the features which characterizes the literature of the epistles is to present many borrowings from writings of the same kind composed previously.

The first four verses of Chapter v. of I Peter excite, indeed, some suspicions. They recall the pious recommendations, a little insipid, impressed upon a hierarchical mind which fill the false epistles to Timothy and Titus. Besides, the affectation which the author shows in representing himself a "witness of the suffering of Christ," raises apprehensions analogous to those which the pseudo-Johannine writings cause by their persistence in representing themselves as the accounts of an actor and spectator. We do not require, however, to stop at that. Many features also are favourable to the hypothesis of authenticity. Thus the progress towards hierarchy is scarcely sensible in I. Peter. Not only is there no mention of *Episcopos*, each Church has not even a *Presbyteros*; it has some *presbyteri* or "elders," and the expressions which the author uses do not imply that these elders formed a distinct body. A circumstance which deserves to be noted is that the author, while seeking to exalt the abnegation of which Jesus gives proof in his passion, omits an essential feature recorded by Luke, and gives us also to believe that the legend of Jesus had not yet arrived, at the time he wrote, at its full development.

As to the eclectic and conciliatory tendencies which we observe in the Epistle of Peter, they only constitute an objection for those who, with Christian Baur and his

pupils, represent the diversity between Peter and Paul as an absolute opposition. If the hatred between the two parties in primitive Christianity had been as deep as this school believes, the reconciliation would never have been made. Peter was not an obstinate Jew like James. It is not necessary in writing this history to consider only the pseudo-Clementine Homilies and the Epistle to the Galatians. It is necessary to take account of the *Acts of the Apostles*. The art of the historian should consist in presenting things in a manner which should in nothing lessen the divisions of parties (these divisions were deeper than we can imagine), and which, nevertheless, permits of explaining how such divisions have been able to weld themselves into a fine unity.

The Epistle of James presents itself to criticism very nearly under the same conditions as the Epistle of Peter. The difficulties of detail which can be opposed to that have not much importance. What is serious is that general objection drawn from the facility of the suppositions of writings at a time when there existed no guarantee of authenticity, and which there would be no scruple as to pious frauds. As to writers like Paul, who have left us by universal admission certain writings, and whose biography is well enough known, there are two certain *criteria* for discerning false attributions; it is (1st) to compare the doubtful work with the universally admitted works, and (2nd) to see if the matter in dispute answers to the biographical data we possess. But if it concerns a writer of whom we have some disputed pages, and whose biography is little known, we have often to decide only on the grounds of sentiment which do not weigh with us. By showing one's self easy certainly risk taking as serious things that are false; by showing one's self rigorous we risk rejecting as false things that are true. The theologian who believes that he proceeds upon certainties is, I repeat, a bad judge of such questions. The critical historian has a conscience at rest when he sets himself to investigate thoroughly the different degrees of certain, probable, plausible, and possible. If he has skill he will know what so true as much by the general colour, while he is prodigal of particular allegations, the signs of doubt and the "may-bes."

A consideration which I have found favourable to these writings (the 1st Epistle of Peter, the Epistles of James and Jude), very rigorously excluded by a certain

criticism, is the fashion in which they are adapted to an organically received recital. While the 2nd Epistle attributed to Peter; the pretended Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, are excluded from the limits of a logical history, the three epistles which we have named enter these, so to speak, of themselves. The features of circumstances which one meets there seem anticipative of facts known through evidence from without, and are embraced in it. The Epistle of Peter answers well to what we know, especially through Tacitus, as to the situation of the Christians at Rome about the year 63 or 64. The Epistle of James, on the other hand, is the perfect picture of the state of the *Ebionim*, at Jerusalem in the years which preceded the revolt. Josephus gives us some statements of the some kind. The hypothesis which attributes the Epistle of James to a James different from the Lord's brother has no advantage. This epistle, it is true, was not admitted in the first centuries in a manner as unanimous as that of Peter; but the motives for these hesitations appear to have been rather dogmatic than critical; the small taste of the Greek fathers for the Judeo-Christian writings was the principal cause of it.

A remark that at least applies with clearness to the small apostolic writings of which we speak is that they had been composed before the fall of Jerusalem. That event introduced into the situation of Judaism and Christianity such changes that one can easily discern a writing subsequent to the catastrophe of the year 70, from a writing contemporaneous with the third temple. Pictures evidently relating to the anterior struggles among the different classes of Jerusalem society, like that which the Epistle of James presents to us (v., & ff), could not be conceived after the revolt of the year 66, which put an end to the reign of the Sadducees. From what there is in the pseudo-apostolic epistles, such as the epistles to Timothy, Titus, *II. Peter*, the epistle of Barnabas, works where we have as a rule an imitation or expansion of the more ancient writings; it follows, then, that there were some writings really apostolic, surrounded by respect, and whose number it was desired to augment. Just as each Arabic poet of the classical period has had his *kasida*, the complete expression of his personality; in like manner each apostle has his epistle more or less authentic, in which it was believed that the fine flower of his thought was preserved.

We have already spoken of the Epistle to the Hebrew. We have proved that this work is not by St. Paul, as has been believed in certain branches of Christian tradition, but we are shown that the date of its composition allows it to be fixed with considerable verisimilitude about the year 66. It remains for us to examine whether it can be known who was the true author, where it was written, and who are those "Hebrews" to whom, according to the title, it was addressed. The circumstantial features which the epistle present are the following:—The author speaks to the Church named as a master well-known to it. He takes as his point of view almost a tone of reproach. That Church has received the faith a long time back, but it has so sunk in the matter of doctrine that it has need of elementary instruction, and is not capable of comprehending a high theology. This Church, besides, has shown, and shows still, much courage and devotion, especially in serving the saints. It had suffered cruel persecutions about the time when it received the full light of the faith. At that time it had been as a spectacle. That was but for a short period, for those who at that time actually composed the Church had had part in the merits of that persecution by sympathising with the confessors, by visiting the prisoners, and especially by courageously enduring the loss of their goods. In the trials, moreover, there were found some renegades, and the question was mooted as to whether those who by weakness had apostatised could re-enter the Church. At the time when the apostle wrote, it appears that there were still some members of the Church in prison. The believers of the Church in question had some illustrious heads who had preached to them the word of God, and whose death had been specially edifying and glorious. The Church had, notwithstanding, still some leaders with whom the author of the letter was on intimate relations. The author of the letter, in fact, has known was on the Church in question, and has exercised there a distinguished ministry. He has the intention of returning to it, and he desires that his return shall be brought about as quickly as possible. The author and those whom he addresses knew Timothy. Timothy has been imprisoned in a different town from that where the author is residing at the time he writes. Timothy had just been set at liberty. The author hopes that Timothy will go to rejoin him, then both of them will set forth together to visit

the Church addressed. The author finishes with these words—ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας, words which can scarcely describe any other than Italians residing for the time being outside of Italy.

As to the author himself, his ruling feature is a perpetual use of the Scriptures, a subtle and allegorical exegesis, a most copious Greek style, very classical, a little dry, but at least as natural as that of most of the apostolic writings. He has a medium acquaintance with the worship which is practised at Jerusalem, and yet this cult inspires him with much pre-possession. He only uses the Alexandrian version of the Bible, and he founds some arguments upon the errors of Greek copyists. He is not a Jerusalem Jew; he is a Hellenist in sympathy with Paul's school. The author, in short, does not give himself out for an immediate hearer of Jesus, but for a hearer of those who had seen Jesus—for a spectator of the apostolic miracles, and the first manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He no less holds an elevated rank in the Church; he speaks with authority; he is much respected by the brethren to whom he writes. Timothy appears to be subordinate to him. The single fact of addressing an epistle to a great Church indicates an important man, one of those personages who figure in the apostolic history, and whose name is celebrated.

All this, nevertheless, is not sufficient for us to pronounce with certainty as to the author of our epistle. It has been attributed, with more or less likelihood, to Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Apollo, and to Clemens Romanus. The attribution to Barnabas is the most likely. It has for it the authority of Tertullian, who represents the fact as recognised by everyone. It has especially in its favour this circumstance, that not one of the special features which the epistle presents are opposed to such an hypothesis. Barnabas was a Cypriote Hellenist, at that time associated with Paul, and independent of Paul. Barnabas was known by all and esteemed by all; it may be conceived, in short, how in this hypothesis the epistle has been attributed to Paul; it was, in fact, the lot of Barnabas to be always lost in some sense in the rays of the glory of the Great Apostle, and if Barnabas has composed some writing, as appears very probable, it is among the works of Paul that it is natural to seek for the pages really from his pen.

The determination of the Church addressed may be made with as much likelihood. The circumstances which we have enumerated scarcely permit of any choice but between the Church of Rome and that of Jerusalem. The title Πρὸς Ἐβραίους makes us think at once of the Church at Jerusalem, but it is impossible to be stopped by each a thought. Some passages—such as v., 11-14, vi., 11-12, and even 6 and 10—are nonsense if we suppose them addressed by a pupil of the apostle's to that mother Church—the source of all instruction. What said of Timothy is not better conceived; people as much engaged as the author, and as Timothy in Paul's party, would not have been able to address to the Church at Jerusalem a communication, supposing intimate relation. How can we admit, for example, that the author, with that exegesis, only founded on the Alexandrian version, that incomplete Jewish knowledge, that imperfect acquaintance with the affairs of the temple, would have dared to give a lesson so lofty to the masters *par excellence*, to people speaking Hebrew, or nearly so, living every day about the temple, and who knew much better than he all that he could tell them? How can we admit especially that he could treat them as catechumens scarcely initiated and incapable of a strong theology? On the contrary, if we suppose that the persons to whom the epistle was addressed are the faithful at Rome, everything is wonderfully arranged. The passages, vi., 10, x., 32 verse and ff., 3-7, are allusions to the persecutions of the year 64; the passage xiii., 7, applies to the death of the Apostles Peter and Paul; in short, οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας are then perfectly justified; for it is natural that the author should bear to the Church of Rome the salutations of the colony of Italians who were around him. Let us add that the 1st Epistle of Clemens Romanus (a work certainly Roman) makes from the Epistle to the Hebrews some distinct borrowings, and follows its mode of exposition very distinctly.

A single difficulty remains to be solved: Why the title of the epistle Πρὸς Ἐβραίους? Let us recall the fact that these titles are not always of apostolic origin, that they have sometimes been inserted later and falsely, as we have seen in the epistle called Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους. The epistle called to the Hebrews was written under the

blow of persecution to the Church which was the most persecuted. In many passages (for example, xiii., 23) we feel that the author expresses himself in covert words. Perhaps the vague title Πρὸς Ἑβραίους was a password to save the letter from becoming a compromising matter. Perhaps, also, this title comes from this, that, in the second century, they looked upon the writing in question as a refutation of the Ebionites whom they called Ἑβραῖοι. A fact remarkable enough is that the Church of Rome had always, as to this epistle, some quite special lights; it is from thence it emerges, it is from thence that the first use is made of it. While Alexandria allows it be attributed to Paul, the Church of Rome maintained always that it is not by that apostle, and that it is wrong to add it to his writings.

From what city was the Epistle to the Hebrews written? It is more difficult to say. The expression Οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας shows that the author was out of Italy. One thing again, certainly, is that the town from which the epistle was written was a great city where there was a colony of Christians from Italy closely allied with those of Rome. These Christians of Italy were probably believers who escaped in the persecution of the year 64. We shall see that the current of Christian emigration fleeing from these terrors of Nero was directed towards Ephesus. The Church of Ephesus, besides, had had for the nucleus of its primitive formation two Jews come from Rome, Aquila and Priscilla; it remained always in direct relation with Rome. We are, therefore, led to believe that the epistle in question was written from Ephesus. Verse 23 of chap. xiii, it must be confessed, in that case, is singular enough. In what town other than Ephesus or Rome, and yet in relation with Ephesus and Rome, could Timothy have been imprisoned? What hypothesis we should adopt is an enigma difficult to explain. The Apocalypse is the principal feature of this history. The persons who will read attentively our chapters xv., xvi., and xvii., will realise, I believe that there is no single writing in the Biblical canon which can be fixed with so much precision. We may determine this date to nearly a few days. The place where the work was written we are also at liberty to fix with probability. The question of the author of the book is, however, subject to greater uncertainty. Upon this point we cannot in my view express ourselves as fully assured. The author names himself at the head of the

book (i., v. 9): "I, John, your brother and your companion in persecution for the kingdom and patience in Christ." But two questions arise here. First, is the assertion sincere, or is it not one of those pious frauds of which all the authors of apocalypses, without exception, have been found guilty? Is the book, in other terms, not by an unknown person, who would be taken for a man of the first order in the opinion of the Churches for John the Apostle—a vision agreeable to his own ideas? Second, having admitted that verse 9 of chapter i of the Apocalypse is sincere, may this John not be a namesake of the Apostle?

Let us discuss first this second hypothesis, for it is the easier to dispose of. The John who speaks, or who is reputed to speak in the Apocalypse, expresses himself with such vigour, supposes so clearly that he will be known, and that people will have no difficulty in distinguishing him from any of his namesakes; he knows so well the secrets of the Churches, he enters into them with such a resolute air, that they can scarcely refuse to see in him an apostle or an ecclesiastical dignitary all along the line. Now, John the Apostle had not in the second half of the first century any namesake who approached him in rank. Although M. Hitzig speaks of John Mark, he has really no place here, and was never on relations so intimate with the Churches of Asia that he should dare to address them in this tone. There remains a doubtful personage, that Presbyteros Johannes, a sort of likeness of the Apostle, who troubles like a spectre all the history of the Church of Ephesus, and causes critics so much embarrassment. Although the existence of this personage has been denied, and although we cannot peremptorily refute the hypothesis of those who see in him a shade of the Apostle John taken for a reality, we incline to believe that Presbyteros Johannes had, in fact, a separate identity; but that he had written the Apocalypse in 68 or 69, as M. Ewald still maintains, we absolutely deny. Such a personage would be known otherwise than by an obscure passage of Papias and an apologetic thesis of Dionysius of Alexandria. We should find his name in the Gospels, in the *Acts*, or in some epistle. We should see him leaving Jerusalem. The author of the Apocalypse is the best versed in the Scriptures, the most attached to the Temple, the most Hebraizing of the New Testament writers; such a personage could not have been

introduced in the provinces; he must be originally from Judea; he holds with the chords of his heart to the Church of Israel. If *Presbyteros Johannes* existed, he was a disciple of the Apostle John, in the extreme old age of the latter. Papias appears to have been near enough to him, or at least to have been his contemporary. We admit, even, that sometimes he takes the pen for his master, and we regard as plausible the opinion which attributes to him the editing of the fourth gospel and of the first epistle called of John. The second and third epistles called "of John," where the author designs himself by the the words *ὁ πρεσβύτερος*, appear to us to be his personal work, and avowed as such. But, certainly, supposing that *Presbyteros Johannes* may have some position in the second class of Johannine writings (which include the fourth gospel and the three epistles), he has none in the composition of the Apocalypse. If anything is clear, it is that the Apocalypse, on the one hand, and the gospel and the three epistles on the other hand, do not come from the same pen. The Apocalypse is the most Jewish, the fourth gospel is the least Jewish of the writings of the New Testament. While admitting that the Apostle John may be author of some one of the writings which tradition attributes to him, it is assuredly the Apocalypse and not the Gospel. The Apocalypse answers well to the decisive opinion he appears to have adopted in the contest between the Judeo-Christians and Paul; the Gospel does not answer to it. The efforts which, in the third century, a party of the fathers of the Greek Church made to attribute the Apocalypse to the *Presbyteros*, came from the repulsion which the book then inspired in the orthodox doctors. They could not endure the thought that a writing whose style they found barbarous, and which appeared to them deeply impressed by Jewish hatred, should be the work of an apostle. Their opinion was the result of an induction *a priori* without value, not the expression of a tradition or of a critical reasoning.

If the *ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης* of the first chapter of the Apocalypse is sincere, the Apocalypse is then most assuredly by the Apostle John. But the essence of apocalypses is to be pseudonymous. The authors of the Apocalypses of Daniel, Enoch, Baruch, and Esdras represent themselves as being Daniel, Enoch, Baruch, and Esdras in person. The Church of the second century admitted upon the same

footing as the Apocalypse of John an Apocalypse of Peter, which was decidedly apocryphal. If, in the Apocalypse which has remained canonical, the author gives his true name, there is there a surprising exception to rules of the kind. Well, that exception we believe must be admitted. An essential difference, indeed, separates the canonical Apocalypse from the other analogous writings which have been preserved to us. The greater number of the apocalypses are attributed to authors who have flourished, or have been reputed to flourish five or six hundred years—sometimes thousands of years back. In the second century they attributed apocalypses to the men of the apostolic century. The *Shepherd* and the pseudo-Clementine writings are 50 or 60 years later than the personages to whom they are attributed. The Apocalypse of Peter was probably in the same position; at least, nothing proves that it had anything special, topical, or personal. The canonical Apocalypse, on the contrary, if it is pseudonymous, would have been attributed to the Apostle John, in his lifetime, or a very short time after his death. Were it not for first three chapters, that would be barely possible; but is it conceivable that the falsifier would have the boldness to address his apocryphal work to the seven Churches which had been in relation with the apostle? And if one were to deny those relations, with M. Scholten, they would fall into a still greater difficulty, for it would be necessary to admit, then, that the falsifier, by an inaptness which has never been equalled, writing to churches which had never know John, presents his pretended John as having been at Patmos, quite near Ephesus, and knowing their deepest secrets, and as having full authority over them. Those churches, which, in the hypothesis of M. Scholten, knew well that John had never been in Asia, nor near Asia—could they be deceived by such a gross artifice? One thing which appears from the Apocalypse, in all hypotheses, is that the Apostle John was for some time head of the Churches of Asia. That being established, it is very difficult not to conclude that the Apostle John was really the author of the Apocalypse, for, the date of the book being fixed with absolute precision, we do not find the space of time necessary for a false one. If the apostle, in January 69, lived in Asia, or only had been there, the first four chapters are incomprehensible on the part of a falsifier. In supposing, with M.

Scholten, that the Apostle John died at the beginning of the year 69 (which does not appear to agree with the truth), we are not without embarrassment. The book is written, in fact, if the recorder was still living; it is intended to spread at once in the Churches of Asia; if the apostle had been dead the fraud would have been too evident. What would they have said at Ephesus, in February 69, on receiving a book reputed to proceed from an apostle whom they knew no longer to exist, and whom, according to M. Scholten, they had never seen?

The critical examination of the book, far from weakening this hypothesis, strongly maintains it. John the Apostle appears to have been after James the most ardent of the Judeo-Christians; the Apocalypse, on its side, breathes out a terrible hatred against Paul, and against those who were relaxed in their observance of the Jewish law. The book answers wonderfully to the violent fanatical character which seems to have been that of John. It is indeed the work of the "son of thunder" the terrible Boanerges, of him who wished that the name of his master might be used only by those who belonged to the circle of the most strict of the disciples; of him who, if he could, would have made fire and brimstone to rain on the inhospitable Samaritans. The description of the heavenly court, with its quite material pomp of thrones and crowns, is indeed that of him who, when young, had set his ambition on being seated, with his brother, on thrones to the right and left of the Messiah. The two grand prepossessions of the author of the Apocalypse are Rome (**ch. xiii. and ff.**) and Jerusalem (**ch. xi. and xii.**). It appears that he had seen Rome, its temples, its statues, and the grand imperial idolatry. Now, a journey to Rome the part of John, accompanying Peter, can be easily supposed. What regards Jerusalem is more striking still. The author always reverts to "the beloved city;" he thinks only of it; he is acquainted with all the adventures of the Jerusalemite Church during the revolution of Judea (which calls forth the fine symbol of the woman and her flight into the desert); we feel that he has been one of the pillars of that Church, a devoted enthusiast of the Jewish party. That agrees well with John. The tradition of Asia Minor appears likewise to have preserved his memory an that of a severe Judaizer. In the Passover controversy, which troubled the Churches so deeply during the latter

half of the second century, the authority of John is the principal argument which makes the Asian Churches maintain the celebration of Easter, conformably to Jewish law, on the 14th Nisan. Polycarpus, in the year 160, and Polycrates in 190, made appeal to his authority to defend their ancient usage against the innovators who, resting upon the fourth Gospel, would not have it that Jesus, the true passover, should have eaten the Paschal Lamb the evening before his death, and who transferred the festival to the day of the resurrection.

The language of the Apocalypse is likewise a reason for attributing the book to a member of the Church of Jerusalem. That language is quite apart from the other writing of the New Testament. There is no doubt that the work has been written in Greek; but it is a Greek thought out in Hebrew, and which could be only understood and appreciated by people who knew Hebrew. The author has fed upon prophecies and apocalypses prior to his own to a degree which is astonishing; he evidently knows them by heart. He is familiar with the Greek version of the Sacred Books; but it is in the Hebrew texts the Biblical passages present themselves to him. What a difference from the style of Paul, Luke, or the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or even the synoptical Gospels! A man having passed some years at Jerusalem in the schools which surrounded the Temple could alone be impregnated to that extent with the Bible, or participate thus in a lively manner in the passions of the revolutionary people, and in its hopes and its hatred against the Romans.

Lastly, a circumstance which must not be neglected is that the Apocalypse presents some features which are in sympathy with the fourth Gospel and with the epistles attributed to John. Thus the expression ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ so characteristic of the fourth Gospel is found, for the first time, in the Apocalypse. The image of "living waters" is common to the two works. The expression Lamb of God in the fourth Gospel recalls the expression of the Lamb which is common in the Apocalypse as designating Christ. The two books apply to the Messiah, the passage in [Zechariah xii. v. x.](#), and translate it in the same manner. Far from us be the thought to conclude from these facts that the same pen has written the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, but it is not immaterial that the fourth Gospel, whose author could not

but have some connexion with the Apostle John, presents in its style and its images some sympathy with a book attributed for various reasons to the Apostle John. Ecclesiastical tradition is hesitating upon the question which occupies us. Up to about the year 150 the Apocalypse appears not to have had in the Church the importance which, according to our ideas, ought to have attached to a writing if they had been assured that in this writing they possessed a solemn manifesto coming from the pen of an apostle. It is doubtful if Papias admitted it as having been written by the Apostle John. Papias was a millenarian in the same style as the Apocalypse, but it appears that he declares that he holds this doctrine "from unwritten tradition." If he had alleged the Apocalypse as his ground, Eusebius would have said so, he who receives with so much enthusiasm all the quotations which that ancient father makes from the apostolic writings. The author of the Shepherd of Hermas knew, it would seem, the Apocalypse and copies it, but it does not follow from that that he held it to be a work of John the Apostle. It is St. Justin who, about the middle of the second century, declares as the first, distinctly, that the Apocalypse really is a composition of the Apostle John. Now, St. Justin, who did not come from the bosom of any of the great churches, is a mediocre authority on the question of traditions. Melito, who comments upon certain parts of the work, Theophilus of Antioch, and Apollonius, who used it much in their polemics, appear, nevertheless, like Justin, to have attributed it to the Apostle. As much must be said as to the Canon of Muratori. At the beginning of the year 200 the opinion is widespread that John of the Apocalypse was indeed the apostle. Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, the author of the *Philosophumena*, have not on this point any hesitation. The contrary opinion was always firmly held. To those who shook themselves free from Judeo-Christianity and from primitive millenarianism, the Apocalypse was a dangerous book, impossible to defend, unworthy of an apostle since it contained some prophecies which were not fulfilled. Marcion, Serdo, and the Gnostics rejected it absolutely. The *Apostolic Constitutions* omitted it in their canon, the old Peshito does not contain it. The enemies of the Montanist reveries, such as Caius the Priest, and the Alogi, pretended to see it work of Cerinth. Lastly, in the second half of the third

century, the School of Alexandria, in hatred of the millenarianism arising afresh in consequence of the persecution of Valerian, criticised the book with a severity and an undisguisedly bad disposition; the Bishop Dionysius demonstrated thoroughly that the Apocalypse could not have been by the same author as the fourth Gospel, and put in fashion the hypothesis of the *presbyteros*. In the fourth century the Greek Church was quite divided. Eusebius, although hesitating, is in the main unfavourable to the theory which attributes the work to the son at Zebedee. Gregory of Nazianzus, and nearly all the educated Christians of the same period, refuse to see an apostolic writing in a book which contradicts so keenly their taste, their ideas of apologetics, and their prejudices of education. We may say that if this party had been successful it would have relegated the Apocalypse to the rank of the *Shepherd* and the ἀντιλεγόμενα, whose Greek text has nearly disappeared. Fortunately, it was too late for such exclusions to be successful. Thanks to a skilful opposition, a book which includes some cruel accusations against Paul has been preserved alongside of the very works of Paul, and forms with them a volume reputed to come from a single inspiration.

This persistent protestation, which constitutes a fact so important in ecclesiastical history, is it really of considerable weight in the eyes of independent critics! We cannot tell. Certainly Dionysius of Alexandria is right when he establishes that the same man could not have written the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. But, placed in this dilemma, modern criticism has replied quite otherwise than the criticism of the third century. The authenticity of the Apocalypse has appeared to it more admissible than that of the Gospel, and if in the Johannine work it were necessary to give a share to this problematical *presbyteros*, it is indeed less the Apocalypse than the Gospel and the epistles which might properly be attributed to him. What motive could these adversaries of Montanism in the third and fourth centuries, those Christians educated in the Hebrew schools of Alexandria, Cesarea, and Antioch, have to deny that the author of the Apocalypse was the Apostle John? A tradition, a souvenir preserved in the churches? In no degree. Their motives were motives of theology, *a priori*. At first the attribution of the Apocalypse to the Apostle made it

nearly impossible for an educated and sensible man to admit the authenticity of the fourth gospel, and they would have believed that they were giving up Christianity if they doubted the authenticity of this latter document. Besides, the vision attributed to John would appear an unceasing source of renewed errors; it went forth in perpetual recrudescences of Judeo-Christianity, of intemperate prophecy, of audacious millenarianism? What reply could one make to the Montanists and mystics of the same kind, disciples quite consistent with the Apocalypse, and to those troops of enthusiasts who ran to martyrdom, intoxicated as they were by the strange poetry of the old book I of the year 69? One only; to prove that the book which served as a text for their chimeras was not of apostolic origin. The reason which led Caius and Dionysius and so many others to deny that the Apocalypse was really by the Apostle John is therefore just that which leads us to the opposite conclusion. The book is Judeo-Christian and Ebionite; it is the work of an enthusiast drunk with hatred against the Roman Empire and the profane world; it excludes all reconciliation between Christianity on the one hand, the empire and the world on the other; Messianism to entirely material there; the reign of the martyrs during 1,000 years is affirmed in it; and the end of the world is declared to be very near. These principles, in which the national Christians, led by the direction of Paul, then by the School of Alexandria, saw insurmountable difficulties, are for us works of ancient date and apostolic authenticity. Ebionism and Montanism do not make us afraid any longer; as simple historians, we even affirm that the adherents of these sects, repulsed by orthodoxy, were the true successors of Jesus, of the Twelve, and the family of the Master. The reasonable direction which Christianity took through moderate Gnosticism, by the tardy triumph of Paul's School, and, above all, by the influence of men such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, ought not to make us forget its true beginnings. The chimeras, the impossibilities, the materialistic conceptions, the paradoxes, the enormities which made Eusebius impatient when he read those ancient Ebionite and millenarian authors, such as Papias, were the true primitive Christianity. That the dreams of those sublime enlightened ones should become a religion capable of living, it was necessary that men of good sense and fine spirit, as

were the Greeks who became Christians at the beginning of third century, should take up the work of the old visionaries, and by taking it up should have singularly modified, corrected, and lessened it. The most authentic monuments of the artlessness of the first age became then embarrassing evidence which they tried to place in the shadow. There happened what occurs usually in the origin of all religious creations, that which is particularly observable during the first centuries of the Franciscan order; the founders of the house were ousted by the new comers; the true successors of the first fathers soon became "suspects" and heretics. Hence arises what we have had often occasion to remark, namely, that the favourite books of Ebionite and millenarian Christianity are much better preserved in the Latin and Oriental translations than in the Greek text, the Greek orthodox Church having always shown itself very intolerant in regard to those books and having systematically suppressed them.

The reasons which led to the attribution of the Apocalypse to the Apostle John remain therefore very strong, and I believe that the person who shall read our statement will be struck with the manner in which everything, in this hypothesis, is explained and connected. But, in a world where the ideas of literary ownership were so different from those of our days, a work could belong to an author in many ways. Did the Apostle John himself write the manifesto of the year 69? We may certainly doubt that. It is sufficient for our argument that he had cognizance of it, and that having approved it, he had seen it, without displeasure, passing from hand to hand under his name. The **first three verses of chapter i.**, which have the appearance of another hand than that of the seer, may then be explained. By this would be explained also passages such as **xviii., 20**, and **xxi., 4**, which lead us to believe that he who held the pen was not the Apostle. In **Ephesians ii., 20**, we find an analogous feature, and there we are sure that between Paul and us there was the intermediary of a secretary or an imitator. The abuse which has been made of the name of the apostles to give value to certain apocryphal writings might to make us very suspicious. Many features of the Apocalypse do not suggest an immediate disciple of Jesus. We are surprised to see one of the members of the little party where the

Gospel was elaborated presenting his old friend as a Messiah in glory, seated on the Throne of God, governing the peoples, and so totally different from the Messiah of Galilee that the seer trembles at his appearance and falls half-dead. A man who had known the true Jesus could with difficulty, even at the end of thirty-six years, have undergone such a modification in his remembrances. Mary of Magdala, on seeing Jesus risen, cried out, "O my Master!" and John saw the heavens opened only to discover Him whom he had loved transformed into Christ terrible! . . . Let us add that we are not less astonished to see coming from the pen of one of the principal personages of the Evangelical idyl an artificial composition, a veritable copy, in which the cool imitation of the visions of the old prophets shows itself in every line. The picture of the fishermen of Galilee which is presented to us by the synoptical evangelists scarcely answers to that of scribes, assiduous readers of ancient books of the learned Rabbis. It remains to enquire if it is not the picture of the synoptists which is false, and if the surroundings of Jesus were not more pedantic, scholastic, more analogous to the scribes and Pharisees than the narrative of Matthew, Mark, and Luke might lead one to suppose.

If we admit the hypothesis of which we have spoken, and according to which John rather accepted the Apocalypse as his, than written it with his own hand, we obtain another advantage, that is, of explaining how the book was so little known during the three-quarters of a century which followed its composition. It is probable that the author, after the year 70, seeing Jerusalem taken, the Flavii solemnly established, the Roman Empire reconstituted, and the world determined to last, in spite of the term of three years and a-half he had assigned to it, himself arrested the publicity of his work. The Apocalypse, in fact, only attained its complete importance in the middle of the second century, when millenarianism became a subject of discord in the Churches, and especially when the persecution gave some meaning and reference to the invectives pronounced against the Beast. The future of the Apocalypse was then attached to the alternatives of peace and trials which passed over the Church. Every persecution gave it a fresh popularity; it was when the

persecutions were over that the book ran through real dangers, and we see it on the point of being expelled from the canons as a lying and seditious pamphlet.

Two traditions whose plausibility I have admitted in this volume, viz., the coming of Peter to Rome and the residence of John at Ephesus, having given cause for great controversies, I have made them the subject of an appendix at the end of the volume. I have specially discussed the recent memoir of M. Scholten the sojourn of the apostles in Asia as carefully as all the writings of the eminent Dutch critic deserve. The conclusions at which I have arrived, and which I only hold, besides, as probable, will certainly call forth, as did the use I have made of the fourth Gospel in writing the *Life of Jesus*, the disdain of a young presumptuous school, in whose eyes every statement is proved if it is negative, and which treats peremptorily as ignorant those who do not admit its exaggerations at first sight. I beg the serious reader to believe that I respect him enough to neglect nothing which can serve to the discovery of the truth in the order of studies which I undertake. But I hold, as a principle, that history and dissertation should be distinct from each other. History ought not to be written until after scholarship has accumulated whole libraries of critical essays and memoirs; but, when history comes to act, it only owes to the reader the original source on which each assertion rests. The notes occupy the third of each in those volumes which I dedicate to the origins of Christianity. If I had been obliged to set down the bibliography there, the quotations from modern authors, the detailed discussion of opinions, the notes would have filled at least three quarters of the page. It is true that the method I have followed supposes readers versed in researches in the Old and New Testament, which is the case with few people in France. But how would serious books have the right to exist if, before writing them, the author was bound to be certain that he would have a public to understand him? I affirm, besides, that even a reader who does not know German, if he is acquainted with what has been written in our language on these matters, can quite easily follow my discussion. The excellent collection entitled *Revue de Theologie*, which was printed up to a few years ago in Strasbourg is an encyclopædia of modern exegesis which does not dispense certainly with a reference to German and Dutch books, but

where all the discussions of learned theology for half a century back have their echo. The writings of MM. Reuss, Reville, Scherer, Kienlen, Coulin, and generally the theses of the faculty of Strasbourg, will likewise present to readers desirous of more ample instruction, a solid acquisition. It "goes without saying" that those who can read the writings of Christian Baur, the father of all these studies; of Zeller, of Schougler, of Voltemar, Hitgenfeld, de Lucke, Lipsius, Holtzman, Ewald, Kelm, Hansrath, and Scholten, are much more edified still. I have declared all my life that Germany has acquired an eternal glory in founding the critical science of the Bible and the studies which are connected with it. I have spoken plainly enough to prevent myself being accused of passing silently over obligations which I have recognised a hundred times. The German School of exegetes has its defects; there defects are those which a theologian, however liberal he may be, cannot avoid; but the patience, the tenacity of mind, and the good faith which have been displayed in this work of analysis are truly admirable. Among many very beautiful stories which Germany has placed in the edifice of the human mind, erected at the common expense by all peoples, Biblical science is perhaps the block which has been cut with the greatest care, and which bears in the highest degree the stamp of the workman.

In regard to this volume, as in regard to the preceding, I owe much to the ever-ready scholarship and to the inexhaustible kindness of my learned *confreres* and friends, MM. Egger, Léon Renier, Derenbourg, Waddington, Bossier, de Longpérier, de Witte, Le Blant, Dulaurier, who have been quite willing that I should consult them constantly upon points connected with their special studies. M. Neubauer has reviewed the Talmudic portion. In spite of his labours in the Chamber M. Noel Parfait has been desirous not to discontinue his labours as an accomplished corrector. Lastly, I ought to express my extreme gratitude to MM. Amari, Pietro Rosa, Fabio Gori, Fiorelli, Minervini, and de Luca, who, during a journey in Italy which I made last year, were the most invaluable of guides to me.

We shall see how this journey will connect itself on many sides with the subject of the present volume. Although I had already known Italy, I was longing to salute once more that land of great memories, the learned mother of all Renaissance.

According to a Rabbinical legend, there was at Rome during that long mourning of beauty which is called the middle ages an antique statue preserved in a secret place, and so beautiful that the Romans came by night to kiss it by stealth. The fruit of these profane embraces was, it is said, the Anti-Christ. This son of the marble statue was certainly at least a son of Italy. All the great protests of the human conscience against the extremes of Christianity have come in former times from that land; and thence they will still come in the future.

I should not conceal that the taste for history, the incomparable delight which one feels in seeing the spectacle of humanity unrolled, has especially enthralled me in this volume. I have had too much pleasure preparing it to ask for any other reward than that of having done so. Often I have reproached myself with so much enjoyment of it in my study while poor country is consuming itself in a prostrated agony, but I have had a tranquil conscience. At the time of the elections of 1869, I offered myself to the suffrages of my fellow citizens; all my addresses bore in large letters: "No Revolution; no War; a war will be as fatal as a revolution." In the month of September, 1870, I implored the enlightened spirits of Germany and Europe to think of the frightful misfortunes which were threatening civilization. During the siege in Paris, in the month in November, 1870, I exposed myself to much unpopularity by counselling the calling together of an Assembly having powers to treat for peace. At the the elections of 1871 I replied to the overtures which were made to me: "Such a mandate can be neither sought for nor refused." After the re-establishment of order I applied as much attention as I could to the reforms which I considered the most urgent to save our country. I have therefore done what I could. We owe our country to be sincere with here; we are not obliged to apply charlatanism to make her accept our services or agree with our ideas. Yet perhaps this volume, although addressed above all to the curious and the artistic, will contain much instruction. We shalt see crime pushed to its height, and the protest of the saints raised in the most sublime accents—such a spectacle shall not be without religious fruit. I never believed so thoroughly that religion is not a subjective duping of our nature, that it responds to an exterior reality, and that he who shall have followed its inspirations will have been

the best inspired. To simplify religion is not to shake, it is often to fortify it. The little Protestant sects of our own day, like budding Christianity, are there to prove it. The great error of Catholicism is to believe that it can struggle against the progress of materialism with a complicated dogmatism, encumbering itself every day with a fresh addition of the marvellous. People cannot longer bear a religion founded on miracles; but such a religion might be very living still if it took a part of the dose of positivism which has entered into the intellectual temperament of the working classes. The people who have charge of souls should reduce dogma as much as possible, and make out of worship a means of moral education, of beneficent association. Beyond the family and outside of the State man has need of the Church. The United States of America could not have made their wonderful democracy last but through their innumerable sects. If, as one might suppose, Ultramontane Catholicism cannot succeed longer in the great cities in drawing people to its temples, there needs only the individual initiative created by the little centres where the weak find lessons, moral succour, patronage, and sometimes material assistance. Civil society, whether it calls itself a commune, a canton or a province, a State or father land, has many duties towards the improvement of the individual; but what it does is necessarily limited. The family ought to do much more, but often it is insufficient; some times it is wanting altogether. The association created in the name of moral principle can alone give to every man coming into this world a bond which unites him with the past, duties as to the future, examples to follow a heritage of virtue to receive and to transmit, and a tradition of devotion to continue.

THE ANTICHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

PAUL CAPTIVE AT ROME.

The times were strange, and perhaps the human race had never passed through a more extraordinary crisis. Nero was in his twenty-fourth year. The head of this wretched young man, placed by a wicked mother at the age of seventeen at the head of the world, finished by losing itself. For a long time some indications had disquieted those who knew him. His was a terribly declamatory mind, a bad, hypocritical, light, and vain nature; an incredible compound of false intelligence, deep wickedness, atrocious and cunning egotism, with unheard of refinements of subtlety; to make of him that monster who has no equal in history, and whose analogue is only found in the pathological annals of the scaffold, special circumstances were necessary. The school of crime in which he had grown up, the execrable influence of his mother, the obligation by which that abominable woman made him nearly begin life as a parricide, caused him soon to look on the world as a horrible comedy in which he was the principal actor. At the time we have reached, he has completely withdrawn himself from the philosophers his masters; he has killed nearly all his relations, and set the most shameful follies in the fashion; a portion of Roman society, by his example, has gone down to the last degree of depravity. The ancient harshness had reached its height; the reaction of popular and just instincts began. At the time when Paul entered Rome, the story of the day was this:—

Pedanius Secundus, prefect of Rome, a consular personage, had been assassinated by one of his slaves, not without extenuating circumstances being alleged in favour of the culprit. According to the law, all the slaves who, at the moment of the crime, had dwelt under the same roof as the assassin, ought to be put to death. There were nearly four hundred unfortunates in this case. When it became known that the atrocious execution was about to take place the feeling of justice which sleeps under the conscience of the most debased people was revolted. There had been an *emeute*; but the senate and the emperor decided that the law must take its course.

Perhaps among these four hundred innocents, destroyed in virtue of an odious law, there had been more than one Christian. Men had touched the bottom of the abyss of evil; they could only re-ascend. Certain moral facts of a singular kind took place even in the most elevated ranks of society. Four years before this there had been much talk of an illustrious lady, Pomponia Græcina, wife of Aulus Plautius, the first conqueror of Britain. They accused her of "foreign superstition." She always dressed in black, and never ceased her austerity. They attributed this melancholy to some horrible recollections, especially to the death of Julia, daughter of Drusus, her intimate friend, whom Messalina had put to death; one of her sons appears also to have been the victim of one of Nero's most monstrous enormities. But it was evident that Pomponia Græcina bore in her heart a deeper sorrow, and perhaps some mysterious hopes. She was remitted according to the ancient custom to her husband's judgment. Plautius assembled the relatives, examined the affair in a family council, and declared his wife innocent. That noble lady lived a long time afterwards tranquil under the protection of her husband, always sad—much respected. She appears to have told her secret to no one. Who knows if the appearances which superficial observers took for gloomy disposition were not the great peace of soul, the calm composure, the resigned waiting for death, disdain of a foolish and wicked society, the ineffable joy of renouncing joy? Who knows if Pomponia Græcina may not have been the first saint of the great world, the elder sister of Melania, Eustochia, and of Paula?

This extraordinary situation, if it exposed the Church of Rome to the opposing influence of politics, gave it on the other hand an importance of the first order, although it was not numerous. Rome under Nero in no way resembled the provinces. Whoever aspired to a great action must go there. Paul had in this point of view a sort of deep instinct which guided him. His arrival at Rome was an event in his life nearly as decisive as his conversion. He believed that he had attained to the summit of his apostolic career, and doubtless recalled to mind the dream in which after one of his days of struggle Christ appeared to him and said, "Courage! as thou hast borne witness of me in Jerusalem, thou shall also bear witness of me at Rome."

From the time when he approached the walls of the eternal city, the Centurion Julius conducted his prisoners to the *Castra prætoria*, built by Sejan, near the Nomentan way, and handed them over to the prefect of the prætorium. The appellants to the Emperor were, on entering Rome, regarded as prisoners of the Emperor, and as such were entrusted to the imperial guard. The prefects of the prætorium were ordinarily two in number, but at this moment there was only one. This high office had been since the year 51 A.D., in the hands of the noble Afranius Burrhus, who a year afterwards, by a most miserable death, expiated the crime of having wished to do good by reckoning with evil. Paul had doubtless no direct communication with him. Perhaps, however, the humane fashion in which the apostle would appear to have been treated was due to the influence which this just and virtuous man exercised around him. Paul was appointed to the condition of *custodia militaris*, that is to say entrusted with a prætorian guard to whom he was chained, but not in an inconvenient or continuous fashion. He had permission to live in rooms hired at his own expense, perhaps in the enceinte of the *castra prætoria*, where all came freely to see him. He awaited for two years in this condition the appeal of his case. Burrhus died in March 62 A.D., and was replaced by Fenius Rufus and the infamous Tigellinus, the companion of Nero's debauches—the instrument of his crimes. Seneca just at this moment retired from public life. Nero had no longer any council save the Furies.

The relations of Paul to the believers in Rome had begun, we have seen, during the last stay of the apostle at Corinth. Three days after his arrival he wished, as was his habit, to put himself in communication with the principal *hakamim*; it was not in the bosom of the synagogue that the Christianity of Rome was formed; it was believers disembarking at Ostia or Puzzoli who, grouping themselves together, had constituted the first church of the capital of the world; this church had scarcely any affinities with the different synagogues of the same city. The immense size of Rome, and the mass of strangers who met there, were the reasons why they knew little of each other there, and why some very contrary ideas could be produced side by side without actual contact. Paul was thus led to follow the rule, which he had adopted

from his first and second mission in the towns to which he brought the germ of the faith. He begged some of the heads of the synagogue to come to see him. He represented his situation to them in the most favourable light and protested that he had done nothing, and wished to do nothing against his nation—that he was actuated by the hope of Israel's faith in the resurrection. The Jews replied to him that they had never heard him spoken of nor received any letter from Judea on the subject, and expressed a desire to hear him expound his opinions himself. "For," added they, "we have heard it said the sect of which you speak provokes everywhere the most lively disputations." They fixed the hour for the discussion, and a considerable number of Jews met in the little room occupied by the apostle in order to hear him. The conference lasted nearly a whole day; Paul quoted all the texts from Moses and the prophets which proved, according to him, that Jesus was the Messiah: some believed, the greater number remained incredulous. The Jews of Rome piqued themselves upon a very strict observance. It was not there that Paul could have a very large success. They separated in great confusion; Paul, displeased, quoted a passage from Isaiah, very common among the Christian preachers, as to the wilful blindness of hardened men who shut their eyes and ears that they might not see or hear the truth. He closed, it is said, with his ordinary menace that he would carry to the Gentiles, who would receive him better, the kingdom of God which the Jews would not have. His apostolate among the Pagans was in fact crowned with a very great success indeed. His prisoner's cell became a theatre of ardent preaching. During the two years which he passed there he was not interfered with; he was not annoyed a single time in this exercise of proselytism. He had about him certain of his disciples, at least Timothy and Aristarchus. It appears that each of his friends in turn remained with him and shared his chain. The progress of the gospel was surprising. The apostle did miracles, and was believed to order heavenly power and spirits. Paul's prison was thus more fertile than his free activity had been. His chain, dragged along the prætorium, and which he showed everywhere with a sort of ostentation, was to them alone like a discourse. From his example, and animated by the manner

in which he bore his captivity, his disciples and the other Christians of Rome preached boldly.

They did not encounter at first any great obstacle. The Campagna and the towns at the foot of Vesuvius received, perhaps from the Church of Puzzoli, the germs of Christianity which found there the conditions in which it was accustomed to increase, I mean with a first Jewish soil to receive it. Some strange conquests were made. The chastity of the believers was a powerful attraction. It was through this virtue that many noble Roman ladies were drawn to Christianity; the good families preserved still as to women an unbroken tradition of modesty and honour. The new sect had some adherents in the household of Nero, perhaps among the Jews, who were numerous in the lower ranks of the service, among those slaves and freed men, banded in guilds, whose condition bordered upon what had been basest and most elevated, the most brilliant and most miserable. Some vague indications would lead us to believe that Paul had certain relations with members of the Annœa family. A thing beyond doubt in any case, is that from this time the most sharp distinction between Jews and Christians was made at Rome among well informed persons. Christianity appeared a distinct "superstition" arising from Judaism, an enemy of its mother, and hated by its mother. Nero especially was sufficiently acquainted with what was going on, and took account of it with a certain animosity. Perhaps already some of the Jewish intriguers who surrounded him had inflamed his imagination from the Oriental point of view, and he had had promised to him that kingdom of Jerusalem, which was the dream of his last hours, his latest hallucination. We do not know with any certainty the names of any of the members of this Church of Rome at the time of Nero. A document of doubtful value enumerates as friends of Paul and Timothy, Eubulus, Pudens, Claudia, and that Linus whom ecclesiastical tradition will represent later on as the successor of Peter in the bishopric of Rome. The elements are likewise wanting to us to estimate the number of the faithful even in an approximate manner.

Everything appeared to go on in the best manner; but the implacable school, which had assumed as its task opposition to the ends of the world to the apostleship

of Paul was not dormant. We have seen the emissaries of those ardent conservatives follow in a manner upon his track, and the Apostle of the Gentiles leaving behind him in the seas through which he passed a long streak of hatred. Paul, pictured as a baneful man, who teaches to eat meat sacrificed to idols, to fornicate with Pagans, is announced before in advance and marked for the vengeance of all. We scarcely believe it, but we cannot wholly doubt it, since it is Paul himself who states it. Even at this solemn and decisive moment, he found still in front of him some mean passions. Certain adversaries, members of that Judæo-Christian school which ten years previous he found everywhere in his footsteps, undertook to raise against him a species of counter-preaching to the gospel. Envious and bitter disputers, they sought occasions to contradict him, to aggravate his position as a prisoner, to enflame the Jews against him, and to lower the merit of his chains. The goodwill, the love, the respect which others manifested towards him, their loudly proclaimed conviction, that the chains of the apostle were the glory and best defence of the gospel, comforted him in all these vexations. "What does it matter, besides," wrote he about this time—

Provided that Christ be preached, whether the preacher be sincere, or the preaching be a pretext for him, I rejoice. I will always rejoice. As for me, I have the firm hope that, even at this time things will turn to my great benefit, to the liberty of the Church, and that my body, whether I live, or whether I die, shall be used to the glory of Christ. On the one hand, Christ is my life, and to die for me is an advantage; on the other hand, if I live, I shall see my work bring forth fruit; thus I know not which to choose. I am pressed by two opposing desires; on the one hand, to quit this world and to go to re-join Christ; on the other to remain with you. The first would be better for me, but the second would be better for you.

This greatness of soul gave him a marvellous assurance, gaiety, and strength. "If my blood," wrote he in one of his gospels, "is the libation by which the sacrifice of your faith must be watered, so much the better—so much the better. And you also say 'so much the better' with me." He, nevertheless, believed very willingly in his acquittal, and even in a prompt acquittal: he saw in that the triumph of the gospel, and he dated from that new projects. It is true that we no more see any of his thoughts directed to the West. It is to the Philippians and Colossians that he dreams of withdrawing himself until the day of the coming of the Lord. Perhaps had he

acquired a more accurate knowledge of the Latin world, and had he seen beyond Rome and the Campagna countries becoming by Syrian immigration very analogous to Greece and Asia Minor, he would have met, had it only been because of the language, with great difficulties. Perhaps he knew a little Latin; but not enough for a fruitful preaching. Jewish and Christian proselytism in the first century was little exercised in the really Latin towns; it was confined to such towns as Rome and Puzzoli, where, in consequence of constant arrivals of Orientals, Greek had become wide-spread. Paul's programme was sufficiently full; the Gospel had been preached in the two worlds, it had attained, according to the wide pictures of the prophetic language, to the extremity of the earth, to all the nations which are under heaven. What Paul now dreamed of doing was to preach freely in Rome and then to return to his churches of Macedonia and Asia, and to wait patiently with them in prayer and extasy the advent of Christ.

In short, few years in the life of the Apostle were more happy than these. Immense consolations came from time to time to him; he had nothing to fear from the malevolence of the Jews. The poor lodging of the prisoner was a centre of marvellous activity. The follies of profane Rome, its spectacles, its scandals, its crimes, the disgraceful acts of Tigellinus, the courage of Thraseas, the horrible fate of the virtuous Octavia, and the death of Pallas, little moved our enlightened pietists. "The fashion of this world passeth away," they said. The great picture of a divine future made them shut their eyes to the blood-soaked soil in which their feet were plunged. Certainly the prophecy of Jesus had been accomplished. In the midst of outer darkness where Satan reigns; in the midst of tears and gnashing of teeth the little paradise of the elect is founded.

They were there in their secluded world, clothed internally with light and a clear sky in the kingdom of God their father, but without them what a hell!!! Oh, God, how frightful it is to remain in this kingdom of the Beast, where the worm never dies and the fire is never extinguished!

One of the greatest joys which Paul experienced at this period of his life was the arrival of a message from his dear Church of the Philippians, the first which he had

founded in Europe and in which he had left so many devoted admirers. The rich Lydia whom he calls "his true spouse," did not forget him. Epaphroditus sent by the church brings him a sum of money, of which the apostle must have had great need, considering the expenses of his new condition. Paul, who had always made an exception of the Philippian Church and received from her what he did not wish to owe to any other, accepted it again with happiness. The news as to the church was excellent. A few quarrels which had occurred between the two deaconesses Euodia and Syntyche had come to trouble the peace. Some scandals awakened by evil-disposed persons and from which resulted imprisonments, only served to show the patience of the faithful. The heresy of the Judæo-Christians, the pretended necessity for circumcision, hung around them without disrupting them. Some bad examples of worldly and sensual Christians, of whom the apostle speaks with tears, did not come as it would appear from their church. Epaphroditus remained some time beside Paul, and had a sickness, the result of his devotion, which nearly brought him to death's door. A lively desire to see the Philippians possessed this excellent man; he sought himself to calm the disquietudes of his friends. Paul on his part wishing to make cease as soon as possible the fears of those pious ladies, quickly dismissed him, sending by him to the Philippians a letter full of tenderness written by the hand of Timothy. Never had he found such sweet expressions to describe the love which he bore to these entirely good and pure churches, which he carried in his heart.

He felicitated them not only on having believed in Christ, but on having suffered for him. Those among them who were in prison ought to be proud of enduring the treatment which they had seen before inflicted upon their apostle, and which they knew he had actually endured. They are like a little chosen group of the children of God, in the midst of a corrupted and perverse race—light in the midst of a dark world. He warned them against the example of less perfect Christians, that is to say, of those who were not released from all Jewish prejudices. The apostles of the circumcision are treated with the greatest hardness.

Beware of dogs, evil workers, of all these circumcised! It is we who are the true circumcised, we who worship according to the Spirit of God, who place our glory and confidence in Christ Jesus, not in the flesh. If I wished to exalt myself by these

carnal distinctions, I should have a better right than anyone; I, circumcised the eighth day, of the pure race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew and son of the Hebrews, formerly a Pharisee, formerly a persecutor, formerly a jealous observer of legal righteousness. Ah, well; all these advantages, I hold them from the point of view of Christ as inferiorities, as dust, since I have apprehended what is transcendent in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. To gain Christ I have lost all the rest, I have exchanged my own righteousness, arising from the observation of the law, against the true righteousness according to God, which comes from the faith in Christ, in order that I may participate in his resurrection and to rise again, I also, among the dead, as I have participated in his sufferings, and as I have taken upon me the image of his death. I am far from having attained this goal, but I pursue it. Forgetting what is behind, always reaching forth to that which is before, I aspire, like the racer, for the prize of the victory, placed at the extremity of the course. Such is the feeling of the perfect.

And he adds:—

Our country is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform our wretched body and make it like his glorious body, by the extension of his power, and thanks to the divine decree, which has submitted every thing to him. Behold, brethren whom I love and regret to see no longer, you, my joy and crown, this is the doctrine which should be held, my dearly beloved.

He especially exhorts them to concord and obedience. The form of life which he has given them, the manner in which they ought to practice Christianity, is good; but, after all, each believer has his revelation, his personal inspiration, which also comes from God. He prays "his true spouse" (Lydia) to reconcile Euodia and Syntyche, to go to help them and second them in their duties as servants of the poor. He wished that they should rejoice; "THE LORD IS AT HAND." His thanks for the sending of money on the part of the rich ladies of the Philippians, is a model of good grace and lively piety:

I have experienced a great joy in the Lord in connection with this late flourishing of your friendship, which has at last made you think of me: you thought well in that: but you had not an occasion. I do not say this to dwell upon my poverty. I have taught myself to be content with what I have. I know what it is to be in penury, and to have abundance. I am accustomed to everything, to be full and to suffer hunger, to have an overplus, and to want even what is necessary. I can do all things in Him who strengthens me. But you—you have done well to contribute so as to relieve my distress. It is not to the gift I look, but to the profit which will result from it to you. I have everything which is needful: I even abound, since I have received by

Epaphroditus your offering, a sacrifice of a good odour, an offering most welcome, agreeable to God!

He recommends humility which makes us look on others as our superiors, charity which makes us think of others more than ourselves, according to the example of Jesus. Jesus had in Him all divinity and power; He could have, during His terrestrial life, shown himself in His divine splendour, but the economy of redemption would then have been reversed. Thus does He strip Himself of His natural distinction, to take the appearance of a slave. The world has seen Him like a man; looked at from without He would have been taken for a man. "He humbled Himself, making Himself obedient even to death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore God has exalted Him and given Him a name above every other, willing that at the name of JESUS every knee shall bend in heaven, on the earth and under the earth, and in hell, and that every tongue shall confess the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus, we see, grew hour by hour greater in the consciousness of Paul. If Paul does not admit yet his full equality with God the Father, he believes in his divinity, and represents all His earthly life as the execution of a divine plan. Prison produced on him the effect which it usually produces on strong minds. It elevated him, and incited in his ideas some lively and deep resolutions. A little after having sent the letter to the Philippians, he sends Timothy to inform him of their condition, and to bear some new instructions to them. Timothy would return promptly enough. Luke would appear also at this time to have made an absence of short duration.

CHAPTER II.

PETER AT ROME.

Paul's chain, his entrance into Rome, quite triumphal according to Christian ideas, the advantages which his residence in the capital of the world gave him, did not allow of any repose for the party at Jerusalem. Paul was for that party a sort of stimulant, an active rival, against whom they murmured, and whom, nevertheless, they sought to imitate. Peter, in a remarkable degree, always hesitated, towards his audacious brother, between a lively personal admiration and the position his surroundings imposed on him; Peter (I say) passed his life, full also of numerous trials, in copying Paul, in following him at a distance in his course, in finding after him those strong positions which could assure the success of the common work. It was probably from the example of Paul that he settled, about the year 54, at Antioch. The report spreading into Judea and Syria in the second half of the year 61, of the arrival of Paul at Rome, was of itself enough to inspire him with the idea of a journey to the West.

It appears that he came with quite an apostolic company. First, his interpreter, John Mark, whom he called "his son," followed him usually. The apostle John, we have more than once observed, appeared likewise generally to have accompanied Peter. Some indications even lead us to believe that Barnabas was of the party. Lastly, it is not improbable that Simon of Gitton on his part might be drawn to the capital of the world, attracted by the kind of charm which that city exercised over all leaders of sects, charlatans, magicians, and thaumaturgists. Nothing was more common among the Jews than a journey to Italy. The historian, Josephus, came to Rome in the year 62 or 63 to obtain the deliverance of the Jewish priests, very holy personages, who, so as to eat nothing impure, lived in foreign countries on nuts and figs, and whom Felix had sent to give account to the emperor for some offence which is not known. Who were these priests? Was their affair entirely disconnected with Peter and Paul? The want of historic proof leaves us in much doubt as to all these points. The very fact on which modern Catholics base the edifice of their faith is far from being certain. We, however, believe that the *Acts of Peter*, such as the

Ebionites recount, are only fabulous in detail. The fundamental idea of these Acts, Peter journeying through the world after Simon, the magician, to refute him, bearing the true gospel, which should overturn the gospel of the impostor, "coming after him like the light after the darkness, like knowledge after ignorance, like healing after sickness"—this conception is true when we put Paul's name in place of Simon's, and when, instead of the ferocious hatred which the Ebionites always exhibited against the preacher of the Gentiles, we picture between the two apostles a simple opposition of principle, excluding neither sympathy nor agreement on the fundamental point—the love of Jesus. In the journey undertaken by the old Galilean disciple to follow the track of Paul, we even willingly admit that Peter, following Paul closely, touched at Corinth, where he had, before his coming, a considerable party, and that he there much strengthened the Judæo-Christians, so much so that later on the Church of Corinth could pretend to have been founded by the two apostles, and to maintain, by making a slight error as to date, that Peter and Paul had been there at the same time, and from thence went forth in company to find death at Rome.

What were the relations of the two apostles at Rome? Certain indications would lead us to believe that they were good enough. We shall soon see Mark, Peter's secretary, charged with a mission from his master, to go to Asia with a recommendation from Paul; besides, the epistle, attributed to Peter, a writing of a very tenable authenticity, presents numerous borrowings made from Paul's epistles. Two truths must be maintained in this whole history; the first is that deep divisions (deeper indeed than those which were in the after history of the Church the ground of any schism) existed between the founders of Christianity, and that the form of the polemics, according to the usages of such people, was singularly bitter; the second is that a higher thought united them, even during their life, those brother-enemies, while wanting the great reconciliation which the Church should, of its own accord, make between them after their death, that is often seen in religious movements. There must also, in appreciating these debates, be great account taken of the Jewish character, quick and susceptible, given to violent language. In these little pious coteries, people quarrel and are reconciled continually; they have bitter words and,

notwithstanding, love each other. A party of Peter, a party of Paul—these divisions did not possess more importance than those which in our day separate the different fractions of the Puritan Church. Paul had an excellent motto on this matter: "Let each one remain in the type of instruction which he has received," an admirable rule which the Roman Church did not much follow later on. The adherence to Jesus was sufficient; the confessional divisions, if one may so describe them, were a simple question of origin independent of the personal merits of the believer.

One fact, however, which is important, and which would lead us to believe that good relations had not been re-established between the two apostles is that, in the memory of the next generation, Peter and Paul are the leaders of opposing parties in the bosom of the Church; it is that the author of the Apocalypse, from the day of the death of the apostles, or at least of Peter, is, of all the Judæo-Christians, the most bitter against Paul. Paul looked on himself as the leader of the converted heathen wherever he found them; there was in this his interpretation of the agreement of Antioch; the Judæo-Christians regarded him evidently in a different manner. It is probable that this last party, which had always been very strong at Rome, drew from Peter's arrival a grand ground of preponderance. Peter became its leader and leader of the Church of Rome. Now the unequalled prestige of Rome gave to such a title the greatest importance. We can see something providential in the part played by this extraordinary city. Following the reaction which was thus produced against Paul, Peter became more and more, in virtue of a sort of opposition, the leader of the apostles. Reconciliation is quickly made between minds easily impressed. The chief of the apostles in the capital of the world! What more could be said? The grand association of ideas which was to dominate the destinies of humanity during thousands of years was being made. Peter and Rome became inseparable; Rome is predestined to be the capital of Latin Christianity; the legend of Peter, first Pope, is written in advance; but it will require four or five centuries to unwind itself. Rome in any case could scarcely doubt the day on which Peter set foot in it, that that day ruled its future, and that the poor Syrian who had entered within its walls had taken possession of it for centuries.

The moral, social, and political situation became graver day by day. People spoke only of signs and misfortunes; the Christians were more affected by these than any; the idea that Satan is the god of this world rooted itself among them more and more. The spectacles appeared to them devilish. They never went to them; but they heard the people around them speaking of them. One Icarus, who, in the wooden amphitheatre in the Field of Mars, pretended to be able to fly in the air, and who fell in front of Nero's own stall, covering him with his blood, struck them greatly and became the principal element in one of their legends. The crime of Rome attained the last bounds of the infernal sublime; it was already a custom in the sect—it may have been a precaution against the police, or from a taste for mystery—to call this city only by the name of Babylon. The Jews had the habit thus of applying to modern things some symbolical proper names borrowed from their ancient sacred literature.

This little disguised antipathy for a world which they did not understand became the characteristic feature of the Christians. "Hatred of the human race" passed as the *résumé* of their doctrine. Their apparent melancholy was an injury to the "happiness of the age;" their belief in the end of the world went against the official optimism, according to which everything renewed its youth. The signs of repulsion which they made while passing before the temples gave the idea that they only thought of burning them. These old sanctuaries of the Roman religion were extremely dear to patriots; to insult them was to insult Evander, Numa, and the ancestors of the Roman people, and the trophies of its victories. They charged the Christians with all misdeeds; their worship passed for a gloomy superstition, fatal to the empire, a thousand atrocious or shameful stories circulated about them; the most enlightened men believed them, and looked on those who were thus pointed out to their hatred as capable of all crimes.

The new sectaries gained scarcely any adherents except among the lower classes; well educated people avoided pronouncing their name, or, when they were obliged to do so, always excused themselves; but among the people the progress was extraordinary: they were like an inundation dammed up for a while which made an irruption. The Church of Rome was already quite a people. The court and the city

began seriously to speak about it; its progress was for some time the news of the day. Conservatives thought with a sort of terror of this *cloaca* of impurity which they pictured to themselves in the depths of Rome; they spoke with anger of those kinds of evil ineradicable plants which they always snatched at and which always resisted.

As to the malevolent populace, it dreamed of impossible crimes to attribute to the Christians. They were rendered responsible for all public evils. They accused them of preaching rebellion against the emperor, and seeking to excite the slaves to insurrection. The Christian came to be looked on like the Jew of the middle ages, the scapegoat of all calamities, the man who only thinks of evil, the poisoner of wells, the child-eater, the incendiary when a crime was committed; the slightest indication was sufficient for the arrest of a Christian, and for putting him to the torture. Often the simple name of a Christian was sufficient to lead to arrest. When they were seen keeping back from heathen sacrifices they were blamed. The era of persecutions was really opened; it will continue with short intervals until Constantine. In the thirty years which had rolled away since the first Christian preaching, the Jews alone had persecuted the work of Jesus: the Romans had protected the Christians against the Jews: now the Romans became persecutors in their turn. From the capital, these terrors and hatreds spread into the provinces, and provoked the most clamant injustices. Many atrocious pleasantries mingled with him; the walls of the places where the Christians met were covered with caricatures and hateful and obscene inscriptions against the brothers and sisters. The habit of representing Jesus under the form of a man with the head of an ass was perhaps already established.

No one doubts at this day that these accusations of crimes and infamy were calumnious; a thousand reasons lead us even to believe that the directors of the Christian Church did not give the least pretext for the ill-will which soon produced such cruel violence against them. All the heads of the parties which divided the Christian society were agreed as to the attitude that should be taken against the Roman functionaries. They might well at heart hold the magistrates as emissaries of Satan, since they protected idolatry, and were the supports of a world given up to Satan; but in public the brothers were full of respect for them. The Ebionite faction

alone showed the enthusiastic feelings of the zealots and other fanatics of Judea. In politics, again, the apostles were essentially legitimist and conservative. Far from encouraging the slave to revolt, they desired the slave to be submissive to his master, even if he was most harsh and unjust, as if he personally were serving Jesus Christ, and that not of necessity, to escape punishment, but for conscience, and because God would have it so. Behind the master was God Himself. Slavery was so far from seeming to be against nature, that the Christians had slaves, and Christian slaves. We have seen Paul repressing the tendency to political revolutions which was manifested about the year 57, preaching to the faithful of Rome, and doubtless of other countries, submission to the powers that be, whatever their origin, establishing in principle that the police is a minister of God, and that it is only the wicked who resist him. Peter, on his side, was the most peaceable of men; we shall soon find the doctrine of submission to the powers taught under his name, nearly in the same terms as by St. Paul. The school which connected itself later with John shared the same feelings on the divine origin of sovereignty. One of the greatest fears of the leaders was to see the faithful compromised in evil matters, whose odium fell on the whole church. The language of the Apostles, at this supreme moment, was of an extreme prudence. Some unfortunates put to the torture, some scourged slaves, were allowed to endure insult, calling their masters idolaters, menacing them with the wrath of God. Others, by excess of zeal, declaimed loudly against the heathen and reproached them with their vices; the reasonable brethren wittily called them "bishops," or "overseers of those without." Cruel misfortunes came upon them; the wise directors of the community, far from praising them, told them plainly enough that they had received what they deserved.

All kinds of intrigues, which the insufficiency of documents do not permit us to disentangle, aggravated the position of the Christians. The Jews were very powerful about the emperor and Poppea. The "mathematicians," that is, the soothsayers, among others a certain Balbillus, of Ephesus, surrounded the emperor, and, under pretext of exercising that portion of their art which consisted in turning away plagues and evil omens, gave him atrocious advices. Has the legend which has mixed with all

this world of sorcerers the name of Simon the magician any foundation? That doubtless may be so; but the reverse may be also the case. The author of the Apocalypse is much pre-occupied about a "false prophet," whom he represents as an agent of Nero, as a thaumaturgist making fire fall from heaven, giving life and speech to statues, marking men with the stamp of the Beast. It is perhaps of Balbillus he speaks: we must however observe that the prodigies attributed to the False Prophet by the Apocalypse resemble much the juggling peculiarities which the legend attributes to Simon. The emblem of a lamb-dragon, under which the False Prophet is pointed out in the same book, agrees better likewise with a false Messiah such as Simon of Gitton was than a simple sorcerer. On the other hand, the legend of Simon falling from the sky is not without an analogue in the accident which happened in the amphitheatre under Nero to an actor who played the part of Icarus. The plan taken by the author of the Apocalypse of expressing himself in enigmas throws all these events greatly into obscurity; but we should not be deceived if we searched behind every line of that strange book for some allusion to the most minute anecdotal circumstances of Nero's reign.

Never, besides, has the Christian conscience been more oppressed, more out of breath, than at that moment. They believed in a provisional condition very short in duration. Each day they expected the solemn appearance. "He comes! Yet an hour longer! He is at hand!" were the words they said every moment. The spirit of martyrdom which thought that the martyr glorifies Christ by his death and that this death is a victory, was universally spread. For the heathen, on the other hand, the Christian became a body naturally devoted to punishment. A drama which about this time had much success was that of *Laureolus*, where the principal actor, a sort of rascal Tartuffe, was crucified on the stage amid the applause of the audience, and eaten by bears. This drama was prior to the introduction of Christianity to Rome; we find it represented in the year 41; but it appears as if at least they made an application of it to the Christian martyrs, the diminutive of *Laureolus* answering to *Stephanos* might suggest these allusions.

CHAPTER III.

STATE OF THE CHURCHES IN JUDEA.—DEATH OF JAMES.

The ill-will of which the Christian Church was the object at Rome, perhaps even in Asia Minor and Greece, made itself felt even in Judea; but the persecution there had other causes. There were rich Sadducees, the aristocracy of the Temple, who showed themselves enraged against the honest poor and blasphemed the name of "Christian." About the time we have reached there was circulated a letter of James, "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," addressed to "the twelve tribes of the Dispersion." It is one of the finest pieces of early Christian literature, recalling sometimes the Gospel, and at other times the sweet and restful wisdom of Ecclesiastes. The authenticity of such writings, seeing the number of false apostolic letters which circulated, is always doubtful. Perhaps the Judeo-Christian party, accustomed to use to its own taste the authority of James, attributed to him this manifesto in which the desire to oppose the innovators made itself felt. Certainly, if James had some share in it, he was not its editor. It is doubtful if James knew Greek; his language was Syriac; now the epistle of James is much the best written work in the New Testament, its Greek is pure and almost classical. As to this, the writing agrees perfectly with the character of James. The author is a Jewish Rabbi, he holds strongly by the Law; to express the meeting of the faithful, he makes use of the word "synagogue"; he is Paul's adversary; the tone of his epistle resembles the synoptical gospel which we shall see later on came from the Christian family of which James was the head. Nevertheless, the name of Jesus is only mentioned there two or three times, with the simple qualification of Messiah, and without any of the ambitious hyperboles which the ardent imagination of Paul had accumulated.

James, or the Jewish moralist who desired to cover himself with his authority, introduces us all at once into a little conventicle of the persecuted. Trials are a good thing, for in putting faith through the crucible, they produce patience; now patience is the perfection of virtue; the man who is tempted receives the crown of life. But what preoccupies our doctor especially is the difference between the rich and the poor. He must have produced in the community some rivalry between the favoured

brothers of fortune and those who were not. Those complain of the harshness of the rich and their pride, while they groaned under them:

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. . . . My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

Pride, corruption, brutality, and the luxury of the rich Sadducees had indeed arrived at their height. The women bought the high priesthood from Agrippa II. with gold. Martha, daughter of Boethus, one of those Simonists, who went to see her husband officiate, made them stretch carpets from the gate of her house to the Sanctuary. The high-priesthood was thus fearfully debased. These worldly priests blushed for the most holy part of their functions. The offering of sacrifice had become repulsive to refined people, whom their duty condemned to the trade of butcher and knacker! Many of them did this in silk gloves not to soil the skin of their hands by contact with the victim. The whole tradition, agreeing on this point with the Gospels and the Epistle of James, represents to us the priests of the last year before the destruction of the Temple as gourmands, given up to luxury, and hard to the poor people. The Talmud contains the fabulous list of what was needed for the table of a high priest; it surpasses all likelihood, but indicates the dominant opinion. "Four cries come from the vestibule of the Temple," says one tradition; the first, "Come forth, ye descendants of Eli, you stain the Temple of the Eternal"; the second, "Come forth, Issachar of Kaphar-Barkai, who only dost respect thyself, and who profanest the victims consecrated to Heaven"—(it was he who wrapped his hands in silk while doing his service); the third, "Open, ye gates, let in Ishmael, the son of Phabi, the

disciple of Phinehas, that he may fulfil the functions of the high-priesthood"; the fourth, "Open, ye gates, and let John, son of Nebedeus, the disciple of gourmands, enter in, that he may gorge himself with victims." A sort of song, or rather malediction, against the sacerdotal families, which ran its course in the streets of Jerusalem at the same period, has been preserved to us.

" Plague take the house of Boëthus!

Plague take them because of their cudgels!

Plague take the house of Hanan!

Plague take them because of their conspiracies!

Plague take the house of Cantheras!

Plague take them because of their Kalams!

Plague take the family of Ishmael, son of Phabi!

Plague take them because of their fists!

They are high-priests, their sons are treasurers, their sons-in-law are customs officers, and their servants beat us with their cudgels."

There was open war between these opulent priests, friends of the Romans, taking these lucrative appointments to themselves and their families, and the poor priests maintained by the people. Every day there were bloody brawls. The impudence and audacity of the high-priestly families went so far as to send their servants to the threshing-floors to collect the tithes which belonged to the high clergy, and they beat those who refused; the poor priests were in a wretched state. Fancy the feelings of the pious man, the democratic Jew, rich in the promises of all the prophets, maltreated in the Temple (his own house) by the insolent lackeys of unbelieving and epicurean priests. The Christians grouped around James made common cause with those oppressed ones who probably were like themselves, holy people (*hasidim*) favourites with the public. Mendicity appears to have become a virtue and the mark of patriotism. The rich classes were friends of the Romans, and could scarcely become that except by a sort of apostacy and treason. To hate the rich was thus a mark of piety. Obligated, so as not to die of hunger, to work in those constructions of the Herodians, in which they saw nothing but an ostentatious vanity, the *hasidim*

looked on themselves as victims of the unbelieving. "Poor" passed as the synonym of "Saint."

"Now weep, ye rich, howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as if it were fire. Ye have heaped treasures together for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

We feel in these pages that there is already fermenting the spirit of those social revolutions which some years later filled Jerusalem with blood. Nothing expresses with so much force the sentiment of aversion to the world which was the soul of Primitive Christianity. "To keep oneself unspotted from the world" is the supreme command. "He who would be the friend of the world is constituted the enemy of God." All desire is vanity—illusion. The end is so near? why complain of one another? why engage in litigation? the true judge is coming: He is at the door!

"And now you others who say: To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life. It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will we shall live, and do this or that."

When he speaks of humility, patience, mercy, the exaltation of the humble, and of the joy which is below tears, James seems to have kept in memory the very words of Jesus. We feel, nevertheless, that he holds much by the law. Quite a paragraph of his Epistle is dedicated to warn the faithful against Paul's doctrine on the uselessness of works and salvation by faith. A phrase of James (ii., 24) is the direct denial of a phrase in the Epistle to the Romans (iii., 28). In opposition to the Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. Iv., 1 and ff.) the Apostle of Jerusalem maintains (ii., 21 and ff.) that Abraham was saved by works, and that faith without works is a dead faith. The

devils have faith and apparently are not saved. Departing here from his usual moderation, James calls his opponent a "vain man." In one or two other passages, we can see an allusion to the debates which already divided the Church, and which shall fill up the history of Christian theology some centuries later.

A spirit of lofty piety and touching charity animated this Church of the Saints. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," said James.

The power of curing diseases, especially by anointing with oil, was considered as of common right among believers: indeed the unbelievers saw in this healing a gift peculiar to the Christians. The elders were reputed to enjoy it in a high degree, and became thus a band of spiritual physicians. James attaches to those practices of supernatural medicine the greatest importance. The germ of nearly all the Catholic Sacraments was laid here. Confession of sins, for a long time practised by the Jews, was looked on as an excellent means of pardon and healing, two ideas inseparable in the beliefs of the age.

"Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is strong when it is made with a fixed object."

The apocryphal apocalypses where the religious passions of the people expressed themselves with so much fire, were greedily collected in this little group of enthusiastic Jews, or rather were born alongside of it, almost in its bosom, so much so that the tissue of these singular writings and that of the writings of the New Testament are often hard to disentangle from each other. They really took these pamphlets, born of yesterday, for the words of Enoch, Baruch and Moses. The strangest beliefs as to hell, the rebel angels, the wicked giants who brought on the flood, were spread about, and had as their principal source the books of Enoch. There were in all these fables some lively allusions to contemporaneous events. That

foreseeing Noah, that pious Enoch, who did not cease to predict the Deluge to those heedless ones who, during this whole period, ate, drank, married, and enriched themselves, who are they if they be not the seers of these last days, vainly warning a frivolous generation, which is unwilling to admit that the world is nearly at an end? An entire branch, a sort of period of subterranean life is added to the legend of Jesus. It was asked what he did during the three days he passed in the grave. They would have it that during this time he had gone down, by giving battle to death, into the infernal prisons where were confined the rebellious or unbelieving spirits; that there he had preached to the shades and devils and prepared for their deliverance. That conception was necessary that Jesus might be, in the strongest sense of the term, the universal Saviour; as St. Paul presents the idea also in his last writings. Yet the fictions we speak of did not find a place within the limits of the Synoptical Gospels, doubtless because these limits had been already fixed when they were created. They remained floating outside the Gospel and did not find body until later in the apocryphal writing called the "Gospel of Nicodemus."

The work *par excellence* of the Christian conscience was, nevertheless, accomplished in silence in Judea or the adjacent countries. The Synoptical Gospels were created part by part, as a living organism is completed little by little, and attained, under the action of a deep mysterious reason, to perfect unity. At the date we have reached, was there already some text written on the acts and words of Jesus? Has the Apostle Matthew, if it is he who is in question, written in Hebrew the discourses of the Lord? Has Mark, or he who takes his name, entrusted to paper his notes on the life of Jesus? We may doubt it. Paul, in particular had certainly in his hands no writing as to the words of Jesus. Did he at least possess an oral tradition, mnemonic in some degree, of these words? We observe such a tradition for the account of the Supper, perhaps for that of the Passion, and up to a certain point for that of the Resurrection, but not for the parables and discourses. Jesus is in his eyes as expiatory victim, a superhuman being, a risen one, not a moralist. His quotation of the words of Jesus are undecided and are not related to the discourses which the

Synoptical Gospels put into Jesus' mouth. The apostolical epistles which we possess, other than those of Paul, do not lead us to suppose any production of this kind.

What seems to result from this is that certain accounts, such as that of the Supper, of the Passion, and the Resurrection, were known by heart, in terms which admitted of little variety. The plan of the Synoptical Gospels was already probably agreed on: but while the Apostles lived, books which would have pretended to fix the tradition of which they believed themselves the sole depositories would not have had any chance of being accepted. Why, besides, write the life of Jesus? He is coming back. A world on the eve of closing has no need of new books. It is when the witnesses shall be dead that it will be important to render durable by the Scripture a representation which is effacing itself every day. In this point of view the Churches of Judea and the neighbouring countries had a great superiority. The knowledge of the discourses of Jesus was much more exact and extended than elsewhere. We remark under this connection a certain difference between the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Paul. The little writing of James is quite impregnated by a sort of evangelical perfume. We hear these sometimes like an echo of the word of Jesus; the sentiment of the life of Galilee is found there still with vivid power.

We know nothing historical as to the missions sent directly by the Church of Jerusalem. That Church, according to its own principles, ought scarcely to be looked on as a propaganda. In general there were few Ebionite and Judeo-Christian Missions. The strict spirit of the *Ebionim* only admitted of circumcised missionaries. According to the picture which is traced to us by some writings of the second century, suspected of exaggeration, but faithful to the Jerusalem spirit, the Judeo-Christianity preacher was held in a sort of suspicion; they made sure about him, they imposed on him some proofs, a noviciate of six years; he must have regular papers, a sort of labelled confession of faith, conformable to that of the Apostles of Jerusalem. Such impediments were a decided obstacle to a fruitful Apostleship: under such conditions Christianity would never have been preached. Thus the messengers of James appeared much more occupied in overturning Paul's foundations than in building on their own account, The Churches of Bithynia, Pontus

and Cappadocia which appeared about this time alongside of the Churches of Asia and Galatia, did not proceed it is true, from Paul, but it is not likely that they were the work of James or Peter: they owed their foundation no doubt to that anonymous preaching of the faithful which was the most efficacious of all. We suppose, on the contrary, that Batania, the Hauran, Decapolis, and in general all the region to the east of the Jordan which were soon to be the centre of the fortress of Judeo-Christianity, were evangelized by some adherents of the Church of Jerusalem. They found the Roman limit very near on that side. Now the Arabian countries inclined in no way to the new preaching, and the countries subject to the Arsacides were little open to efforts coming from Roman lands. In the geography of the Apostles the earth was very little. The first Christians never thought of the barbarian or Persian world; the Arabian world itself scarcely existed for them. The missions of St. Thomas among the Parthians, of St. Andrew among the Scythians, and of Bartholomew in India are only legendary. The Christian imagination of the first ages turned little towards the East: the goal of Apostolic Pilgrimages was the extremity of the West; as to the East, they spoke as if the missionaries regarded the boundary as already reached.

Had Edessa heard of the name of Jesus in the first century? Was there at that time beside Osrhoene a Syriac-speaking Christianity? The fables by which the Church has surrounded its cradle do not permit us to express ourselves with certainty on that point. Yet it is very probable that the strong relations which Judaism had on this side were used for the propagation of Christianity. Samosata and Comagena had at an early period educated persons forming part of the Church or at least very favourable to Jesus. It was from Antioch in any case that this region of the Euphrates received the seed of the faith.

The clouds which were gathering over the East disturbed these pacific preachings. The good administration of Festus could do nothing against the evils which Judea carried in her bosom. Brigands, zealots, assassins, and impostors of all kinds overran the country. A magician presented himself, among twenty others, promising the people salvation and the end of evil, if they would accompany him to

the desert. Those who followed him were massacred by the Roman soldiers; but no one was undeceived as to the false prophets. Festus died in Judea about the beginning of the year 62. Nero appointed Albinus as his successor. About the same time, Herod Agrippa II. took the high priesthood from Joseph Cabi to give it to Hanan, son of the celebrated Hanan or Annas, who had contributed more than anyone to the death of Jesus. He was the fifth of Annas' sons who occupied that dignity.

Hanan the younger was a haughty, harsh and audacious man. He was the flower of Sadduceism, the complete expression of that cruel and inhuman sect, always ready to render the exercise of authority odious and insupportable. James, the brother of the Lord, was known in all Jerusalem as a bitter defender of the poor, as a prophet in the old style, inveighing against the rich and powerful. Hanan resolved on his death, and taking advantage of the absence of Agrippa, and of the fact that Albinus had not yet arrived in Judea, he assembled the judicial Sanhedrin and caused James and several other saints to appear before him. They accused them of breaking the law; they were condemned to be stoned. The authority of Agrippa was necessary to assemble the Sanhedrim, and that of Albinus would have been needed to proceed to punishment; but the violent Hanan went beyond all rules. James was, in fact, stoned near the temple. As they had a difficulty in accomplishing it, a fuller broke his head with his cudgel which was used to measure stuffs. He was, it is said, forty-six years old.

The death of this saintly personage had the worst effect on the city. The Pharisee devotees and the strict observers of the law were very discontented. James was universally esteemed; he was considered one of those men whose prayers were most efficacious. It is asserted that a Rechabite (probably an Essene), or according to others, Simeon son of Clopas, nephew of Jesus, cried while they stoned him, "Stop, what are you doing? What! you kill the just who prays for you?" They applied to him the passage in Isaiah iii., 10, which they had heard from him, "Let us suppress they say, the righteous, because he is vexatious to us: this is why the fruit of their works is devoured." Some Hebrew Elegies were written on his death, full of

allusion to Biblical passages and to his name of Obliam. Nearly everybody at last was found in sympathy asking Herod Agrippa II. to set bounds to the audacity of the high-priest. Albinus was informed of the actions of Hanan, when he had left Alexandria for Judea. He wrote Hanan a threatening letter, then he unseated him. Hanan thus only occupied the high-priesthood three months. The misfortunes which soon fell on the nation were looked on by many people as the consequence of James' murder. As to the Christians, they saw in this death a sign of the times, a proof that the final catastrophes were approaching.

The enthusiasm, indeed, assumed at Jerusalem great proportions. Anarchy was at its height. The zealots although decimated by punishment, were masters of everything. Albinus in no way resembled Festus; he only thought of making money by connivance with the brigands. On all sides, one saw prognostications of some unheard-of event. It was at the end of the year 62 that one named Jesus, son of Hanan, a sort of risen Jeremiah, began to run night and day through the streets of Jerusalem, crying, "A voice from the East! a voice from the West! a voice from the four winds a voice against Jerusalem and the temple! a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides! a voice against all the people!" They scourged him; but he repeated the same cry. They beat him with rods till his bones were seen; at each blow he repeated in a lamentable voice, "Woe to Jerusalem! woe to Jerusalem!" He was never seen to speak to anyone. He went along repeating, "Woe! woe to Jerusalem!" without reproaching those who beat him, and thanking those who gave him alms. He went on thus until the siege, his voice never appearing to grow weaker.

If this Jesus, son of Hanan, was not a disciple of Jesus, his weird cry was at least the true expression of what was at the core of the Christian conscience. Jerusalem had filled up its measure. That city which slew the prophets and stoned those who were sent to it, beating some, crucifying others, was henceforth the city of anathemas. About the time at which we have arrived were formed those little apocalypses which some attributed to Enoch, others to Jesus, and which offered the

greatest analogies to the exclamations of Jesus, son of Hanan. These writings extend later into the framework of the synoptical gospels; they were represented as discourses, which Jesus had given in his last days. Perhaps already the *mot d'ordre* was given to leave Judea and flee to the mountains. The synoptical gospels always bear deeply the mark of these sorrows; they keep it like a birth-mark—an indelible impression. With the peaceful axioms of Jesus mingled the colours of a gloomy apocalypse, the presentiments of a disgusted and troubled imagination. But the gentleness of the Christians put them in the shadow compared with the madresses which agitated the other parties in the nation, possessed like them by Messianic ideas. To them the Messiah had come; he had been in the desert, he had ascended to heaven after thirty years; the impostors or enthusiasts who sought to carry the people away after them were false Christs and false prophets. The death of James and perhaps of some other brethren, led them, besides, to separate their cause more and more from Judaism. A butt to the hatred of all, they comforted themselves by thinking of the precepts of Jesus. According to many, Jesus had predicted that, in the midst of all these trials, not a hair of their heads should perish.

The situation was so precarious, and they felt so plainly that they were on the eve of a catastrophe that an immediate successor was given to James in the presiding of the Church of Jerusalem. The other "brethren of the Lord," such as Jude, Simon, son of Clopas, continued to be the principal authorities in the community. After the war, we shall see them serving as a rallying point to all the faithful of Judea. Jerusalem had no more than eight years to live, and indeed, even before the fatal hour, the eruption of the volcano, will thrust to a distance the little group of pious Jews who are bound to one another by the memory of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV.

FINAL ACTIVITY OF PAUL.

Paul, nevertheless, was subjected in prison to the gentleness of an administration half distracted by the extravagance of the sovereign and his evil surroundings. Timothy, Luke, Aristarchus, and according to certain traditions, Titus, were with him. A certain Jesus, surnamed Justus, who was circumcised, one Demetrius, or Demas, an uncircumcised proselyte, who was, it appears, from Thessalonica, a doubtful personage of the name of Crescens, still were seen around him and served him as coadjutors. Mark, who according to our hypothesis had come to Rome in company with Peter, was reconciled, it appears, with him with whom he had shared the first apostolical activity, and from whom he had rudely separated: he served probably as an intermediary between Peter and the apostle of the Gentiles. In any case Paul, about this time, was very discontented with the Christians of the circumcision: he considered them as not very favourable to him, and declared that he did not find good fellow-workers among them.

Some important modifications, introduced probably by the new relations which he had in the capital of the empire, the centre and confluence of all ideas, were carried out about the time we are speaking of now in Paul's mind, and made the writings of that period of his life sensibly different from those he composed during his second and third mission. The informal development of the Christian doctrine worked rapidly. In some months of these fertile years, theology marched much faster than it did afterwards in some centuries. The new dogma sought its equilibrium and created props on all sides to support its feeble portions. They might have called it an animal in its genetic crisis, putting forth a limb, transforming an organ, cutting off a tail, to arrive at the harmony of life, that is to say, at the condition where everything in the living being answers, supports, and holds itself together.

The fire of a devouring activity had never till now allowed Paul leisure to measure the time, nor to consider that Jesus delayed his reappearance very long: but these long months of prison forced him to consider. Old age, besides, began to tell upon him; a sort of gloomy maturity succeeded to the ardour of his passion; reflection

brought light, and obliged him to fill up his ideas, to reduce them to theory. He became mystical, theological, speculative, from being practical as he was. The impetuosity of a blind conviction, absolutely incapable of going backward, could not prevent him from being sometimes astonished that heaven did not open more quickly, and that the final trumpet did not sound sooner. The faith of Paul was not shaken, but it sought other points of support. His idea of Christ became modified. His dream henceforth is less the Son of Man appearing in the clouds, and presiding at the general resurrection, as a Christ established as divinity, incorporated with it, acting in it and with it. The resurrection for him is not in the future: it seems to have already taken place—When we change once, we change always; we may be at the same time the most impassioned and yet mobile of men. That which is certain is that the grand pictures of the final apocalypse and of the resurrection which were formerly so familiar to Paul, which present themselves in some way at every page of the letters of the second and third mission, and even in the Epistle to the Philippians, have a secondary place in the last writings of his captivity. They are then replaced by a theory of Christ, conceived like a sort of divine person, a theory very analogous to that of the Logos which, later on, shall find its definitive form in the writings attributed to John.

The same change is remarkable in his style. The language of the epistles of the captivity has more fulness: but it has lost a little of its force. The thought is advanced with less vigour. The dictionary differs very much from the first vocabulary of Paul. The favourite terms of the Johannine school, "light," "darkness," "life," "love," &c., become dominant. The syncretic philosophy of Gnosticism made itself already felt. The question of justification by Jesus is no longer so lively; the war between faith and works seems appeased in the bosom of the unity of the Christian life, made up of knowledge and grace. Christ, become the central being of the universe, conciliates in his person (thus become divine) the antinomianism of the two Christianities. Certainly it is not without reason that the authenticity of such writings has been suspected: there are for them, however, such strong proofs that we like better to attribute the differences of style and thought of which we speak to a

natural progress in Paul's method. The earlier and undoubtedly authentic writings of Paul contain the germ of this new language. "Christ" and "God" are interchanged almost like synonyms; Christ exercises there divine functions; they invoke him as God, he is the necessary mediator with God. The ardour with which these were connected with Jesus made them connect with him all the theories which had been in vogue in some part or other of the Jewish world. Let us suppose that a man replying to aspirations so different from the democracy should arise in our days. His partisans would say to some, "You are for the organisation of work," it is he who is the organisation of the work; to others, "You are for independent morality," he is the independent morality; to others again, "You are for co-operation," it is he who is the co-operation; and yet others, "You are for solidarity," it is he who is the solidarity.

The new theory of Paul can be summed up nearly as follows:—

This kingdom is the reign of darkness, that is to say of Satan and his infernal hierarchy who fill the world. The reign of the Saints on the contrary shall be the reign of light. Now the saints are what they are not by their own merit (before Christ all are enemies of God), but by the application which God makes to them of the merits of Jesus Christ the son of his love. It is the blood of this son, shed upon the cross, which blots out sins and reconciles every creature to God, making peace to reign in Heaven and earth. The Son is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of creatures; all has been created in him, by him and for him, things celestial and terrestrial, visible, and invisible, thrones, powers, and dominions. He was before all things and by him all things consist. The church and he form only one body, of which he is the head. As in everything he has always held the first rank, he shall also hold it in the resurrection. His resurrection is the commencement of the universal resurrection. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. Jesus is thus the God of man, a sort of prime minister of the creation, placed between God and man. Everything that monotheism says of the relations between man and God may according to the then present theory of Paul, be said of the relations between man and Jesus. The veneration for Jesus, which with James does not exceed the cult of

doulia or *hyperdoulia*, attains with Paul to the proportions of a true worship a *latría* such as no Jew had ever vowed to a son of woman.

This mystery which God prepared from all eternity, the fulness of the times being come, he has revealed to his saints in these last days. The moment has come when each must complete for his part the work of Christ. Now the work of Christ is completed by suffering; suffering is therefore a good thing in which we should rejoice and glory. The Christian, by participating with Jesus, is filled like him with the fulness of the Godhead. Jesus by rising again has quickened all with himself. The wall of separation which the law created between the people of God and the Gentiles Christ has broken down; the two portions of reconciled humanity he has made a new humanity; all the old enmities he has slain upon the cross. The text of the law was like a bill of debt which humanity could not wipe off: Jesus has destroyed the value of that bill, nailing it to his cross. The world created by Jesus is therefore an entirely new world. Jesus is the corner stone of the Temple which God has built. The Christian is dead to the world, buried with Christ in the tomb; his life is hid with Christ in God. While waiting till Christ appears and associates him with his glory he mortifies his body, extinguishing all his natural passions, taking up in everything the opposition to nature, putting off "the old man" and clothing himself with "the new," renovated according to the image of his creator. From this point of view there is no more Jew nor Greek, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free man. Christ is all, Christ is in all. The saints are those to whom God by gratuitous gift has made application of the merits of Christ, and whom he has predestinated to the divine adoption before even the world began. The Church is one as God himself is one; his work is the edification of the body of Christ; the final goal of all this is the realization of perfect man, the complete union of Christ with all his members, a state in which Christ shall truly be the head of a humanity regenerated according to his own model, a humanity receiving from him movement and life by a series of members bound to each other and subordinated the one to the other. The dark powers of the air fight to prevent this consummation; a terrible struggle shall

take place between them and the saints. It shall be an evil day, but, armed by the gifts of Christ, the saints will triumph.

Such doctrines were not entirely original. They were in part those of the Jewish school in Egypt and notably those of Philo. This Christ became a divine hypostasis, is the *Logos* of the Jewish Alexandrian philosophy, the *Memera* of the Chaldean paraphrases, prototype of everything, by which everything has been created. These powers of the air to which the empire of the world has been given, these *bizarre* hierarchies, celestial and infernal, are those of the Jewish *cabbala* and of Gnosticism. This mysterious *pleroma*, the final goal of the work of Christ, much resembles the divine *pleroma* which the *gnosis* places at the summit of the universal ladder, the Gnostic and cabbalistic theosophy which may be regarded as the mythology of monotheism, and which we believe we have seen weighing with Simon of Gitton, is represented from the first century with its principal features. To reject systematically in the second century all the documents in which are found traces of such a spirit is very rash. That spirit was in germ, in Philo, and in primitive Christianity. The theosophic conception of Christ would arise necessarily from the Messianic conception of the Son of Man, when it would be distinctly proved after a long waiting that the Son of Man had not come. In the most incontestably authentic epistles of Paul there are certain features which remain a little in advance of the exaggerations which are presented by the epistles written in prison. The epistle to the Hebrews dating before the year 70, shows the same tendency to place Jesus in the world of metaphysical abstractions. All this will become in the highest degree plain when we speak of the Johannine writings. According to Paul, who had not known Jesus, this metamorphosis in the idea of Christ was in some sort inevitable. While the school which possessed the living tradition of the master created the Jesus of the synoptical gospels, the enthusiastic man, who had only seen Jesus in his dreams, transformed him more and more into a superhuman being, into a sort of metaphysical *archon* whom they would say had never lived.

This transformation besides did not operate only on the ideas of Paul. The Churches raised by him advanced in the same views. Those of Asia Minor especially

were impelled by a sort of a secret work to the most exaggerated ideas as to the divinity of Jesus. This might be imagined. To the fraction of Christianity which had sprung from the familiar conversations by the lake of Tiberias Jesus must always remain the beloved Son of God, who had been seen moving among men with that charming manner and that gentle smile; but when they preached Jesus to the people of some province hidden away in Phrygia, when the preacher declared that he had never seen him, and affected to know scarcely anything of His earthly life, what could these good and artless hearers think of him who was preached to them? How would they picture him to themselves? As a sage? As a master full of charm? It is not thus that Paul presents the *rôle* of Jesus. Paul was ignorant of, or pretended to be ignorant of, the historic Jesus. As the Messiah, as the Son of Man coming to appear in the clouds in the great day of the Lord? These ideas were strange to the Gentiles and supposed a knowledge of the Jewish books. Evidently the picture which would most often he presented to these good country people would be that of an incarnation, of a God clothed with a human form and walking upon the earth. This idea was very familiar in Asia Minor; Apollonius of Tyana was soon to ventilate it for his own prophet. To reconcile such a style of view with worn theism only one thing remained, to conceive Jesus as a divine hypostasis become incarnate, as a sort of reduplication of the one God, having taken the human form for the accomplishment of a divine plan. It must be remembered that we are no longer in Syria. Christianity has passed from the Semitic world into the hands of races intoxicated with imagination and mythology. The prophet Mahomet, whose legend is so purely human among the Arabs, has become the same among the Schiites of Persia and India, a being completely supernatural, a sort of Vishnu or Buddha. Some relations which the apostle had with his Churches of Asia Minor exactly about this time furnished him with the occasion of expounding the new form which he was accustomed to give to his ideas. The pious Epaphroditus, or Epaphras, the teacher and founder of the Church of Colosse and leader of the Churches on the shores of the Lycus, came to him with a mission from the said Churches. Paul had never been in that valley, but they admitted his authority there; They recognised him even as the apostle of the

country and each one regarded himself as like him before conversion. When his captivity took place the churches of the Colossians, Laodicea upon the Lycus, and Hierapolis deputed Epaphras to share his chain, to console him, to assure him of the friendship of the faithful and probably to offer him the aid of money, of which he had need. What Epaphras reported of the zeal of the new converts filled Paul with satisfaction; faith, charity and hospitality were admirable, but Christianity took in these Churches of Phrygia a singular direction. Away from contact with the great Apostles, free entirely from Jewish influence, composed nearly entirely of heathens, these churches inclined to a sort of mixture of Christianity, Greek philosophy and the local cults. In this quiet little town of Colosse, with the sound of waterfalls, in the midst of wreaths of foam, facing Hierapolis with its frowning mountain, there increased every day the belief in the full divinity of Jesus Christ. Let us remember that Phrygia was one of those countries which had the most religious originality. Its mysteries included or claimed to include an exalted symbolism. Many of the rights which were practised there were not without analogy to those of the new cult. For Christians without an earlier tradition, not having gone through the same apprenticeship of monotheism as the Jews, the temptation became very strong to associate the Christian dogma with the old symbols which presented themselves here as the legacy of the most respectable antiquity. These Christians had been devoted Pagans before adopting the ideas which had come from Syria. Perhaps in adopting them they had not believed that they were breaking formally with their past. And besides, where is the truly religious man who repudiates completely the traditional teaching in the shadow of which he felt first his ideal, who does not seek some reconciliations, often impossible, between his old faith and that to which he has come by the advancement of his thought?

In the second century this need of syncretism shall take an extreme importance and shall complete the full development of the Gnostic sects. We shall see at the end of the first century some analogous tendencies filling the Church of Ephesus with troubles and agitation. Corinth and the author of the fourth gospel shared at bottom this identical principle from the idea that the conscience of Jesus was a heavenly

being distinct from his terrestrial appearance. In the year 60 Colosse was already touched by the same disease—a theosophy made up of indigenous beliefs, Ebionitism, Judaism, philosophy and material borrowed from the new preaching found there already some skilful interpreters. A worship of uncreated *æons*, a largely developed theory of angels and devils, Gnosticism in short with its arbitrary practices, its realized abstractions, commenced to be produced, and by its sweet deceit threatened the Christian faith in its most lively and essential parts. There mingled here some renunciations against nature, a false taste for humiliation, a pretended austerity refusing to the flesh its rights, in a word all the aberrations of moral sense which would produce the Phrygian heresies of the second century (Montanists, Pepuzians, and Cata-Phrygians) which connected themselves with the old mystical leaven of Galli and Corybantes, and whose latest survivals are the dervishes of our days. The difference between the Christians of Pagan origin and those of Jewish origin are thus marked from day to day. Christian mythology and metaphysics were born in Paul's Churches. Springing from Polytheistic races the converted Pagans found quite simple the idea of a God-made man, while the incarnation of the divinity was for the Jews a thing blasphemous and revolting.

Paul wishing to keep Epaphras near him (whose activity he thought of utilizing) resolved to reply from the deputation to the Colossians by sending to them Tychicus of Ephesus, whom he charged at the same time with commissions for the churches of Asia. Tychicus was to make a journey into the valley of the Meander to visit the communities, to give them some news of Paul, to transmit to them with a living voice a knowledge as to the condition of the Apostle in regard to the Roman authorities—some details which he did not think it prudent to entrust to paper, in short to convey to each of the churches separate letters which Paul had addressed to them. He also recommended those churches who were nearest each other to communicate their letters reciprocally and to read them in turn in their meetings. Tychicus might besides be the bearer of a kind of Encyclical, traced upon the plan of the epistle to the Colossians and reserved for the churches to which Paul had nothing special to say. The apostle appeared to have left to his disciples or secretaries the

care of editing this circular upon the plan which he gave them or after the system which he showed them. The epistle addressed in these circumstances to the Colossians has not been preserved to us. Paul dictated it to Timothy, signed it, and added in his own writing, *remember my chains*. As to the circular epistle which Tychicus took on his way to the churches which were not named by letter, it would appear that we have it in the Epistle called 'to the Ephesians.' Certainly this epistle was not destined for the Ephesians, since the apostle addresses himself exclusively to converted Pagans, to a Church which he had never seen and to which he had no special counsel to give. The ancient manuscripts of the epistle called to the Ephesians bore in blank in the superscription the designation of the Church to which it was destined, the Vatican manuscript and the *codex Sinaiticus* present an analagous peculiarity. It is supposed that this pretended letter to the Ephesians is in reality the letter to the Laodiceans, which was written at the same time as that to the Colossians. We have elsewhere given the reasons which prevent us from admitting this opinion, and which lead us rather to see in this writing what concerns a doctrinal letter which St. Paul desired to have reproduced in many copies and circulated in Asia. Tychicus, in passing to Asia, his own country, was able to show one of these copies to the elders; they could keep it as an edifying *morceau*, and it is perfectly admissible that it might be this copy which had remained, when the letters of Paul were collected; thence would come the title which the epistle in question bears to-day. What is certain is that the epistle called "to the Ephesians" is scarcely anything but a paraphrased imitation of the epistle to the Colossians, with some additions drawn from other epistles of Paul and perhaps lost epistles.

This epistle called 'to the Ephesians,' forms, along with the epistle to the Colossians, the best statement of Paul's theories about the close of his career. The epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians have, for the last period in the life of the apostle, the same value as the epistle to the Romans has to the period of his great apostleship. The idea of the founder of Christian theology here reached the highest degree of clearness. We feel this last work of spiritualization to which great souls about to depart subject their thought, and after which there is nothing but death.

Certainly Paul was right when fighting this dangerous disease of Gnosticism, which was soon to threaten human reason, this chimerical religion of angels, to which he opposes his Christ as superior to all that is not God. We know there is still to come the last assault which he delivers against circumcision, vain works and Jewish prejudices. The morality which he draws from his transcendent conception of Christ is admirable from many points of view. But how much excess, great God! How does this disdain of all reason, this brilliant eulogy of madness, this burst of paradox, prepare us on the other hand for the perfect wisdom which shuns all extremes! That "old man," whom Paul attacks so harshly, is again brought forward. He will show that it does not deserve so many anathemas. All that past, condemned by an unjust sentence, will rediscover a principle of "new birth" for the world, carried by Christianity to the most exhaustive point. Paul shall be in that sense one of the most dangerous enemies of civilization. The recrudescences of Paul's mind shall be so many defeats for the human mind. Paul will die when the human mind shall triumph. What shall be the triumph of Jesus will be the death of Paul.

The apostle closes his epistle to the Colossians by sending to them compliments and good wishes of their holy and devoted catechist Epaphras. He begs them at the same time to make an exchange of letters with the Church at Laodicea. To Tychicus, who carries the correspondence, he joins as messenger a certain Onesimus, whom he calls "a faithful dear brother." Nothing is more touching than the history of this Onesimus. He had been the slave of Philemon, one of the heads of the Colossian Church; he fled from his master and sought to hide himself at Rome. There he entered into relations, with Paul, perhaps through the medium of Epaphras his compatriot. Paul converted him and persuaded him to return to his master, making him leave for Asia in the company of Tychicus. Finally, to calm the apprehensions of poor Onesimus, Paul dictated to Timothy a letter for Philemon, a perfect little *chef d'œuvre* of the epistolary art, and placed it in the hands of the delinquent.

"PAUL, THE PRISONER of Jesus Christ, and brother Timothy, and Philemon, our well beloved and our fellow-worker, and sister Appia, our companion in works, and to the Church which is in thy house. Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the

Lord Jesus Christ, I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers; hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints. May the communication of thy own faith become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient; yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me, whom I have sent again, thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. But without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season that thou shouldest receive him for ever. Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If thou count me therefore a partner receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought put that on mine account."

Paul then took his pen, and to give his letter the value of a true credibility he added these words:

"I Paul, I have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it, albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me, even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord, refresh my bowels in the Lord."

Then he resumed his dictation:

"Trusting in thy obedience, I have written to thee, knowing that thou wilt do more than I say, prepare thyself also to receive me for I hope that, because of your prayers I shall be given back to you. Epaphras, my prison companion in Jesus Christ, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow labourers, salute thee. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit!"

We have seen that Paul had some singular illusions. He believed himself on the eve of deliverance, he formed new plans of travel, and saw himself in the centre of Asia Minor, in the midst of the Churches which revered him as their apostle without ever having met with him. John Mark likewise was preparing to visit Asia, no doubt in Peter's name. Already the Churches of Asia had been informed of the approaching arrival of this brother. In the letter to the Colossians Paul inserted a new recommendation to his subject. The tone of this recommendation is cold enough. Paul feared that the disagreement he had had with John Mark and more still the sympathy of Mark with the Jerusalem party would place his friends in Asia in embarrassment, and that they would hesitate to receive a man whom they had up till then only known to be opposed. Paul was beforehand with these Churches and enjoined them to communicate with Mark, when he should pass through their country. Mark was cousin to Barnabas, whose name, dear to the Galatians, would not be unknown to the people of Phrygia. We do not know the result of the incidents. A frightful earthquake shook the whole valley of the Lycus. Opulent Laodicea was rebuilt by its own resources: but Colosse could not recover itself it almost disappeared from the number of the Churches, the Apocalypse in 69 does not mention it. Laodicea and Hierapolis invented all its importance in the history of Christianity.

Paul was comforted by his apostolic activity for the sad news which came from all parts. He said that he suffered for his dear Churches; he pictured himself as the victim who was opening to the Gentiles the gates of the family of Israel. About the last months of his imprisonment, he yet knew discouragement and desertion. Already writing to the Philippians he says, when opposing the conduct of his dear and faithful Timothy to that of others:

"Every one seeks his own interest, not that of Jesus Christ." Timothy alone appears never to have excited any complaint in this matter, severe, gruff,—difficult to please. It is not admissible to say that Aristarchus, Epaphras, Jesus called Justus had deserted him, but many among them were found absent occasionally. Titus was on a mission; others who owed everything to him, among whom may be quoted

Phygellus and Hermogenes, ceased to visit him. He, once so surrounded, saw himself isolated. The Christians of the circumcision shunned him. Luke, at certain periods, was alone with him. His character, which had always been a little morose, exasperated him; people could scarcely live in his company. Paul had from that time a cruel feeling of the ingratitude of men. Every word which one reads of his about this time is full of discontent and bitterness. The Church of Rome, closely affiliated to that of Jerusalem, was for the most part Judeo-Christian. Orthodox Judaism, very strong at Rome, had fought roughly with him. The old Apostle; with a broken heart, called for death.

If the matter had concerned one of another nature and another race we might try to picture Paul, in these last days, arriving at the conviction that he had used his life in a dream, repudiating all the sacred prophets for a writing which he had scarcely read till then *Ecclesiastes* (a charming book, the only loveable book ever composed by a Jew), and proclaiming that man happy who, after having let his life flow on in joy even to old age with the wife of his youth, dies without losing a son. A feature which characterises great European men is, at certain times, that they admit the wisdom of Epicurus, by being taken with disgust while working with ardour, and after having succeeded, by doubting if the cause they have served was worth so many sacrifices. Many dare to say, in the heat of action, that the day on which they begin to be wise is that on which, freed from all care, they contemplate nature and enjoy it. Very few at least escape tardy regrets. There is scarcely any devoted person, priest or 'religious' who, at fifty years of age, does not deplore his vow, and nevertheless perseveres. We do not understand the gallant man without a little scepticism; we love to hear the virtuous man sometimes say, "Virtue, thou art but a word!" for he who is too sure that virtue will be rewarded has not much merit; his good actions do not appear more than an advantageous investment. Jesus was no stranger to this exquisite sentiment; more than once his divine *rôle* appears to have weighed him down. Certainly it was not thus with St. Paul; he has not his Gethsemane of agony, and that is one of the reasons which make him less loveable. While Jesus possessed in the highest degree what we regard as the essential quality

of a distinguished person, I mean by that the gift of smiling in his work, of being its superior, of not allowing it to master him, Paul was not free from the defect which shocks us in sectaries; he believed clumsily. We could wish that sometimes, like ourselves, he had been seated fatigued on the roadside, and had perceived the vanity of absolute opinions. Marcus Aurelius, representing the most glorious of our race, yields to no one in virtue, and yet he does not know what fanaticism is. That is never seen in the East; our race alone is capable of realizing virtue without faith, of uniting doubt with hope. Freed from the terrible impetuosity of their temperament, exempted from the refined vices of Greek and Roman civilization, these strong Jewish minds were like powerful fountains which never run dry. Up to the end doubtless Paul saw before him the imperishable crown which was prepared for him, and like a runner redoubled his efforts the nearer he approached the goal. He had, moreover, moments of comfort. Onesiphorus of Ephesus, having come to Rome, sought him, and without being ashamed of his chains, served him and refreshed his heart. Demas, on the contrary, was disgusted by the absolute doctrines of the apostle and left him. Paul appears always to have treated him with a certain coldness.

Did Paul appear before Nero, or, to put it better, before the council to which his appeal would be laid? That is almost certain. Some indications, of doubtful value it is true, tell us of a "first defence," where no one assisted him, and in which, thanks to the grace which sustained him, he acquitted himself to his own advantage, so much so that he compares himself to a man who has been saved from the teeth of a lion. It is very probable that his affair terminated at the close of two years of prison at Rome (beginning of the year 63) by an acquittal. We do not see what interest the Roman authority would have had in condemning him for a sect-quarrel, which concerned it little. Some substantial indications, moreover, prove that Paul, before his death, carried out a series of apostolic travels and preachings, but not in the countries of Greece or Asia, which he had evangelized already.

Five years before, a month previous to his arrest, Paul writing from Corinth to the faithful at Rome, announced to them his intention to visit Spain. He did not wish, he

said, to exercise his ministry among them; it was only in passing that he reckoned on seeing them and enjoying some time with them; then they would bring him forward and facilitate his journey to the countries situated beyond them. The sojourn of the apostle at Rome was thus subordinated to a distant apostleship, which appeared to be his principal goal. During his imprisonment at Rome Paul appears sometimes to have changed his intention relative to his Western travels. He expresses to the Philippians and to the Colossian Philemon the hope of going to see them; but he certainly did not carry out that plan. When he left prison, what did he do? It is natural to suppose that he followed his first plan, and journeyed about where he could. Some grave reasons lead us to believe that he realized his project of visiting Spain. That journey had in his mind a lofty dogmatic meaning; he held to it much. It was important that he should be able to say that the good news had touched the extremity of the West, to prove that the gospel was accomplished since it had been heard at the end of the world. This fashion of exaggerating slightly the extent of his travels was familiar to Paul.

The general idea of the faithful was that before the appearing of Christ, the kingdom of God should have been preached everywhere. According to the apostles' manner of speech it was enough that it had been preached in a city for it to have been preached in a country; and it was sufficient that it had been preached to a dozen people, for everyone in the city to have heard it.

If Paul made this journey, he no doubt made it by sea. It is not absolutely impossible that some port in the south of France received the imprint of the apostle's foot. In any case, there remained of this problematical visit to the West no appreciable result.

CHAPTER V.

THE APPROACH OF THE CRISIS.

At the close of Paul's captivity, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles fail us. We fall into a profound night, which contrasts singularly with the historical clearness of the preceding ten years. No doubt not to be obliged to recount facts in which the Roman authority played an odious part, the author of the *Acts*, always respectful to that authority, and desirous of showing that it has been sometimes favourable to the Christians, stops all at once. That fatal silence casts a great uncertainty over the events which we should like so much to know. Fortunately Tacitus and the Apocalypse introduce a ray of living light into this deep night. The moment has come when Christianity, up till now held in secret by insignificant people to whom it was a joy, was about to break into history with a thunderclap, whose reverberation should be long.

We have seen that the Apostles did not neglect any effort to recall to moderation their brethren exasperated by the iniquities of which they were the victims. They did not always succeed in that. Different condemnations had been pronounced against some Christians, and people had been able to represent these sentences as the repression of crimes or evils. With an admirable correctness of meaning the Apostles drew out the code of martyrdom. Was one condemned for the name of "Christian," he must rejoice. We see it recalled that Jesus had said: "Ye shall be hated by all because of My name." But, to have the right to be proud of that hatred, one must be irreproachable. It was partly to calm some inopportune effervescences, to prevent acts of insubordination against the public authority, and also to establish his right to speak in all the Churches, that Peter, about this time, thought of imitating Paul and writing to the Churches of Asia Minor, without making any distinction between Jews and converted heathens, a circular letter or catechetic. Epistles were in fashion; from simple correspondence the Epistle had become a kind of literature, a fictional form serving as a framework for little treatises on religion. We have seen St. Paul at the end of his life adopting this custom. Each of the Apostles, following his example, wished to have his Epistle, as a specimen of his method of instruction, containing his

favourite maxims, and when one of them had none, they made one for him. These new Epistles which were at a later date called "catholic," do not suggest that they have anything to order of some one; they are the personal work of the Apostle, his sermon, his dominant thought, his little theology in eight or ten pages. There was mixed up in it some scraps of phrases drawn from the common treasure of homiletics and which, by dint of being quoted, have lost all signature, and no longer belong to anyone.

Mark had returned from his journey in Asia Minor, which he had undertaken at Peter's order, and with recommendations from Paul, a journey which probably was the sign of the reconciliation of the two Apostles. This journey had put Peter in relations with the Churches of Asia and authorised him to address to them a doctrinal instruction. Mark, according to his habit, served as secretary and interpreter to Peter for the editing of the Epistle. It is doubtful if Peter could speak Greek or Latin: his language was Syriac. Mark was at the same time in relations with Peter and Paul, and perhaps it is that which explains a singular fact which the Epistle of Peter presents, I mean some borrowings which the author of that Epistle makes from the writings of St. Paul. It is certain that Peter or his secretary (or the forger who has usurped his name), had under his eyes the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle called "to the Ephesians," really the two "Catholic" Epistles of Paul, those which have some true general features, and which were universally circulated. The Church of Rome could have a copy of the Epistle called to the Ephesians, recently written, a sort of general formula of the latter faith of Paul, addressed in the style of a circular to many Churches. With much stronger reason it would possess the Epistle to the Romans. Paul's other writings, which indeed have more the character of special letters, would not be found at Rome. Some less characteristic passages of the Epistle of Peter appear to have been borrowed from James. Did Peter, whom we have seen always holding a floating position in the apostolic controversies, while he made, if we can express it so, James and Paul speak by the same mouth, wish to show that the contradiction between these two Apostles were only apparent? As a pledge of agreement, did he wish to become the demonstrator of Pauline conceptions,

softened, it is true, and deprived of their necessary crowning—justification by faith? It is more probable that Peter, little accustomed to write and not concealing his literary barrenness, did not hesitate to appropriate some pious phrases which were continually repeated around him, and which, although parts of different systems, did not contradict each other in a formal way. Peter appears, fortunately for him, to have remained all his life a very mediocre theologian; the rigour of a consequent system ought not to be sought for in his writing.

The difference of the points of view in which Peter and Paul habitually placed themselves betrays itself, besides, from the first line of that writing: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect banished by the dispersion through Pontus, Galatia, &c." Such expressions are thoroughly final. The family of Israel, according to Palestinian ideas, was composed of two fractions—on the one hand, those who inhabited the Holy Land; on the other hand, those who did not inhabit it, comprehended under the general name of "the dispersion." Now, for Peter and James, the Christians, even heathens by origin, are so much a portion of the people of Israel that the whole Christian Church, outside of Jerusalem, enters in their views into the category of the expatriated. Jerusalem is still the only point in the world where, according to them, the Christian is not exiled.

The Epistle of Peter, in spite of its bad style, although more analogous to that of Paul than to that of James or Jude, is an affecting *morceau* where the state of the Christian conscience about the end of Nero's reign is reflected. A sweet sadness, a resigned confidence, fills it. The last times were at hand. These must be preceded by trials, from which the elect would come forth purified as by fire. Jesus, whom the faithful love without having seen him, in whom they believe without seeing him, will soon reappear, to their joy. Foreseen by God from all eternity, the mystery of the redemption is accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The elect, called to be born again in the blood of Jesus, are a people of saints, a spiritual temple, a royal priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices.

"My dearly beloved, I pray you to comfort yourselves among the Gentiles who seek to represent you as evil-doers, as strangers and expatriated, so that they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the

day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently, but if when ye do well and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow in his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

The ideal of the Passion, that touching picture of Jesus suffering without a word, exercised already, we have seen, a decisive influence on the Christian conscience. We may doubt if the account of it was yet written; that account was increased every day by new circumstances; but the essential features, fixed in the memory of the faithful, were to them perpetual exhortations to patience. One of the principal Christian positions was that "the Messiah ought to suffer." Jesus and the true Christian are more and more represented to the imagination under the form of a silent lamb in the hands of the butcher. They embraced Him in Spirit, this gentle lamb slain young by sinners; they dwelt lovingly on the features of affectionate pity and amorous tenderness of a Magdalen at the tomb. This innocent victim, with the knife plunged in his side, drew tears from all those who had known him. The expression "Lamb of God," to describe Jesus, was already coined; there mingled with it the idea of the paschal lamb; one of the most essential symbols of Christian art was in germ in these figures. Such an imagination, which struck Francis d'Assisi so greatly and made him weep, came from that beautiful passage where the second Isaiah, describing the ideal of the prophet of Israel (the man of sorrows) shows Him as a sheep which is led to death, and which does not open its mouth before its shearer.

This model of submission and humility Peter made the law of all classes of Christian society. The elders ought to rule their flock with deference, avoiding the appearance of commanding—the young ought to submit to the elder; the women, especially, without being preachers, ought to be, by the discreet charm of their piety, the great missionaries of the faith.

“And you, wives, likewise be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? And if ye suffer anything for righteousness, happy are ye!

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The hope of the kingdom of God held by the Christians gave room for some misunderstandings. The heathens imagined they spoke of a political revolution on the point of being carried out.

“Have a reason always ready for those who ask explanations from you as to your hopes, but make that answer with gentleness and meekness, strong in your own good conscience, so that those who calumniate the honest life in Christ you lead may be ashamed of their injuries; for it is better to suffer for doing good (if such is the will of God) than for doing evil. You have long enough done the will of the heathen, living in lust, evil desires, drunkenness, revelries, feasting, and the most abominable idolatrous worship. They are astonished now at your keeping from throwing yourselves with them into this excess of crime, and they insult you. They shall give an answer to him who shall soon judge the living and the dead. The end of all things is at hand. My dearly beloved, be not astonished at the fire which is lit to prove you, as if it were some strange thing; but rejoice in having part in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may triumph at the revelation of his glory. If you are insulted for

the name of Christ happy are ye. Let none of you be punished as a murderer, a thief, or malefactor, as a judge of the affairs of those who are without but if anyone suffers as a 'Christian' let him not be ashamed; on the contrary, let him glorify God in that name; for the time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God. If it begin with us, what shall the end be of those that obey not the Gospel of God? The righteous shall scarcely be saved. What then shall become of the impious and the sinner? Let those therefore who suffer according to the will of God: commit to the faithful Creator their souls in all purity. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time. Be sober and watch your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, prowleth seeking for prey. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same trials which prove you, your brethren spread over the whole world endure also. The God of all grace, after you have suffered awhile will heal you, confirm and strengthen you. To Him be all power through all the ages." Amen.

If this epistle, as we readily believe, is truly Peter's, it does much credit to his good sense, to his right feeling, and his simplicity. He does not arrogate any authority to himself. Speaking to the elders, he represents himself as one among themselves; he does not boast because he has been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and hopes to be a participator in the glory that is so soon to be revealed. The letter was conveyed to Asia by a certain Silvanus, who could not have been distinct from the Silvanus, or Silas, who was Paul's companion. Peter would thus have chosen him as known to the faithful of Asia Minor, through the visit he had made to them with Paul. Peter sends the salutations of Mark to these distant churches in a way which supposes, moreover, that he was, likewise, not unknown to them. The letter is closed by the usual greetings. The Church of Rome is there described in these words: "The elect which is at Babylon." The sect was closely watched; a letter too clear, intercepted, might have led to frightful evils. Thus to disarm the suspicions of the police, Peter terms Rome by the name of the ancient capital of Asiatic impiety, a name whose symbolic signification would not escape anyone, and which would soon furnish the material for a complete poem.