

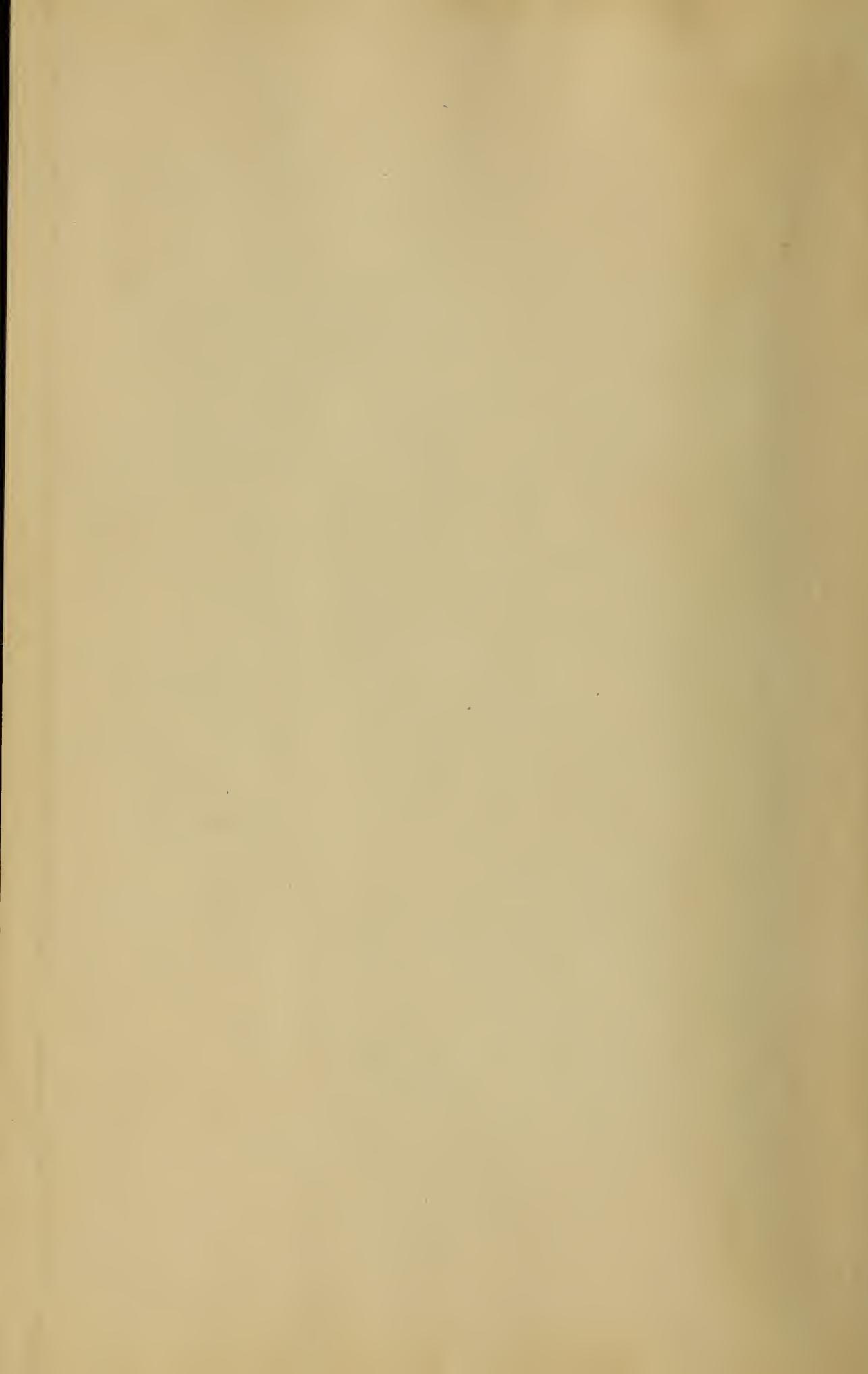
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GOD IN HISTORY:  
OR THE  
ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS PURPOSES  
AS DECLARED BY HIS SERVANTS  
THE PROPHETS,  
EXEMPLIFIED IN THE  
CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. JABEZ B. HYDE,  
First received Missionary among the Seneca Indians.

"SURELY THE LORD GOD WILL DO NOTHING, BUT HE REVEALETH HIS SECRET  
UNTO HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS;"—AMOS 3: 7.

BUFFALO:  
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1848.

See last page of cover.



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## INTRODUCTION.

THE plan proposed for this work, is to bring up the civil and political history of the world from the beginning of the Christian Era — noticing the political changes which have taken place in each century — the Sovereigns who reigned — their character — the length of their reign — the changes and revolutions which occurred, and by what means, and by whom effected. These are to be given in sufficient detail to afford a general view of the state of the Roman world, in the different periods, as we pass over them — comparing the transpiring events with the prophecies, which are supposed to have reference to them.

The Saviour forewarned the disciples that the first sign of the approach of the destruction of Jerusalem, would be that "they should hear of wars and rumors of wars." Instead of simply saying that from eight to ten years prior to that event, the Roman Empire was fearfully convulsed with revolutions, our plan is to give some details of the particular manner in which it was convulsed, the principal actors, and the character of these "wars and rumors of wars." — The same course will be pursued in relation to the prophetic vision seen by John when he was called up into Heaven, to be shown those things which should be hereafter — the book with seven seals, which contained the whole mystery of God that remained to be fulfilled, as had been declared by his servants, the Prophets; that is, the whole purpose of God concerning the world to its consummation.

In the Book of Seven Seals, six of them contained specified events following each other in regular succession. The first of these emblems was a white horse, "and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering and to conquer." These emblems denote peace and victory. Peace in the world, and the triumphs of the gospel in the period to which it relates. Instead of simply declaring that such a state of things did follow, soon after the publication of this prophecy, our plan will ensure sufficient of detail to show in what manner, and at what time the events occurred answering exactly to the emblem. The same course will also be pursued in relation to the three following seals: the Red, the Black, and the Pale Horse, and the riders who sat on them. All these symbols represent varied and dire calamities which were to come upon the world, and our aim will be to show the particulars of their fulfilment. The fifth seal does not relate, strictly speaking, to particular events, but represents the sufferings of the martyrs during the period which will be passed over in considering the first four. It rather belongs to the history of the church, and will be treated of in another division of our subject. In the sixth seal, the emblems denote great events — fearful revolutions, overturnings and casting down from high places. As in the other

seals, our object will be, from historical facts, to show events, answering to the bold emblematical figures of the prophecy. In the seventh seal there are no specific events. It contains seven trumpets; six of these represent as many specific events: or in their progress, consummating six epochs. As in the seals, we shall present historical facts corresponding to the emblems. These trumpets embrace the prominent political events which are to take place to the end of the world, except those contained in the seven last vials, and Ezekiel's Gog and Magog, in the 30th and 39th chapter of his prophecy — which is still future — as nothing like it is to be seen in the Revelation. It appears an isolated event preceding the vials.

After having completed the political history according to the outline of the plan above given, we shall proceed to take up the history of the Church through the same period:—the eminent men in the church — their doctrines and practice — the errors and heresies propagated in different centuries — the great falling away — the rise of the “Man of Sin,” — his long continuance, and the witnesses who have prophesied in sack cloth in every age since his rise — where they had suffered and who they have been. But our plan will be more fully unfolded as we proceed.

It should be observed that as Israel, under the Old Dispensation, was the “Valley of Vision,” in which God was pleased to manifest His moral perfections, in actual life, the “Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious — long suffering, and abundant in goodness and in truth, keeping mercy for thousands — forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.”\* So under the gospel dispensation, He chose the Roman Empire in which to display the like attributes in the fulfillment of the prediction of His Prophets, as well as the character of man under every variety of circumstances. Therefore the history of the affairs of other nations will not be embraced, only as they are connected with that Empire.

The Author, like all others, except those who have written the history of their our times, is indebted to those who have gone before him, for the facts and incidents whereof he writes. The authorities from which he has drawn most largely, are Gibbon, for his secular history. First because his is a work of deep research. Second: because those who have read him will not suspect that he has shaped his narrative of events to accommodate prophecies.

For his ecclesiastical history, he has consulted Milner, Neander, and Fuller’s British Church History. Of Milner he has made more use than of any other. His object has been to condense these histories and show by them the progress and the accomplishment of the several prophecies. He frequently uses their own language, and often without the usual marks of quotations.

On the prophecies he has consulted Newton, Scott, Faber and Townsend. While he would acknowledge his indebtedness to those authors, it will be seen that he differs in some respects, materially from them.

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\*Exodus 34—6, 7.

## C H A P T E R . I

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### SECULAR HISTORY.—FIRST CENTURY.

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THE EMPERORS WHO REIGNED IN THIS CENTURY — THEIR CHARACTER — THE PROMINENT EVENTS OF THE PERIOD AND THE PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN THEM.

B. C. 30.—Augustus was the first Emperor of Rome, and reigned forty four years. About the thirtieth year of his reign “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” This is the beginning of the Christian Era. Tiberius succeeded Augustus and reigned twenty-three years. Luke says that John the Baptist began his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. Christ was crucified during his reign, and it, is related that Pilate wrote to him on account of the Life, Miracles and Passion of the Lord Jesus, which Tiberius communicated to the Senate, with a request that Jesus should be honored among the gods of the Romans, which the Senate refused on account of the recommendation coming from the Emperor — as that body was exceedingly jealous of its rights and prerogatives. Caligula, a weak, cruel and rash prince, succeeded Tiberius and reigned four years. Next came Claudius, who reigned fourteen years. Now succeeded Nero, and reigned also fourteen years. “Nero,” says Gibbon, “involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the space of eighteen months, three princes perished by the sword, and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of contending armies.” These three princes were Galba, Otho, and Vitellus. These fearful scenes were enacted a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Why may not these be the “wars and rumors of wars” which the Saviour forewarned his disciples they should hear as the first sign which was to precede that event? The whole reign of Nero was marked with cruelty and blood. The christians were persecuted with unrelenting violence and thousands suffered death in all the forms of torture which the malice and ingenuity of their persecutors could invent.

The closing up of these bloody scenes, was the establishment of Vespasian on the throne of the Cæsars. He reigned ten years in much mildness, and was succeeded by his son Titus, who appears to have been the chosen instrument of God, to execute the threatenings of our Saviour against Jerusalem. This was, however, before he was Emperor, and while he was chief commander of the Roman armies. Titus reigned but three years, and was succeeded by Domitian, who occupied the throne fifteen years. Nerva, a virtuous prince succeeded him — but his reign was short, being only sixteen months. This completed the first century — a period before John was shown the things that should *be hereafter* and consequently will not be found in his book of prophecies — Revelations.

A celebrated Historian (Gibbon) in speaking of the characters of the Emperors who succeeded Augustus, says. “Their unparalleled vices and the splendid theatre on which they acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark and unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellus and the timid, inhuman

Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy." During the four score years—excepting the short and doubtful reign of Vespasian—Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny which exterminated the ancient families of the Republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue, and every talent which arose in that unhappy period.

It was in this untoward state of the world, that the gospel was promulgated amidst these moral ruins, and that with great success in reclaiming great numbers during that period, and forming a noble band of martyrs. Had not Gibbon's eyes been holden by prejudice and enmity to the gospel, he would have seen that virtue had not left the earth, but shone with a humble lustre, before unknown in the heathen world. During the reign of these tyrants, the church had peace excepting a few years of the persecution of Nero, and the latter part of the reign of Domitian—yet, all along, was subject to violent popular outbreaks, as in the days of the Apostles.

## SECOND CENTURY.

This century began with the renowned Trajan, who reigned seventeen years and was succeeded by Adrian, who reigned twenty-one years. He was succeeded by Antonius Pius, who reigned twenty-three years, and was succeeded by Marcus Antonius, who reigned nineteen years. Commodus succeeded him and reigned thirteen years, and was succeeded by Pertinax, a prince renowned for his virtue, who reigned but eighty-six days, when he was overcome and slain by Severus, who reigned eighteen years in cruelty and savage ferocity. During the last eight years of his reign, he was a violent persecutor of the church. This brings us to the close of the second century, and five or six years into the third.

## THIRD CENTURY.

Before entering upon the events of this century, we will quote from Gibbon, a passage, relating to the condition of the world. "If a man were called upon to fix a period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was the most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the succession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire, was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm and gentle hand of four successive Emperors, whose character and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonies, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the law." Yet Trajan and Marcus were persecutors of the christians—Trajan the last half of his reign and Marcus the whole of his—facts which will be considered in the history of the church.

The eighty years embraced in the reigns of Trajan, Adrian, Antonius Pius, and Marcus Antonius, there can be no doubt, is the period under the emblem of the White Horse,—the first seal of Revelations. The Chronology exactly agrees as it immediately follows the publication of the prophecy, which must have been the very last of the first—or the begining of the second century. The emblems denote peace and victory. Peace to

the world and the triumphs of the Gospel. Both were conspicuous at this period, as will be shown in the history of the church. "And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

But different scenes awaited the world for nearly another century from the accession of Commodus, about A. D. 181. They cannot be better described than in the language of the second seal; "and there went out another horse that was Red; and power was given him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword."

Of Commodus it may be said, as of Manassah of old, at Jerusalem: he filled Rome with innocent blood — the best families were almost exterminated — great numbers of Senators fell by his hand. The worst part of the French revolution, in its executions and murders, did not exceed those of Commodus during the last half of his reign. And then the fall of Pertinax and Julianus; with the accession of Severus, wading to a throne in blood — by vanquishing, after several hard fought battles, two rival generals — Albinus and Niger, each equaling him in military skill and in the number and discipline of their respective armies; and not only this but destroying the cities, and provinces which favored them.. Here was an accomplishment, in part, of the commission of the Red Horse; "*that they should kill one another.*"

As before remarked, Severus reigned eighteen years — extending five or six into the third century. This century therefore commences in his reign. He left the empire to his two sons, Caracalla and Geta. Caracalla murdered Geta in the arms of their mother, who attempted to protect her son.

Caracalla was a most wretched man. Gibbon says "that neither business nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend him from a guilty conscience; and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured mind, that in his disordered fancy he often beheld the angry forms of his father, and brother rising into life to threaten and upbraid him. The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero and Domitian, who resided mostly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the Senatorial and equestrian orders: But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire; particularly those of the east, and every province was by turns the scene of his rapine and cruelty, The Senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immense expense, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect in every city magnificent palaces and theatres which he either disdained to visit, or ordered immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations and the great body of the subjects were oppressed by ingenious, and aggravated taxes. In the midst of peace and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his command at Alexandria, in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure part in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers. Since, as he coolly informed the senate, "*all* the Alexandrian's those who had perished, and those who had escaped were alike guilty.

This monster, Caracalla, reigned six years, and was assassinated without any popular outbreak. Macrinus succeeded him and reigned nearly one year when he was overthrown in battle, and was succeeded by Bassianus, grand son of Severus, in the female line, but known in history as Elagabulus or Heliogabulus, priest of the Sun, claiming to be pontiff and favorite of that deity, he assumed the sacred name (Elagabulus.) He professed to perform all things in a religious manner; but his debaucheries, infamy and degradation are almost incredible. He was slain by the praetorian guards, after an infamous reign of three years and nine months, without any popular tumult, his body was dragged through the streets of Rome and thrown into the Tiber, and his memory branded with eternal infamy by the Senate and ratified by posterity. This monster was succeeded by his cousin Alexander, who, with his mother Mamea, reigned thirteen years. These were persons of another character. For in the midst of wrath God remembereth mercy; he does not proceed to extremes in this world, that men should not perish from off the earth. He says to the destroyer "*see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*" God will spare some comforts in the greatest extremities, to most ill deserving communities and individuals, until they shall be given up. "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." even over the Roman world sinking in her dissoluteness. *even in a time when it was given up to kill one another with the sword.* And during the reign of these monsters the church had enjoyed repose and protection. Caracalla did not repeal the edicts of his father Severus against the christians, but issued another edict, that any person complaining of christians as such should be capitally punished. We shall meet with a curious case in the history of the church under his reign where the informer, and the christian, were both put to death by law—the one for informing against a christian, and he for avowing he was one. Elagabulus was tolerant to christians, and previous to being cut off, was purposing to build a splendid temple for the Jews and christians, over which doubtless he intended to preside.

That we may better see the providence of God in this affair, and the work of his hand, and the instruments he employs, we will turn back to Severus: Though in his youth, under Marcus, he was a bitter persecutor of the christians, at Lyons where he acted as Judge, he was afterward, through the influence and kindness received from Proculus, through whose instrumentality he was raised from a dangerous sickness, favorably disposed towards them, until the tenth year of his reign. Returning from his victories in the east, he established himself absolute master of the Roman world. In his pride he forbid christians to proselyte to their faith. The christians refused to obey: for this refusal he felt his honor concerned to bring them to submission, which resulted in a cruel persecution of all ages and sexes. Proculus, he retained in his family while he lived, but he died before this change in Severus. Julia, Caracalla's mother, was a superior woman, whatever might have been her views of christianity, probably favorable, though she sunk under her afflictions in the conduct and loss of her sons. On the accession of Macrinus, finding herself degraded from an empress to a subject, she withdrew herself by taking her own life. But Caracalla was early impressed in favor of christians. On one occasion while in play with one of his mates the lad was accused and beaten as a christian, not only by the rabble around him, but his own father joined in

the persecution. Severus looking on, and approving their conduct. Caracalla was so grieved and indignant at the deed, that for a long time he could not see his father but with abhorrence and detestation; and very probably here was the germ of that deadly hate, which led Caracalla to seek the life of his father; however that may be, with all the desperation and profligacy of his character, his prepossessions were in favor of christianity. Perhaps this is not a solitary case, for other desperate men in other ages, who in early life have been impressed in favor of the gospel, in all their subsequent abandonment may not wholly lose that impression, and if not brought to repentance their impressions may remain in favor of christianity, as the true religion.

Julia had two daughters, both widows each having a son: Soaemias the mother of Elagabulus, and Mamaea the mother of Alexander. He was a modest and dutiful son, seventeen years of age when invested with the purple. Mamaea was virtually at the head of the government, though she declined the useless prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted excluding women forever from the senate, and devoting to the infernal gods, the head of the wretch by whom this section should be violated. The substance not the pageantry of power was the object of Mamaea's only ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. She persuaded him to divorce a wife he had married with her consent before his elevation, drive her from the palace and banish her to Africa.

Notwithstanding this act of jealous cruelty as well as some other instances of wrong with which she is charged, the general tenor of her administration was equally for the benefit of her son, and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate, she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous of that body as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was to be debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally distinguished for his knowledge of, and respect for the laws of Rome, was the head, and the prudence and firmness of this aristocracy restored order, and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the State from foreign superstitions, and luxury the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabulus, they applied themselves to remove the worthless creatures from every department of public administration and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning and the love of justice became the only recommendation for civil office. Valor and the love of discipline, the only qualification for military employment.

But the most important care of Mamaea and her wise counsellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted, and even prevented the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantage of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labor; natural mildness of temper and moderation, preserved him from the assaults of passion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wise Ulpian, guarded his inexperienced youth from the poison of flattery.

Alexander answered the expectation caused by such a beginning, and training in one of the best moral characters found in profane history.—A

great blessing to the Roman world, in delivering it from that tyranny, dissoluteness, and misrule which had become intolerable. While God gave the empire a breathing spell under the administration of these excellent princes, they showed that they were unworthy of such a blessing. The dissolute became impatient under the wholesome restraint, and exclusion from offices of trust and emolument. They first murdered Ulpian in the presence of Alexander. He however put down that insurrection and brought the ringleaders to justice. They murmured at the influence of the mother in state affairs. They desired to be commanded by a chief of more military renown. A mutiny was excited in the camp, and Alexander and his mother were assassinated in their tent by Maximian, his general, who began his reign A. D. 235. We are destitute of evidence that Alexander and his mother were truly christians. Yet doubtless their outward characters were greatly improved by what they had learnt of christian ethics. The providence of God is observable in his compassion for dissolute and ungrateful Rome in giving such princes, and for the church in preserving her from persecution, and giving her rest. Alexander had a domestic chapel, where he every morning worshipped those princes who had been placed among the gods whose characters were most esteemed. Among whom were placed Apollanius of Tyana, Jesus Christ, Abraham, Orpheus. This was incomparable with his being a devoted servant of Christ. Eusebius says Mamaea was a most godly woman. In the history of the church we shall have better opportunity to consider this.

God gratified the Romans, who had become impatient under the mild and excellent government of Alexander in preferring a man more distinguished as a military chief. This they had in Maximinus to their hearts content. He was a savage raised up out of the dregs of society. A monster in stature, being more than eight feet in height, his muscular strength and the celerity of his motions first brought him to the notice of Severus, "who appointed him to serve in the horse guards which always attended on the person of the Sovereign. He was born within the territory of the empire and descended from a mixed race of barbarians. His father a Goth and his mother of the nation of the Alani. He displayed, on every occasion, a valor equal to his strength; and his native fierceness was soon tempered or disguised by a knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his son he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favor and esteem of both these princes, the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximinus to serve under the assassin of Caracalla. Honor taught him to decline the effeminate, insult of Elagabus. On the accession of Alexander, he returned to court, and was placed by that prince in a station useful to the service and honorable to himself. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, soon became under his care, the best disciplined of the whole army. With the general applause of the soldiers who bestowed on him, the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was successively promoted to the first military command. Had he not retained so much of his savage origin, the emperor would have given his sister to his son in marriage. Instead of securing his fidelity, these favors served only to inflame his ambition, and he deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit, as long as he was constrained to acknowledge a superior. Though a stranger to real wisdom, he was not devoid of selfish cunning, which shewed him, that the emperor had lost the affection of the army, and

taught him to improve their discontent to his own advantage. It is easy for faction and calumny to shed their poison on the administration of the best of princes and to accuse even their virtues, by artfully confounding them with those vices to which they bear the nearest affinity. The troops listened with pleasure to the emissaries of Maximinus; their arts succeeded; Maximinus was saluted Emperor by the army, and immediately they disposed of Alexander and his mother. On his elevation, says Gibbon, his dark and sanguinary soul was open to every suspicion against those among his subjects who were most distinguished by birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed with the sound of treason his cruelty was unbounded and unrelenting. A conspiracy against his life was either discovered or imagined, and Magnus, a consular Senator, was named as the principal author of it. Without a witness, without a trial, without an opportunity of defence. Magnus with four thousand of his supposed accomplices were put to death. Italy and the whole empire were infested with innumerable spies and informers. On the slightest suspicion, the first of the Roman nobles, who had governed provinces, commanded armies, and been adorned with consul, and triumphal ornaments, were chained on the public carriages and hurried to the emperor's presence. Confiscation, exile, or simple death, were considered uncommon instances of lenity. Some of the unfortunate sufferers were ordered to be sewed up in the skin of slaughtered animals, others to be exposed to the wild beasts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs. During the three years of his reign, he disdained to visit either Rome or Italy. His camp, occasionally removed from the banks of the Rhine to those of Danube, was the seat of his stern despotism: which trampled on every principle of law and justice, and was supported by the avowed power of the sword. No man of noble birth, elegant accomplishments or knowledg of civil business was suffered near his person: and the court of a Roman Emperor revived the idea of those ancient chiefs of slaves and gladiators.

As long as these cruelties were confined to the illustrious, the rich, and the adventurous in the court or army, the body of the people looked on with indifference, and perhaps an envious pleasure; but he seized the public revenue of the cities, destined to purchase corn for the multitude, and to supply the expences of secular games, and entertainments. By a single act of authority, the whole mass of wealth was confiscated for the use of the imperial treasury. The temples were stripped of their most valuable offerings of gold, silver statutes of gods, heroes, and emperors, were melted down and coined into money. These impious orders could not be executed without tumult and blood. The whole Roman world groaned under the cruel oppression of Maximinus. Gibbon says "his body was suited to his soul, and circumstances almost incredible, are related of his matchless strength and appetite. Had he lived in a less enlightened age, tradition and poetry might well have described him as one of those monstrous giants whose supernatural power was constantly exerted for the destruction of mankind. During the ravages of this monster, four emperors were made and slain; two in opposing Maximinus, and two deposed and slain by their own troops: viz. the two Gordans, Maximius and Balbianus; Maximinus was finally slain by his own troops. After him the younger Gordian reigned four years. He was cut off by violence, and was succeeded by Philip the Arabian who reigned five years, a friend of christians, who desired admission among

them. But his conduct in the murder of Gordian, and the pomp with which he solemnised the secular games, looked like any thing but christianity.

Gibbon says from the great secular games celebrated by Philip A. D. 248, to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. In this period Decius, Gallus, *Aemitianus*, Valerian, and Gallienus reigned. Within this period the empire was constantly annoyed by the irruptions and success of barbarians on every side. In addition to these disasters from without, in which many flourishing cities became runious heaps, and provinces a desolate wilderness, almost innumerable multitudes perished by the sword, and captivity at the same time. More than twenty pretenders to the throne assumed the purple, in different parts of the empire, and perished with their adherents; or established themselves in little independent states. Most surely this answers to the description of the *Red Horse* "and the power given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword." Also the accomplishment of the two following seals, the Black and Pale Horse. The famine the pestilence, and the increase of ferocious beasts, glutted and nourished by the carcases of human victims, would multiply and occupy the ruined and vacated cities, and deserted provinces, until they, in their turn, made inroads on the remnant of those who had escaped the above calamities. So that government was obliged to raise armies to repel and defend the inhabitants from the ravages of the beasts. This is not explicitly made out in Gibbon, yet we will hear what he says, and he will not be suspected of attempting to accommodate history to agree with prophecy. After speaking of the bloody scenes which we have noticed he says: "But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of the future harvest. Famines are almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must however have contributed to the furious plague, which from the year 250 to 265, raged without interruption, in every province, every city and almost every family of the Roman Empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated." It was found, says he, "by an exact register kept in Alexandria, (a city of 300,000 inhabitants) that more than half perished, and could we, venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, famine and pestilence, had consumed, in a few years a moiety of the human species."

Concerning the inroads of the wild beasts on the inhabitants and that forces of armed men were raised to repel them, we have discovered nothing in Gibbon, directly stating such a fact. Yet we see in the triumphs of succeeding Emperors, multitudes of wild beasts are exhibited. In the triumph of Aurelian, the hunting of wild beasts is mentioned as one item. In the triumph of Carius, Gibbon says of the spectacles, if we confine ourselves solely to the hunting of wild beasts, however we may censure the vanity of the design, or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confess that neither before nor since this time of the Romans, so much art and expense have ever been lavished for the amusement of the people. By the order of Probus, a great quantity of trees torn up by the roots, were

transplanted into the midst of the circus. This spacious forest was filled with 1000 Ostriches, 1000 stags, 1000 fallow deer, and a 1000 wild boars: and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of 100 lions, an equal number of lionesses, 200 leopards, and 300 bears. Besides these, were exhibited animals from all parts of the world; Zebras, Elks, Camel-leopards, 30 African Hyenas, 10 Indian Tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, 32 Elephants.

From these new spectacles in Roman triumph, and their occurring immediately after the empire had been so depopulated by the sword, famine and pestilence, and provinces desolated where beasts might multiply without molestation — the prediction of the fourth seal as connected with these other calamities — hunting wild beasts must have been a considerable avocation, or so many would not have been collected, and an art worth cultivating, which seemed to be one end of the exhibition. These are all the facts that we have obtained, of the fulfillment of that part of the prophecy. We have seen that men were “killed with the sword, and with hunger and with death,” in vast numbers in this period; and, we can have no reason to doubt, by the beasts of the earth, from what we have seen of the spectacles at their games. Dr. Scott says armies were sent out to repel the aggression of beasts — but we have not seen the details of his authority. Yet no doubt, he wrote advisedly.

But to return to our history. Beside the famine, pestilence and the aggressions of the beasts of the earth, from the death of Alexander, A. D. 235 to that of Gallienus, 268, thirty three years, the Empire had hardly any respite from military tyranny, revolution and blood' from within and wasting desolation from the barbarians without. The calamities of the empire seem to have come to their height in the reign of Gallienas, who held the throne fifteen years. Under the deplorable reign of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppressed and almost destroyed by the soldiers, the tyrants and the barbarians.

## CHAPTER II.

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FROM THE DEATH OF GALLIENUS, A. D. 268, TO THE ACCESSION OF CONSTANTINE, A. D. 324.

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The prophecies lose their figurative character in their literal accomplishment — Shaping of events for the fulfilment of those contained in the Sixth Seal — Great Princes come on the stage, by whom order and security were restored to the empire — The reign of Claudius Aurelius — The resolution of the army sent to the Senate — Interim of eight months to the election of Senator Tacitus — Succeeded by Probus — Probus succeeded by Carus, who is reported killed by lightning in Persia — The events which followed — His two sons Numerian and Carinus declared Emperors — The events which advanced Dioclesian — His changes in the government — Chooses Maximian his colleague, and the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius — Abdication of Dioclesian and Maximian — Galerius fills the vacated places with Maximin and Severus — Constantine returns to his father a short time before his father's death — Constantine declared Augusta-Emperor by the army of Gaul and Britain — Maxentius' usurpation — Overthrows Severus — The Augusta-Emperor, Licinius appointed to fill his place — Ill success of Galerius against Maxentius — Maxentius overthrown by Constantine — Maximin makes war on Licinius — Is overthrown — Galerius dies a miserable death — The Roman Empire divided between Constantine and Licinius — Licinius overthrown by Constantine, who becomes master of the Roman world, A. D. 324.

When we compare the foregoing history of the calamities which befel the empire, with the prophecies predicting them in the seals, they seem to lose their figurative character in their literal accomplishment. In the second seal, Rev. VI, 4, it is said, "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given unto him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." We have seen that it was a civil war, and that on a great scale, represented by "and there was given unto him a great sword." Third seal, 5th verse, "And I beheld a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand," 6th verse, "And I heard a voice in the midst of the beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny: and see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine." The balances denoted the weighing with care the scanty provision to the famishing inhabitants, black with hunger. We have heard what Gibbon said of the famine at this period. We have another fact we have not noticed, viz: that the whole policy of the government, for years, was directed to devise means to preserve the mass of the inhabitants from actual starvation, and the empire from depopulation. Another feature in this seal, "see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine," indicates that some comforts would be spared—some alleviations mingled in these dire

calamities, as we have seen were. "And when he had opened the Fourth seal," "and I looked and beheld a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, with hunger and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." This we have seen fulfilled to the letter in the mingling and consummation of these three calamitous seals.

From the death of Gallienus, A. D. 268, we shall see that the providence of God concerning the Roman world was shaping to another momentous revolution, consummated A. D. 324 or 6—the subject of the sixth seal. We shall see these dire calamities stayed, order and subordination restored to the empire, discipline and victory to her armies, the barbarians driven beyond the Danube and the barriers of the empire. Gibbon, who appears to have little concern with, or discovery of a Divine Providence, notices the new aspect of things in the Roman State. After summing up the evils under which the empire had groaned, threatening her dissolution and ruin, he says, "It was saved by a series of great princes, who derived their obscure origin from the martial provinces of Illyricum. Within the space of thirty years, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Dioclesian and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domestic enemies of the State, re-established military discipline, strengthened the frontiers, and deserved the glorious title of the restorers of the Roman world." All this gigantic power, we shall see, was concentrated to overthrow the Christian religion, and the re-establishment of Polytheism, but which resulted in its final extirpation in the Roman Empire.

We must confine ourselves more to general facts. Gibbon does justice to the valor and ability of these princes. In the bloody and calamitous period we have passed over, the soldiers made and murdered emperors as they were bought by donatives, their passions inflamed by real or supposed injuries, or as they were deceived by designing men. They themselves became alarmed at this state of things, which destroyed all confidence and all discipline. Yet, two of the above Emperors, Aurelian and Probus, were however, murdered by their soldiers. The former under the most aggravating circumstances. Aurelian, though severe and prompt in his discipline, was yet the idol of his army. By his wise and energetic administration he had restored order and peace at home, and protection to the frontiers, recovered Gaul and Britain from the usurper Tetricus, Palmyra from the revolted Queen Zenobia—and by a series of brilliant achievements had recovered the fame of the Roman arms to its ancient glory, and obtained for himself a name among the first of the Romans; yet, notwithstanding all this, the soldiers murdered this emperor. The circumstances were these: his Secretary was accused of extortion, for which Aurelian had threatened him, and he knew he seldom threatened in vain. As the only means of saving himself, he artfully counterfeited his master's hand, and shewed the principal officers of the army a long and bloody list of their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting the imposition, they hastily resolved to secure their own lives by the murder of the emperor. But when the officers and army discovered the fraud which had been practised on them, after despatching the secretary and honoring Aurelian with becoming funeral rites, unanimously adopted a resolution, sent it to the senate, signified by the following epistle: "The brave and fortunate armies

of the senate and people of Rome: The crime of one man, and the error of many, have deprived us of our late emperor, Aurelian. May it please your venerable lords and fathers to place him in the number of the gods, and appoint a successor whom your judgment shall declare worthy of the imperial purple! None of those whose guilt or misfortune has contributed to our loss shall ever reign over us." Though the Senate rejoiced at the returning respect and confidence reposed in them, yet they declined the perilous responsibility, and referred back the election of an emperor to the suffrage of the military order.

The troops, as if satiated with the exercise of power, again conjured the senate to invest one of its own body with the imperial purple. The senate still persisted in its refusal; and the army in its request. The reciprocal offer was pressed and rejected three times, and while the obstinate modesty of either party was resolved to receive a master from the hand of the other, eight months had elapsed—an amazing period of tranquil-anarchy, (says Gibbon)—during which the Roman world remained without a sovereign, without an usurper, and without sedition. The generals and magistrates appointed by Aurelian continued to execute their ordinary functions with little change.

We have introduced this here, that we may see the hand of God in bringing about his purposes, through the instrumentality of means, operating on and influencing free agents to stay that effusion of blood and misrule which had brought the Roman world to the verge of dissolution and ruin! Surely God is wonderful in counsel—"the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder he will restrain."

The purpose of God concerning the fourth kingdom, that nameless terrific beast, of such diversified atrocity of character, which when Daniel saw in prophetic vision, filled him with amazement and distress, especially his protracted and successful war against the saints—the whole purpose of God concerning this power was not yet accomplished, therefore he appointed means, which, through their operation on the agencies of creatures, would raise the Roman world from its then ruinous state, to unity and power beyond what it had ever attained, and that it might put forth its full strength against the gospel.

But to return to the history. The movements of enemies from without compelled the senate, after a lapse of eight months, to elect Tacitus, one of their number—a worthy prince, who reigned nearly seven months. After him, his brother assumed the purple, unasked and unfit; his reign was about three months. He was removed to make room for Probus, who was elected by the joint suffrages of the army and senate. Of whom Gibbon says, "that by his active vigor, in a short reign of about six years he equaled the fame of ancient heroes, and restored peace and order to the Roman world. There was not left in the provinces a hostile barbarian, or tyrant to revive the memory of past disorders." Yet this excellent prince was murdered by his soldiers—an act committed in a sudden outbreak of passion for hardships imposed on them in draining a marsh, not for military purposes, but to improve the emperor's land. The rage of the troops subsided as soon as it had been gratified, and they lamented their fatal rashness with expressions of deep contrition. Carus succeeded Probus. He spent the most of his reign in his Persian expedition, where, in the midst of the most brilliant success, he died suddenly in his tent, supposed

by many to have been killed by lightning. Numerian, the son of Carus, who was with his father in Persia, and Carinus, who remained at Rome, were unanimously acknowledged emperors by the army and senate. Numerian's constitution was destroyed by the hardships of the service and the heat of the climate; his eyes were so affected that he was obliged to confine himself to a darkened tent, or covered litter. After the death of Carus, no discipline or persuasion could overcome the superstitious fears of the soldiers, to induce them to follow up their conquest. But leave they must, a place where such indications of the wrath of Heaven had been manifested, as the killing of their emperor with lightning. They left the Tigris, and by slow marches reach Chalcedon on the Thracian Bosphorus. Soon after they arrived, their young emperor, Numerian, was found dead in his tent. A military council was called, and Dioclesian elected emperor. Carinus and Dioclesian, with their armies, met to contend for the throne. The former was slain by his own officers, on the very point of victory, and Dioclesian left sole master of the Roman world.

Dioclesian holds a conspicuous place in that revolution, the progress of which we are contemplating. Gibbon says of him, that "he was more illustrious than any of his predecessors. He may be considered as the founder of a new empire, or new order of things." As he was not indebted to the senate for his elevation, in the progress of his administration he hardly left them a name to live. From his accession, Rome ceased to be the seat of the empire, which she never regained until the dragon gave his seat to the beast, in the beginning of the eighth century. Dioclesian enlarged and embellished Nicomedia. There he built his palace and held his court. He, by gradual advances, diminished the number and abridged the privileges of the proud Praetorians who had so long made and disposed of emperors. Rome he reduced to a level with the cities of the provinces, and new modeled the whole government.

Early in his reign, Dioclesian associated with himself in the government Maximian, a brave, ferocious man, who had been distinguished in former wars. Indeed, in the appointment of all officers, civil and military, Dioclesian seemed only to have respect to ability, valor, and fitness for their place, irrespective of whom they had formerly served, or to what party or family allied. For himself and his colleague, Maximian, he took the title of Augusta-Emperors. To these he added two other emperors, called Cæsars — Galerius and Constantius. Each of these were required to repudiate their wives, and marry, Galerius the daughter of Dioclesian, and Constantius the daughter of Maximian. The wide extent of the Roman empire was distributed between these four emperors. The defence of Gaul, Spain and Britain was committed to Constantius. Galerius was stationed on the banks of the Danube, as the safeguard of the Illyrian provinces. Italy and Africa were considered as the department of Maximian; and, for his particular portion, Dioclesian reserved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich provinces of Asia. Each was sovereign within his own territory; and their united authority extended over the whole empire, and each was required to assist his colleague with his counsel or presence, as the case might require. This arrangement was completed about the sixth year of Dioclesian. Through these measures, and the valor and abilities of these emperors, the empire was defended from without, while the whole groaned under the burden which oppressed them from within. The balance of power established by

Dioclesian, worked well, while it was sustained by the firm and dexterous hand of its founder; and it required such a fortunate mixture of different tempers, and abilities, as could scarcely be found, or even expected, a second time; two emperors without jealousy—two Cæsars without ambition, and the same general interest invariably pursued by four independent princes. In this united, gigantic power, the whole Roman world lay quietly prostrate at its feet, except the clans of savages in the wilds of Europe and Asia—this power which the dragon was permitted to arrange and discipline, he stirred up to a simultaneous effort to exterminate Christianity—to exert its whole strength, subtlety, and all possible torture to effect the object. And this they did with such success that they shouted victory, and erected pillars, and struck medals to commemorate the achievement. But as this belongs to ecclesiastical history, we will only notice here, that the Christians were unapprised and unprepared for this visitation when it burst upon them. Up to the year 298, Dioclesian appeared the friend of Christians; his palace was full of them; his wife and daughter, as well as servants of his household, were Christians: and up to the above period he had not dissembled, but was really favorable to Christians; but he was given to magic and practiced the rites of divination. From bad omens and ill success attending the observance of these rites, he was led to suspect the failure was owing to the presence of a Christian servant, who made on his forehead the sign of the cross. From this circumstance began the Dioclesian persecution, of which we shall speak in its place. We would only say there was no ground to suspect that Dioclesion, in the construction of his government, had any design, or discovery, that it would be brought to make war with the church. This was the work of an invisible agent.

But we will return to secular affairs. A. D. 305, Dioclesian abdicated his throne at Nicomedia, and also Maximian his on the same day at Milan. Dioclesian had exacted of Maximian his promise and oath, when he made him emperor, that he would resign his power on his advice and example.

Gibbon says, "the balance of power established by Dioclesian subsisted no longer than while it was sustained by the firm and dexterous hand of its founder." This we shall see abundantly verified in the history of the next eighteen years.

By the Constitution, Galerius and Constantius were advanced to fill the vacated places of these abdicated Augusta-Emperors, which would leave vacant their stations as Cæsar-Emperors. Galerius selected creatures of his own to fill these places, without consulting Constantius. Maximin, his sister's son, an inexperienced youth, he invested with the purple and exalted him to the sovereign command of Egypt and Syria. At the same time, Severus, a faithful servant, addicted to pleasure, but not incapable of business, was sent to Milan to receive from the reluctant hands of old Maximian the Cæsarian ornaments and the sovereignty of Italy and Africa. Constantius retained the western empire, Gaul, Spain and Britain. Galerius reserved for himself from the confines of Italy to those of Syria, with the territory of his two Cæsars, subservient to his will, he considered his authority firmly established over three-fourths of the monarchy, in full confidence that the approaching death of Constantius would leave him full master of the Roman world. Constantius was old and viewed his death near, and had repeatedly and urgently written to Galerius to send Constantine, his son, to him, and to Constantine to make no delay in returning to his father. The

circumstances are these: when Constantius was promoted to the rank of Cæsar, that event was attended with the divorce and humiliation of Helena, his wife, in which Constantine shared. Instead of following his father in the west, he remained in the service of Dioclesian, and signalized his valor in the wars of Egypt and Persia, and gradually rose to the honorable station of a tribune of the first order. Constantine was now with Galerius, who feared the consequences of his return to his father, whose repeated letters expressed the warmest desire of embracing his son. For some time the policy of Galerius supplied him with delays and excuses; but it was impossible longer to refuse so natural a request of his associate, without maintaining his refusal with open rupture. The permission for the journey was reluctantly granted, and whatever precaution the emperor might have taken to interrupt his return to his father, the consequences of which he with reason apprehended, they were effectually disappointed by the incredible diligence of Constantine. Leaving the palace at Nicomedia in the night, he traveled through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pennonia, Italy, and Gaul, almost with telegraphic despatch, and amidst the joyful acclamations of the people, reached Boulogne as his father was about to embark for Britain, A. D. 306. An easy victory over the barbarians of Caledonia was the last exploit of the reign of Constantius. He ended his life in the imperial city of York, fifteen months after he had received the title of Augusta, and over fourteen years after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæsar. Constantius was spared, and his anxious desire gratified, of embracing his son, Constantine, whose superior merits had been ratified by the dying emperor. In his last moments he bequeathed to his eldest son the care of the safety, as well as the greatness of the family, conjuring him to assume both the authority, and the sentiment of a father with regard to the children of Theodora, (the second wife.) which trust he fulfilled with truly paternal affection, which was reciprocated by the children.

The death of Constantius was immediately followed by the elevation of Constantine. The army could not hesitate a moment between the honor of placing at their head the worthy son of their beloved emperor; or the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of some obscure stranger, on whom it might please the sovereign of Asia to bestow the armies and provinces of the west. They were prepared with acclamation to salute Constantine Augusta-Emperor. Constantine dispatched a messenger with a letter to the emperor of the East, informing him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modestly asserting his natural claim to the succession, and respectfully lamenting that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to solicit the imperial purple in the regular and constitutional way. The reception of this letter threw Galerius into a rage. He loudly threatened to commit to the flames both the letter and the messenger—but, after his rage subsided, his prudence suggested, without noticing the choice of the British army, that he accepted the son of his deceased colleague, as the sovereign beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæsar, and the fourth rank among the Roman princes, while he conferred the vacant place of Augusta-Emperor on his favorite, Severus. In this way apparent harmony was preserved. Constantine did neither resign nor object.

But other and heavier troubles awaited Galerius. Rome invested Maxentius with the purple. The causes which led to this, were briefly these: the

city of Rome became impatient beyond endurance, when they perceived that it was the settled policy of their rulers to remove from them the seat of government. The senate had no voice in public affairs, and were distinguished in nothing from other men but in the burden of their taxes, confiscation and banishment if they uttered any complaint. The whole city united with the feeble remains of the Praetorian guards, to make one desperate effort to regain what they had lost. It was the wish, and soon became the hope of every citizen, that after expelling from Italy their foreign tyrants, they might have a prince who, by the place of his residence, and the maxims of his government, might once more deserve the name of Roman emperor. The popular favor determined on Maxentius, a vicious, incapable youth, with nothing to recommend him but his birth, being the son of the old emperor, Maximian. He was also son-in-law to Galerius.

As soon as the tidings of the revolt reached Maximian, the old emperor, he broke loose from his retirement, and at the request of his son and the senate, he condescended to assume the purple. His ancient dignity, his experience, his fame in arms, added strength as well as reputation to the party of Maxentius. Severus, the colleague emperor, hastened to Rome in full confidence that by his unexpected celerity, he should easily suppress the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a licentious youth. But he found the gates of the city shut against him, the walls filled with men and arms, and an experienced general at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without spirit or affection. A large body of his Moors, allured over by promises, deserted to the enemy. From this state of things at Rome, Severus was obliged to retreat, or rather flee, with precipitation, to Ravenna, where, by intrigues and management, he was persuaded to give himself up into the hands of Maximian, under the most solemn assurance of the preservation of his life and fortune. But ultimately Severus only obtained the liberty of choosing his own way of suffering death, with assurance of an honorable sepulchre.

The crisis now called for the presence and abilities of Galerius. He entered Italy at the head of a powerful army of veterans, resolving to revenge the death of Severus, extirpate the senate, and cut off the citizens by the sword. But the skill of Maximian, his prudent system of defence was so well prepared to meet the invader, though he forced his way to within forty miles of Rome, his dominion in Italy was confined to the narrow limits of his camp—and in the end he was obliged to retreat and leave Italy in order to escape the fate of Severus.

Galerius invested Licinius with the vacant purple of Severus, resigning to his immediate command Illyricum, A. D. 308. Galerius, after his retreat from Italy, retired to his capital, Sardus, devoting his life to pleasure, and about four years after, died a most awful death, as we shall notice in its place.

After Italy was freed from its invaders, Maximian and his son strove which should be emperor. They submitted the question to the Praetorian guards, who decided against the old emperor; his life and freedom however were respected. He then went to Galerius, professing great penitence for his wrong in the course he had taken; but Galerius suspected and discarded him. The last refuge of the disappointed Maximian was the court of Constantine, where he was received with respect. And that he might remove every suspicion, he resigned again the imperial purple, professing

himself at length convinced of the vanity of greatness and ambition. But an incursion of the Franks had summoned Constantine with part of his army to the banks of the Rhine. After a short absence of Constantine, it was reported that he was dead. Without hesitation, Maximian ascended the throne, seized the treasures that were deposited in the city of Aries, and dealt them out with a liberal hand. But before he had time to establish himself, Constantine returned. Maximian had only time to throw himself into Marseilles, where the garrison, after little delay, delivered him up; and to Maximian was given the privilege of choosing the manner in which he would suffer death. He chose strangling by his own hand, A. D. 310.

After the death of Galerius, Licinius and Maximin, entered into an arrangement for the division of his territory between them, which was but a truce for the present. Maxentius, intoxicated with his success, claimed to be the emperor of the Roman world, and the Cæsars but his lieutenants, to defend the frontiers. He was enraged at Constantine, for his treatment of his father, in not only causing his death, but in ordering his statues to be thrown down and his name branded with infamy. He ordered Constantine's in Italy and Africa, to receive the same treatment. Not content with this, he collected an army of near two hundred thousand men, with vast supplies of military stores, to invade Gaul. Constantine resolved on anticipating him, and carrying the war into Italy. With all possible despatch he left the banks of the Rhine with forty thousand men, (all he ventured to detach from his extended frontier,) to cross the Alps. He was on the plains of Italy before Maxentius' lieutenants had learnt that he had left the Rhine. Strong places and armies fell before him, as he approached them. At last he arrived at Saxa Rubra, nine miles from Rome, where Maxentius, with a large army, waited his approach. A battle ensued; Constantine was victorious. After the overthrow of his army, Maxentius, in the rush of the fugitives attempting to escape into the city, was crowded off the bridge and drowned in the Tiber. Not more than four months from Constantine's leaving the Rhine he was master of Rome and Italy.

There was a secret alliance between Maxentius and Maximin; also, between Constantine and Licinius. To Licinius Constantine had promised his daughter after his Italian campaign—which promise he fulfilled soon after his last victory. And while celebrating the nuptials, Maximin invaded the territory of Licinius with an army of seventy-five thousand men. Licinius hastened to the frontier with what troops he could collect, amounting to no more than thirty-five thousand men. The two emperors met—Maximin was defeated, but made his escape and lingered a most wretched life a short time, and died with despair and madness.

A. D. 314, the empire was reduced to two masters—Constantine and Licinius. And their families were so closely allied, it might have been thought that these chiefs would have been content to have given the world some repose—not immediately to have drenched it again with blood by their discords. But it was not so. Yet Gibbon admits that it was the restless intriguing spirit of Licinius that provoked the war.

The first outbreak between these two emperors was A. D. 315. After two hard-fought battles, Licinius sued for peace, which Constantine granted him under some humiliating circumstances, including the loss of a portion of his territory. Licinius, impatient under his declining glory, resolved to make another desperate effort to regain what he had lost, if not the mastery

of the empire. His preparations by land and sea were beyond any thing known in the Roman wars. Constantine's were considerable, but far inferior by sea to those of Licinius. Yet Licinius was defeated both by sea and land with a dreadful overthrow—taken prisoner, divested of his purple, and soon after of his life. He was the last of the Pagan suns who sat in sack-cloth of hair. And Constantine became the master of the Roman world, A. D. 324.

The foregoing is a brief history of the secular events of the Roman world, from the death of Gallienus, A. D. 268, to the accession of Constantine, A. D. 324. In our next chapter we will notice the religious aspect of this revolution.

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### CHAPTER III.

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#### GENERAL REMARKS ON THE BOOK OF REVELATIONS.

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The order and character of the prophecies — The seals and trumpets generally secular or earthly things — Exceptions noticed — VII chapter, the prophecy arrested — Proceeds in the VIII and IX chapters — X chapter, preparatory to the introduction of the little book containing the prophetic history of the church — The XI chapter a general summary — Remarks on — Chapter XII, more in detail — Gibbon's testimony — Remarks on.

Before we enter on comparing the foregoing events with the prophecy of the sixth seal, we will notice something of the order and peculiar character of the emblems of the book of Revelations. 1st. The book shown John (when he in prophetic vision was called up to heaven to be "shown things which must be hereafter,") contained seven seals which embraced all the important political changes and earthly calamities to the end of time. But the affairs of the church are not mingled with these earthly things, only incidentally, as in the first seal—the peace of the world and the triumphs of the gospel are simultaneous, and the suffering of the martyrs in the fifth seal—silence in heaven preceding the first trumpet—the star falling from heaven in the fifth trumpet. The primary object, however, of the seals and trumpets is to reveal the earthly things which will take place in succession to the end of time.

The seals we have considered. The first, in its mingled character—peace in the world—triumph and prosperity of the church. The varied calamities in the three following seals—the suffering of the martyrs in the fifth—the great civil and religious revolutions in the sixth—the war in heaven—the dragon and his angels cast out. This latter was not in the seals, but in the little book which contains the prophetic history of the church, cotemporaneous with that of the world; both mingling, yet distinct events—the first, the overthrow of Pagan principles; the second, of its civil power.

Following the opening of the seals in the sixth chapter, the prophecy is suspended, to give place to a review of the ground passed over, or what had been accomplished in the church during the accomplishment of the calamities and revolutions predicted in the seals. And what a cheering account! Beside those of the tribes of Israel, "that great multitude which no man could number, of all nations," which had come up out of great tribulation and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; which now stood before the throne, saying, 'Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.' There can be no doubt these were those who had been gathered to Christ from the first preaching of the gospel through the period of the seals, to A. D. 324, and most of this time a time of great affliction and calamity. After this sealing or numbering in the seventh chapter, the prophecy proceeds in the eighth and ninth chapters, under the emblems of trumpets. In those six trumpets are contained all the important political changes and revolutions that will take place to the end of time—except the brief and tremendous scenes contained in the seven vials, the contents of the seventh trumpet. Perhaps there is another exception—the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel may be an isolated event, immediately preceding the pouring out of the vials. This being sufficiently detailed by the prophet as to time and manner, needed no further notice. Also, the return of the Jews and ten tribes of Israel. The apostle having thus received the revelation of earthly things to the end of time.

The tenth chapter opens with a vision of a mighty angel, who, from the glory which surrounds him, and the attributes ascribed to him, can hardly be any other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He had in his hand a little book open: "and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth."

This little book contained a prophetic vision of the history of the church during the period passed over, as well as to the end of the world. The third and fourth verses following, under the emblem of the seven thunders, uttering their voices, and the apostles being commanded "to seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." These seven thunders were without doubt what was contained in the seventh trumpet, which were earthly things, the revelation of which was to be arrested for the present, to bring up the history of the church, which would require all his attention—which he is significantly taught by *eating the book*—digesting the matter.

But, before the prophet received the little book, he was taught by the most solemn and impressive representation, that the revelation contained in the little book embraced no other period of time than that contained in the seals and trumpets, and would terminate with them. "And the angel which he saw stand upon the earth and upon the sea, lifted up his hand to heaven and swear by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets." Rev. X. 5—7.

The attention of the prophet being fixed, there was first given to him the general outlines of the prophecy in the eleventh chapter, during the whole period of the prophecy he was about to receive, of which he afterward

received the details. He, in this chapter, was shown that the great body of the nominal church, under the emblem of the temple of God, would become so corrupt that they would not bear measuring by the word of God, and would be rejected as Gentiles not belonging to him. This state of things, from a time hereafter designated, would continue forty and two months, or 1260 prophetic days. But during the whole period of this fearful apostacy there would be continued a remnant of inward spiritual worshippers, whom the Lord Jesus calls "my two witnesses"—competent testimony to the truth! "And they shall prophesy" (hold up the truth) "one thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth"—deeply afflicted that such abominations should abound in the visible church, as professed service done for Christ. In the fourth verse, under the emblems of the two candlesticks and the two olive trees, is represented the excellency of the character of these witnesses for God, the only fruit acceptable to Him, and the only true moral light in this dark world.

By the figures contained in the fifth and sixth verses are represented the Divine protection and shield, which God has thrown around his people; and notwithstanding their enemies are left to "practice and prosper," wear them out, and make themselves drunk with their blood, and that for many days. Yet they are safe; and their prayers are prevalent to ward off whatever would really injure them; yea, what was not needful to exercise their humility, faith and patience, and manifest their fidelity to Christ, which nothing could overcome. They had power with God to inflict what evils on their enemies were necessary to restrain them, or take them out of the way by divine judgments, when the good of his people required it; "and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." 6th verse.

And yet, notwithstanding God's people, his witnesses, are so precious in his sight that he suffers no creature to harm them, "and causes all things to work together for their good." Yea, though their prayers are prevalent for every thing agreeable to his will, and for their best interest, and most for the Divine glory, yet when they shall have finished their testimony (their 1260 prophetic days, clothed in sackcloth) the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. Their dead bodies are represented as not buried, but exposed to public view three and a half prophetic days, to be exulted and triumphed over as a final victory, "and they of the people, and kindred, and tongues, and nations, (very extensive and general,) shall see their dead bodies three days and a half," "and they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry; and send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them; and they heard a great voice from heaven, saying, 'Come up hither;' and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." 7—12 verses. By this we understand that the days of the warfare of the church are accomplished; she now puts off her sackcloth. We shall see her again in this prophecy clothed in white, standing on a sea of glass mingled with fire, with the harps of God in their hands, while the angels go forth with the vials of the wrath of God, to pour them upon an ungodly world.

After the ascension of the witnesses and the earthquake which followed, 13th v., it is said, "the second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly." The second of the three woe trumpets, or the sixth trumpet, fixes the chronology, as all the events, of which the foregoing is a summary, are accomplished in the sixth trumpet. Then immediately follows the sounding of the seventh trumpet, in which is contained the seven last plagues, and when it "shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared by his servants, the prophets." That is, all the affairs of this world will be wound up.

Then the summary is more brief; showing the triumph and universal prevalence of the gospel over the whole earth, and how holy beings were affected by this joyful event, which we shall find more circumstantially detailed hereafter.

The apostle having, in the XIth chapter received the general summary of events, the XIIth proceeds with the details of the period passed over; which goes back to the setting up of the Christian dispensation, or the first preaching of the gospel by the apostles after the ascension of their Lord—in language highly figurative. In the first verse, it says, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven." By Heaven, here, we are to understand the moral or religious world, in distinction from earthly things, which had been treated of under the seals and trumpets. They greatly wondered at the appearance of "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." This woman represented the church—an emblem of her being justified, sanctified, and irradiated, by virtue of her union with Christ, the Sun of righteousness. "The moon under her feet," denotes her superiority to the reflected, feeble light of the Mosaic dispensation, and to the love of all sublunary objects. "And upon her head, a crown of twelve stars," represents her honorable maintenance of the doctrines of the twelve apostles. "And being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered," represents the afflicted state of the church in the three first centuries, during which time, amidst many hardships and persecutions, with fervent prayers, and earnest labors, she sought deliverance from her oppression, and an increase of her family, and waited the appointed time, which was to bring a happy crisis to these, her sorrows. As a specimen, the apostle says to the Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Gal. IV, 19.

In the explanation of these emblems, we have adopted the interpretation of Bishop Newton and Dr. Scott, except where Scott says, "The church, under the common emblem of a woman, the mother of individual believers, derived its original from heaven, and being destined to return thither, was beheld by the apostle in vision in heaven." Though it is true that "the church derived its original from heaven, and is destined to return thither," yet this is not the subject here treated of, but of moral and religious things, in distinction from the earthly things before treated of in the seals and trumpets. This world is the theatre on which both are displayed, and the scenes acted—not in the invisible heavens.

We shall now notice the matters of fact by which the interpretation is sustained. The wonder, (see the 11d Chap. Acts, 1—12) "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues." "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all *amazed*, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these that speak, Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" Then follows a list of sixteen nations and tribes of men, who said, "We do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another what meaneth this?"

Here was a flood of moral light, before unknown, burst upon the world, which filled all who witnessed it with wonder and amazement. The miracle would excite the attention of the multitude, who were amazed to be addressed every one in the tongue in which he was born; but to hear the wonderful works of God seems to have more affected a goodly number; while others mocked and treated the whole as a drunken revel.

Doubtless, most of these devout men of every nation, were those who, through their intercourse with the Jews scattered among them, had been recovered from the reigning polytheism around them, and believed in the one living and true God, "and that salvation was of the Jews," or, in other words, the Jews had the knowledge of the way of acceptable worship; and for this purpose these devout men had come up to Jerusalem, and were doubtless more or less oppressed with a sense of their sins, and a desire to propitiate the divine favor. It is probable that they had but a glimmering of the reflected light of that dispensation. But when the full light of the gospel burst upon them; the extent and spirituality of the law; the lost, ruined, helpless state of man; and salvation only through the sacrifice of Christ, who was the end and substance of the Mosaic dispensation, and the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth —their legal righteousness was all gone, and doubtless many of them had implicated on themselves the blood of Jesus of Nazareth, that only Prince of life whom God had raised from the dead. When they heard this, and felt its truth, they cried out in the anguish of their souls, "men and brethren what shall we do?"

Doubtless, something like this attended the preaching of the gospel in the first centuries, when it was successful. Indeed, in every age, when it has been preached in its purity, accompanied with a divine energy, the light has made the darkness manifest, and produced wonder and amazement, as in the Reformation in the 16th century. Gibbon is, unwittingly, a good witness of this effect in the primitive church. In his reasons accounting for the success of the gospel in the first centuries, after complaining of the intolerant spirit of the primitive church, who, he says, "without hesitation, delivered over to eternal torture, the far greater part of the human species, but letting the heathen alone before the coming of Christ, they unanimously affirmed, that those who, since the birth or the death of Christ, had obstinately persisted in the worship of the demons, neither deserved nor could expect a pardon from the irritated justice of the Deity.. These rigid sentiments, which had been unknown to the ancient world, appear to have infused a spirit of bitterness into a system of love and harmony. The ties of blood and friendship were frequently torn asunder by the difference of

religious faith; and the christians who in this world, found themselves oppressed by the pagans, were sometimes seduced by resentment and spiritual pride to delight in the prospect of their future triumph." He then quotes Tertullian as exulting over the future miseries of their persecutors, and then resumes, "Doubtless there were many among the primitive christians of a temper more suitable to the meekness and charity of their profession. There were many who felt a sincere compassion for the dangers of their friends and countrymen, and who exerted the most benevolent zeal to save them from impending destruction. The careless polytheist, assailed by new and unexpected terrors, against which neither his priest nor his philosophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently subdued by the menace of eternal tortures. His fears might assist the progress of his faith and reason; and if he could once persuade himself to suspect the christian religion might possibly be true, it became an easy task to convince him that it was the safest, and most prudent party that he could possibly embrace." We have given the quotation at length, without extracting the venom, that it might not appear garbled.

Two things are most evident from this extract: 1st. What was the primitive faith concerning a future punishment, and that from one who was bitter against the doctrine. And 2nd. The thing we had in view by the reference that the gospel, as faithfully held up by primitive christians, whether by ministers or laymen, filled the pagans with wonder, astonishment and terror—"and there appeared a great wonder in heaven—a woman clothed with the sun."

We need not add that the very nature of the gospel is light—the only moral light that has shone on our dark world—"and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and this light is emitted through his word and through his people—"Ye are the light of the world." The light of the christian dispensation also sheds a brilliant light on the dispensation of the law;—what was types and shadows of good things to come are all accomplished in Christ, the substance.

"The moon under her feet," was interpreted not only as superior to, and superseding the reflected light of the Mosaic dispensation, and taking it out of the way, but also superior to the love of all sublunary things. On no lower terms can any be an accepted disciple of Christ, than the freely surrendering of every other interest—even life itself, if called to it—in fidelity to Christ. The apostle triumphantly appeals, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. viii. 35—39. We have abundant testimony not only from martyrologists, that christians, during the three first centuries, well sustained this confident appeal of the apostle: but we have the testimony of enemies to their being indifferent to suffering, and that they would cheerfully suffer the loss of all things, and life itself, than prove recreant to Christ and his cause.

We need only refer to the testimony of Epictetus, Celsus, Lucian, Galen, Porphyry: and Pliny's Letter is also good evidence of the passiveness of Christians under suffering. These testimonies we shall more particularly notice hereafter. Antoninus Pius, in his edict directed to the Common Council of Asia, says to the Pagans of the Christians, "To them, it appears an advantage to die for their religion; and they gain their point, while they throw away their lives, rather than comply with your injunctions." This faith which overcame the world, that could enable christians to say and act in perfect consistency with what they said, "I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me," was a great wonder in the Pagan world.

"And upon her head a crown of twelve stars." We have already explained her stedfast maintenance of the doctrines of the twelve apostles. There are no novelties in the christian religion. All the true children of the church are of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.—Eph. ii. 20.

"And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." To what has already been said on this verse, we will only add, it is a representation of the anxiety of true christians for the extension of the church; their souls yearn over the sinfulness and misery of their fellow men; the madness and ruin of their course. They sigh over them: "O that they were wise, that they understood the things which belonged to their peace, before they were hid from their eyes." Also they are very jealous for the honor of the gospel, that all who profess it should walk worthy of their profession; that the family of believers may not be dis honored, occasions given to the enemy to blaspheme, and weak believers stumble. The solicitude expressed by the apostles for the churches to whom they wrote, witness the intensity which they felt on these subjects; and may well be represented by that of a matron for her offspring, not only the fruit of her own body, but all the branches of the family through following generations.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.—Rev. xii. 3—6.

Here we have another summary of the adversaries of the church. The dragon, the known emblem of Satan. *Red*, purple, or scarlet being the distinguishing dress of emperors, consuls, generals, popes, cardinals, bishops, his angels or distinguished agents. The *seven heads* denote the seven hills on which Rome was built, and the *seven successive governments* that have flourished there. This fixes the geography. The *seven crowns* on the *heads*, and not on the *horns*, determine the chronology. The ten horns are spoken of by way of anticipation. When the western empire was divided into ten kingdoms, we shall find the crown on the *horns*. The

dragon drawing the third part of the stars of heaven and casting them to the earth, represents the conquests of the neighboring kingdoms by the Roman power, overturning their thrones, and casting down their kings. The dragon standing before the woman to devour her child, denotes the vigilance with which pagan Rome watched the church, and their politic measures to prevent her increase. The man child brought forth was Constantine; and his being caught up unto God and to his throne, represents the divine protection of him, and his success as an instrument in the hand of God in delivering his church from the power of the dragon, or the pagan power. The woman's flight into the wilderness is spoken of by way of anticipation, as we shall see, if permitted to proceed. The apostle goes back to give further details of the operations of this power—the dragon.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."—Rev. xii. 7—9.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SECULAR AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY MINGLED.

What are we to understand by Michael and his angels—The Dragon and his angels—The period that he is called Dragon—Where his operations—The state of the Roman Empire, and of the Church at the commencement of the Dioclesian persecution—Its first commencement—Orders to the army—Marcellus the centurion the first martyr—The Church unaffected while confined to the army—The instigation of Galerius to more violent measures—Destruction of the Church at Nicomedia—Second edict depriving all Christians of all honor and dignity—Declared outlaws—Galerius not satisfied by such mild measures—The palace twice set on fire charged on Christians—A new edict devoting to the flames all of the Christian name of every age and sex, from the palace to the remotest parts of the empire—Milner's remarks—Libanius testimony—Pillars in Spain—Medals—Further details of the sufferings of Christians at Nicomedia—City in Phrygia burnt with all inhabitants—Persecution continued ten years, with alleviation noticed—Setting of the Pagan Suns—A temporary calm—Persecution revived by Maximin—His arts—discouragement of Christians—The providence of God interposing—The excellent spirit of Christians—Maximin's war with Licinius—His vow to Jupiter—Defeat—Wretched death—Dioclesian's death—Free toleration of Constantine and Licinius—Licinius revives the persecution—Defeated and slain—Constantine master of the Roman World—Gibbon's testimony—Remarks on Gibbon—Beneficial effects of the persecution to the Church—her outcry emancipated civilized men from polytheism.

We need not again repeat, that Michael, in this place, is Christ; his angels are ministers and all faithful Christians, male or female; they use no

carnal weapons, as we learn from the manner in which they achieved their victory. "And they overcame *him* [the dragon] by the blood of the Lamb;" by simply relying on the merits of his blood, and the power of his grace, the prevalence of his intercession, "and by the word of their testimony." "John was banished to the Isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." All the victors in this war, like the apostle, openly avowed their union and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, as Emanuel, the only Savior of lost men, and in fidelity to him they were ready cheerfully to yield up their lives, "and they loved not their lives to the death."—Rev. xii. 11. And Christ fought invisibly in his people—strengthening, encouraging, and guiding them—giving them wisdom and patience—comforting and sustaining them in all their tribulation—dwelling in them, and they so simply abiding in him, that they could truly say, "It is not I, but Christ dwelling in me." These were the weapons with which they overcame the dragon—with which all the martyrs achieved their victories! The dragon, Satan, or the devil, fights invisibly in his angels, and they are wicked men in high and low places. He is called the *red* dragon here, because it has ever been the livery of emperors and popes and their dignitaries as before mentioned. The dragon, also, dwells in his angels, inspires them with his own diabolical spirit: he cannot inject sin into them, but he nourishes and stirs up the depravity in them to do his pleasure.

The apostle had more particular reference to the legal persecutions of pagan Rome, which were ten, and in the tenth his civil power was overthrown. Though the dragon gave his power and his seat and great authority to the beast; and they worshipped the dragon who gave power unto the beast, Rev. xiii. 4th verse, yet, from his overthrow in the fourth century, the dragon, as dragon, and as a polytheist, has not persecuted the Church as a settled policy of his government as pagan Rome did. The opposition of pagans, as pagans, or polytheists, to the gospel has been temporary, local outbreaks since the beginning of the fourth century. The overthrow of this power in the revolution we are considering. This is the victory which the Church celebrates with such joyful triumph. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven," (in the church) "now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night," xii. 12th. By heaven here we are to understand the church on earth; how they were affected by the great deliverance they had experienced, and the victory that had been achieved, which they ascribed to God, and the power of his Christ. The circumstances and emotions were similar to those of the children of Israel on their deliverance from Pharaoh, when they safely landed on the opposite banks of the Red Sea: and doubtless as little apprised of the trials which awaited them as the Israelites were. The repose of the Church was very short after this victory, as is expressed: "And there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." This is found in viii. chap. 1st verse, yet, it will be seen, was contemporaneous with the great revolutions, the events predicted in the sixth seal; the secular feature, as the casting out of the dragon; the religious feature of the same event. Before the contents of the seventh seal are announced, (the trumpets) notice is given that the repose of the church would be short, notwithstanding the signal victory

which had been obtained. Though the dragon was deprived of his civil power to persecute the church — and ancient idolatry was losing its credit — philosophers, poets and historians would no longer defend the gods, and intelligent men every where abandoned them, as we shall see they did about this time. Yet the great adversary of the Church is still recognized as the dragon, and the grand agent in promoting and consummating that calling away preparatory to the revelation of the man of sin — the beast. To bring about that event, he had his agents every where employed to corrupt the church with heresy, superstition, voluntary humility, philosophy and vain deceit. But this we shall consider in the history of the falling away. This is treated of in the prophecy as the works of the dragon, through his angels, by whom he operated, now assumed to be Christians, and to be zealously engaged to promote the interests of the Church. The dragon retained his name until he was merged in the beast, who was matured or became the beast in the early part of the eighth century, to whom “the dragon gave his power, and his seat, and great authority.” He is treated of in this prophecy as the life, the principle, and the prime agent in that power, and through whom he receives divine honors. “And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast.” This is important to be observed, lest we become confused in the chronology. The twelfth chapter is summarily a prophecy of the trials of the Church from Pagan Rome, here called the red dragon: though this power did not legalize the persecutions of the Church before Nero, A. D. 64: more than thirty years before John received his revelation. Yet, as in the history of the Christian Church, he goes back to the beginning, so also of this enemy to the same period, continuing the prophetic history of this power, till it is broken to pieces, and the papal power formed out of the fragments. The prophecy has a more special reference to the trials of the remnant of those who were faithful in the time of this falling away, which had been advancing for centuries in the nominal church, flooding her with superstition, heresy, philosophy, and almost every thing anti-christian. “And though the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went out” with almost the whole nominal church “to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” 17th verse, yet God will sustain his true witnesses in the most perilous times.

Though the word dragon is used in the singular, yet it should be remembered that his name is legion — many. They are those fallen spirits whose character is unmixed evil, and malignity; the instruments through whom they work in this world are human beings, who willingly yield themselves to their influence, to do their pleasure. This alone can explain much of the strange conduct of men. They are under a diabolical influence, not only outraging all moral sense, but their rational nature — do evil often from pure love of evil, not only to their fellows, but to themselves. Surely they walk according to the suggestions “of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” Eph. 11, 2.—But popery is the devil’s master-piece. Its rise, continuance, tact, and management through so many centuries is super-human — beyond human power without foreign aid; and that aid, from its character, must be diabolical, fully sustaining the prophecy of him “Whose coming is after

the working of satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders. 2d Thes. xi. 9.

**STATE OF THE EMPIRE.**—But to return to our subject, the consideration of the religious aspect of the great revolution predicted in the sixth seal. We have seen from the secular history of this event, that at no period of the Roman state had the empire attained to such an extent of dominion — to such a strength and union in its government as at the time of which we are speaking. Order and quiet, subjection within, and their vast extended frontier so defended that not a hostile foe ventured to disturb the public peace. Such was the Roman world as organized by Dioclesian. And it was at the zenith of its power that it commenced a persecution of the church, aiming in its progress, utterly to exterminate the christian name and sect from the earth. Such was the power of the enemy at this time. The weakness and unprepared state of the church for the onset was as extreme on the other hand. “On the side of the oppressor there was power,” but for the oppressed church as to human aid, “there was no comforter.”

**STATE OF THE CHURCH.**—We will now briefly notice the state of the church at this time. Its peace had scarcely been disturbed for 45 years. Dioclesian had been extremely indulgent to christians during the first eighteen years of his reign. His wife Prisca, and daughter Valeria, were christians, in some sense secretly. The eunuchs of his palace and his most important officers were christians, and with their wives and families openly professed the gospel. Christians held honorable offices in various parts of the empire ; innumerable crowds attended christian worship ; the old buildings could no longer receive them. In all cities wide and large edifices were erected. Of this time, Milner says, “If Christ’s kingdom had been of this world, and its strength and beauty measured by secular prosperity we should here fix the era of its greatness.” But, on the contrary, the era of its decline must be dated during the pacific part of Dioclesian. During the whole century the work of God in purity and power had been declining ; its connection with philosophy had been one of the principal causes ; outward peace and secular advantages now completed the corruption ; discipline was relaxed exceedingly ; bishops and people were in a state of malice, and quarrels without end were fomented one among another ; ambition and covetousness had now the ascendancy pretty generally in the christian church. Some there were, doubtless, who mourned in secret and strove in vain to stop the abounding torrent of evil.” The truth of this account from Eusebius, says Milner, seems much confirmed by the extreme dearth of real christian excellencies, from the death of Dionysius. None seem, for the space of thirty years, to have risen in the room of Cyprian, Fermilian, Gregory and Dionysius. No bishop or pastor of eminence for piety, zeal, and labors appeared.\* Christian worship was constantly attended ; the number of nominal converts were increasing ; but the faith of Christ now appeared an ordinary busi-

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\* Can there remain a question that in our day may be seen a striking likeness in the protestant church to what the church was at the outbreak of the Dioclesian persecution? and if we are to be purged from our filthiness, where are our Cyprians and his contemporaries, those holy men to conduct the church through the furnace? That we have many *smart* men there can be no doubt, if we will take their own opinion of themselves, and the testimonies of their admirers, but who will stand the fiery trials that may be near to try every man’s work of what sort it is.



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ness, and here ended as far as appears, that first great outpouring of the spirit of God, which began at the day of Pentecost. Human depravity spread a general decay of godliness through the church, and one generation of men elapsed with hardly any proof of the spiritual presence of Christ with his church. The observation of Eusebius, who honestly confesses this declension is judicious : "The heavy hand of God's judgments, began softly, by little and little to visit us after his wonted manner, so that the persecution which was raised against us took its rise first from the christians who were in the military service. But we were not at all moved with his hand, nor took any pains to return to God, but heaped sin upon sin, thinking, like careless epicurians, that God cared not for, nor would ever visit us for our sins. And our pretended shepherds, laying aside the rules of godliness, practiced among themselves contentions and divisions." He further says, that the dreadful persecution of Dioclesian was then inflicted on the church, as a just punishment and a proper chastisement for their iniquities."

We shall not duly appreciate the extent of the unpreparedness of the church in this apostate state to meet the persecution hovering over them unless we take into account that they could bring forward no other weapons of offence or defence, or expect to overcome "but by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony," boldly maintaining their union and fidelity to Christ, "and not loving their lives unto the death." And to their honor they attempted to use no other. There were fearful apostacies—many denying their Lord to save their lives, some buying themselves off, and others resorting to artful evasion to escape torture and death: and there were indiscretions, but no resisting evil with evil, or resorting to force for defence.

**COMMENCEMENT OF THE DIOCLESIAN PERSECUTION.**—Having given this account of the state of the church and empire previous to the Dioclesian persecution, we will give a brief statement of the persecution itself. We have already noticed that Dioclesian's ill success in his rites of divination, led him to suspect the cause was the presence of a christian servant. On that, he not only ordered that servant but all in his palace to sacrifice, or on refusal to be scourged with whips. He wrote also to the officers of his armies to constrain all the soldiers to sacrifice, or discharge the disobedient from the service: and many resigned rather than to sacrifice. For christianity was not yet lost, nor was the decay universal. Very few were put to death on this account. The story of one Marcellus we will notice, because Gibbon undertakes to justify his death, representing him as punished purely for desertion and military disobedience. This happened in the year 298 at Tangier, in Mauritania. While every one was employed in feasting and sacrifices, Marcellus the centurion took off his belt, threw down his vine branch and arms, and added, "I will not fight any longer under the banner of your emperor, or serve your gods of wood and stone. If the condition of a soldier is such that he is obliged to sacrifice to gods and emperors, I abandon the vine branch and the belt, and quit the service." Gibbon leaves out "if the condition of a soldier be such" as above. Those who ordered christian soldiers to sacrifice knew that, in fact, they ordered them to renounce christianity. The consciences of christians were not burdened with being soldiers, but with the introduction of new rule, subversive of christianity. Marcellus was beheaded; and,

Cassianus, who cried out against the injustice of the act, suffered soon after. These preliminaries of the persecution did not seem to affect christians in general, to stir them to prayer, or to consider their ways, a certain sign, says Milner, of a long and obstinate decay in godliness. God, who had exercised long patience, declared at length in the course of his providence, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee."

The vexations in the army continued. It was put to the option of christians whether they would sacrifice and enjoy their dignity, or refuse and be deprived of them. Much pains was taken to seduce the soldiers. Many retired, some were put to death for a terror to others. Dioclesian, who had so long favored the christians, had now a superstitious prejudice against them, but he thought at first rather to use artifice than violence: but Galerius, instigated by his superstitious mother, himself as superstitious, by a variety of artifices induced Dioclesian to adopt more vigorous measures. The day of an idolatrous feast was chosen to commence operations against the church. This they did by commanding the guards to demolish the great church at Nicomedia, burning the scriptures found in it, and giving the rest to plunder.

The next day an edict appeared, in which men of the christian religion, of whatever rank or degree, were deprived of all honor and dignity; and were exposed to torture: every one might have justice against them, while they were deprived of the benefit of the law in all cases whatever. Thus was the christian world at once exposed to all possible insults with impunity. The spirit of man naturally revolts against injustice so flagrant, and a christian was found hardy enough, under the transports of indignation, to pull down and tear the edict. He was burned alive for his indiscretion, and bore his sufferings with admirable patience.

Galerius not satisfied with this, wished all the christians burnt without discrimination. Not long after the palace was discovered on fire, Christians were charged with setting the fire. The eunuchs of the palace were accused, Dioclesian had his christian servants burnt in his presence. Galerius' servants escaped suspicion. Fifteen days after a second fire broke out, Galerius hurried out declaring his fears of being burnt alive.

Dioclesian now thoroughly in earnest, raged against all sorts of men who bore the christian name, and obliged, among others, his wife and daughter to sacrifice, doubtless suspecting them at least of a secret regard to christianity. Presbyters and deacons were seized and condemned in a summary way to death. Eunuchs of the greatest power in the palace were slain, and persons of every age and sex were burnt. It was tedious to destroy men singly: fires were made to burn numbers together, and men with millstones fastened about their necks were thrown into the sea. Judges were every where at work in compelling men to sacrifice. The prisons were full. Unheard of tortures were invented, and to prevent the possibility of christians obtaining justice, altars were placed in courts, at which plaintiffs were obliged to sacrifice before their cause could be heard. The other two emperors were directed by letters to proceed in the same violent course. Maximian, who governed Italy and Africa, obeyed with savage alacrity. Constantius with reluctance demolished churches, while he preserved the persons of christians.

The persecution pervaded the whole Roman world, except the West, where the mild Constantius ruled, and from east to west, to use the language of Lactantius, "three monsters of horrible ferocity raged." Much pains have been taken to depreciate the account of this persecution as well as other persecutions, representing that christians are vain of their sufferings, and give exaggerated accounts of them. This we can consider better in another place. Here we would only say, that all concede that Lactantius and Eusebius, contemporary writers, living at the same time in different parts of the empire, agree in their accounts. And there is no question that edicts were published authorizing and commanding all the cruelty and injustice before sketched, and these edicts continued in force for years, and all possible pains taken to have them enforced: that christians were outlaws for years; they might be insulted, robbed, and killed with impunity, in tumult, or by individuals, and those who distinguished themselves in these outrages were patronized and rewarded as the friends of the state and the favorite of the gods. These are facts which cannot be controverted. "Whoever knows," says Milner, "what the passions of men are capable of, when set afloat and only suffered (but in this case stimulated and urged on by those in high places) to act without check or control, will not doubt that the sufferings of christians in this period must have been far greater than can be related by any historian. Thus did God at once punish the sins of christians, revive his work in their hearts by sanctified afflictions, evidencing the extreme depravity of mankind,—and above all, illustrate his own power and wisdom in baffling the rage of Satan, and in defending and delivering his church when every thing seemed combined for its destruction."

But if the testimony of a heathen should be preferred to that of christians of the sufferings of christians, let them hear Libenius, the friend of Julian the Apostate, who spake the funeral oration on that emperor. "They who adhered to a corrupt religion (the christians) were in great terrors, and expected that their eyes would be plucked out, that their heads would be cut off, and that rivers of blood would flow from the multitudes of slaughters. They apprehended that their new master would invent new kind of tortures, in comparison of which mutilation, sword, fire, being drowned, buried alive, would appear but slight pains. For preceding emperors had employed all these kind of punishments against them." He goes on to commend Julian for using milder methods. Two pillars in Spain were also monuments of the systematic cruelty of this persecution, on one of which was this inscription: Dioclesian, Julian, Maximian, Hercules, Cæsars Augusto, for having extended the Roman empire in the east and west, and for having extinguished the name of Christians." On the other, this: "Dioclesian &c., for having adopted Galerius in the east, for having every where abolished the superstition of Christ, having extended the worship of the gods." One other fact Milner mentions, of the wasting desolation of this persecution in all parts of the world, and the supposed success. The medal of Dioclesian which still remains with this inscription, "The name of Christian being extinguished." Milner having introduced these authorities, as he says, against the unreasonableness of modern skepticism on this subject. He proceeds in detailing some facts.

To condense these, and give an intelligent summary of transactions on so an extensive field, and of so long continuance, we feel to be difficult.

Take Nicomedia. There were some ministers of the palace of the highest rank, who witnessed a good confession under a great variety of torments, their names are given by Eusebius, who says, the bishop of Nicomedia, with great multitudes of his flock, suffered martyrdom. Men and women leaped on the funeral piles with alacrity: the spirit of martyrdom was revived in the church with the persecution. In every place the prisons were filled with bishops and other ministers of the church, and no room was reserved for felons. Martyrs were put to death in every province: Africa, Mauritania, Thebais, and Egypt throughout abounded with them. Details of individuals are given, the variety of torments they suffered, and the excellent spirit they manifested.

Egypt suffered extremely. Whole families were put to various kinds of death, some by fire, others by water, others by decollation, after horrible tortures. Some perished by famine, others by crucifixion, and of these some of them in the common manner. Others were fastened with their heads downward, and preserved alive that they might die by hunger. But the torments in Thebais exceeded all description. Women were tied by one foot up on high, and exposed naked. (With what spirit must these persecutors have been influenced?) Others were torn by the distorted boughs of trees, and these scenes continued some years. Sometimes ten, at other times thirty, and sixty, and once a hundred, men and women, with their little ones, in one day, were murdered by various torments.

Eusebius states what he himself saw, while in Egypt. He says he witnessed many executions in one day; some beheaded, others burnt; so that both the executioners were quite fatigued, and their weapons blunted. The christians suffered, he says, with the greatest faith and patience. There was even the strongest appearances of joy and triumph among them, and to the last they employed themselves in psalms and thanksgiving. He mentions one Phileromus, a person of great dignity at Alexandria, a man of wealth and eloquence, who died cheerfully for Christ at this time. Also Phileas, a bishop of Themituane, a man of eminence. In vain did relations, friends, magistrates, even the judge himself, exhort them to pity and save themselves, their wives and children. They loved Christ above all, and were beheaded. Undoubtedly these scenes demonstrate in the highest manner, the strength and reality of that divine influence which attended christians.

This same Phileas, while in prison in Alexandria, before his martyrdom, wrote to his flock at Themituane concerning the sufferings of christians at Alexandria, their spirit, and their views, and says, "The martyrs sincerely fixing the eye of their mind on the supreme God, and cheerfully embracing death for the sake of godliness, held immoveably their calling, knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ was made man for us, that he might cut down all sin, and might afford us the necessary preparatives for an entrance into eternal life." (He then quotes the well known passage concerning the proper deity and humiliation of Christ, in the second chapter of Philippians.) "Coveting the best gifts, the martyrs, who carried Christ within, underwent all sorts of tortures once and again. And while the guards insulted them in word and deed, they were preserved serene and unbroken in spirit, because perfect love casteth out fear." But what eloquence can do justice to their fortitude? Free leave was given to any to injure them: some beat them with clubs, others with rods, some scourged them with

thongs of leather, others with ropes; some having their hands tied behind them, were hung about a wooden engine, and every limb of their bodies was distended by certain machines. The torturers rent their whole bodies with iron nails, which were applied not only to the sides, as in the case of murderers, but also to their legs, their bellies, and their cheeks: others were suspended by one hand to a portico, and underwent the most severe distension of all their joints: others were bound to pillars, face to face, their feet being raised above the ground, that their bonds being distended by the weight of their bodies, might be the closer drawn together, and thus they endured a whole day without intermission. The governor ordered them to be bound with the greatest severity, and when they breathed their last, to be dragged on the ground. No care, said he, ought to be taken of these christians: let all treat them as unworthy of the name of men. Some, after they had been scourged, lay in the stocks, their feet being stretched to the fourth hole. Some expired under their tortures. Others being recovered by methods taken to heal them, and being reduced to the alternative to sacrifice or die, cheerfully preferred the latter; for they knew what was written, Whosoever sacrificeth to other gods shall be destroyed. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

One city in Phrygia, being generally christian, was besieged by armed men and set on fire. The men with their wives and children were burnt to death, calling upon Christ the God over all. All the inhabitants, magistrates and people, nobles and plebeians, professing christianity, were ordered to sacrifice, and for refusing suffered in this manner.

These scenes are too painful to pursue any further. It is the same thing over again in all the provinces; and we know not but in all the cities (except in the dominion of Constantius) with little variety but a new list of sufferers, and new inventions of torture. Except when wearied with murder, and regretting the loss of so many subjects, affecting to praise the clemency of the emperors, they contented themselves with plucking out eyes, and cutting off one leg, then condemning them to the mines. The number of these sufferers was very great. And also it became a science which was studied with great diligence, to ascertain the amount and acuteness of torture which can be endured without extinguishing life.

This persecution continued ten years. The abdication of Dioclesian brought the christians no relief; other political changes however did, in some parts of the empire. In the dissolute reign of Maxentius christians were not molested in Italy, and probably the unsuccessful expeditions of Severus and Galerius against him might have so occupied these emperors for the time, that the persecution might have relaxed. But Galerius and Maximius were persecutors to near the end of their lives. So was Licinius with a short interval.

Perhaps we may as well here give a brief account of the setting of some of these pagan suns.

Of SEVERUS, the first of these Roman princes who fell, we know but little. He was a creature of Galerius, a persecutor, of course, when it was the rage of the whole world, except in the Gaulic provinces. Nothing remarkable is noticed in his death. He was suddenly overthrown and compelled to take his own life.

MAXIMIAN.—In him we see a restless, desperate old man, hastening to his own destruction, and compelled to strangle himself, A. D. 307: and

GALERIUS, in the year 310, was smitten with an incurable disease. All his lower parts were corrupted; physicians and idols were applied to in vain; an intolerable stench spread itself over the palace of Sardis, where he resided. He was devoured by worms; and in this situation continued a whole year. Softened at length by his sufferings, in the year 311 he published an edict, by which he took off the persecutions from the christians, allowing them to rebuild their places of worship, and desired them to pray for his health. Thus did God himself subdue this haughty tyrant. Prisons were opened, the prisoners were released, the confessors were freed from the mines, the highways were full of christians singing psalms and hymns to God as they returned to their friends, and christendom at length wore a cheerful aspect in the world. Even pagans were melted; and many who had joined in the attempt to extinguish the Christian name began to be convinced, that a religion which had sustained such repeated and formidable attacks was divine and invincible.

But this calm lasted not six months. Galerius, who had exceeded all emperors in hostility to Christ, was even exceeded by Maximin in the arts of persecution, who reigned in a subordinate station in the east. After the death of Galerius, part of his dominions fell to Maximin, who spared no pains, subtlety, or cruelty to extirpate christianity. Should we enter into details it would exceed our limits. Falsehood and slander were paid for by government: enough were found to furnish supplies. Certain acts of Pilot and our Saviour were forged, full of blasphemy.

An officer at Damascus obtaining a confession from some infamous woman, who said they had been christians, and privy to the lascivious practices which were committed in their assemblies on the Lord's day, these were registered, published, and sent everywhere, directed to school-masters to deliver to youth, that they might commit them to memory. The officer, however, who invented this calumny, soon after destroyed himself by his own hand.—A plan of polite refinement appears in this renewed persecution, beyond any thing that had yet been practised. Maximin did not now as formerly, slay indiscriminately or put to death numbers with exquisite torture. A few persons of distinction were deprived of life, the rest were harassed by every kind of suffering short of death, and no arts were left unemployed to wrest christianity out of the mind, and educate the next generation in a confirmed aversion to it. The decrees of cities against christians which were obtained, and besides them the copies of imperial edicts engraven on brazen tables, were nailed and seen in every town. This was a new thing. The persecution in this, its last stage, had arrived at the perfection of diabolical ingenuity. Children in schools daily sounded Jesus and Pilot, and other things intended to asperse the gospel.

A rescript of the emperor, nailed to a post at Tyre, manifests with what pleasure and joy he had received the petition against the christians,—he venerates Jupiter and the rest of the gods as the authors of all good, appeals to the experience of the inhabitants how happily their affairs had prospered since the worship of the ancients had been restored, now blest with good harvests; no plagues, earthquakes, and tempest; peace through the empire: and how opposite to all this when christianity prevailed. He desires that such as persisted still in their error should be banished from Tyre, according to the prayer of the petition. This rescript was a speci-

men of the rest. There appears in his measures an ingenuity, capacity, and persevering activity superhuman—a diabolical inspiration. “Surely the dragon and his angels fought.”

Never were christian minds so dispirited and clouded. Thus low did God suffer his church to fall, to try her faith, and to purify her in the furnace. Art was more poisonous than rage, and the deceptions seemed calculated to impose (if it were possible) even on the elect. Very remarkable however was the divine testimony to his church; at this time, man’s extremity was the opportunity in which the truth and goodness of God appeared most conspicuous. There were doubtless many praying spirits at this time, wrestling with their God to appear for his church, and he did so in this manner. While the messengers were on the road with rescripts, similar to that at Tyre, a drought commenced, famine unexpectedly oppressed the dominions of Maximin: then followed a plague and inflamed ulcers. The sore spread over the body, but chiefly affected the eyes, and blinded many. And the Armenians, the allies and neighbors of the eastern empire, entered into a war with Maximin, which he had provoked by extending the persecution to them. Thus were the boasts of Maximin confounded. The plague and famine raged in the most dreadful manner, and multitudes lay unburied; while the christians, whose piety and fear of God being stirred up on this occasion, were the only persons who employed themselves in doing good, every day busying themselves in taking care of the sick and burying the dead: whereas numbers of the pagans were neglected by their own friends: they gathered together also numbers of the famished poor, and distributed bread to all; thus imitating their heavenly Father, who sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. Christians appeared still to be superior to all others; and the church was known yet to exist by fruits peculiarly her own, to the praise of God our Saviour.

In the year 313 a war broke out between Maximin and Licinius. The former invaded the territory of the latter in the dead of winter, with an army of 75,000 men. By surprise he took a few fortified places before Licinius’ lieutenants were apprised of any hostile intentions of Maximin. It was at the time that Constantine was at the court of Licinius, celebrating the nuptials of his daughter, whom he had given to wife to that prince. Before the decisive battle, Maximin vowed to Jupiter that if he obtained the victory, he would abolish the Christian name. Licinius in a dream, was directed to supplicate with all his army the supreme God, in a solemn manner. He gave directions to his soldiers to do so, and they prayed in the field of battle, using the very words which he had received in his dream. So Milner quotes from Lactantius. There is no doubt but Licinius so reported the matter to his army, that he was directed by a dream. But the extraordinary success which had so lately attended Constantius’ armies, who was directed to seek for protection from the supreme God, and who directed his soldiers to pray to him in the field of battle, and being at this time on such friendly terms with Constantine, would probably hear from him an account of the matter. In this manner Licinius might have been led to try the experiment, and to inspire the courage and hope of victory in his soldiers in the unequal contest, report it to them as directed by a dream. But no matter how Licinius was influenced. It was on the face of it an open and direct contest between Jehovah and

Jupiter, now at its height, and drawing to a close. Victory decided in favor of Licinius, though his force was not half of that of Maximin. In consequence of this, Maximin published a cautious decree, which forbade the molestation of christians, but not allowing them the liberty of public worship. Whilst Constantine and Licinius published a complete toleration of christianity, together with that of all other religions.

Maximin struck with rage at the sad reverse of his affairs, slew many priests and prophets of his gods, by whose enchantments he had been seduced with false hopes of universal empire in the East; and finding he gained no friends among the christians by his late edict, he published another in their favor, as full and complete as that of the two other emperors. So amazingly were affairs now changed, that contending emperors courted the favor of the poor persecuted christians. After this he was struck with sudden plague over his whole body, pined away with hunger, fell down from his bed, his flesh being so wasted away by a secret fire, that it consumed and dropt off from his bones, his eyes leaped out of their sockets; and in his distress he began to see God passing judgment upon him. Frantic in his agonies he cried out, "It was not I, but others who did it." At length by the increasing force of torment, he owned his guilt, and every now and then implored Christ that he would compassionate his misery. He confessed himself vanquished, and gave up the ghost.

Dioclesian died a little before Maximin. His declining life was most wretched, from domestic afflictions and the distractions of the times. This Gibbon admits, and quotes young Victor, who affirms that he died raving mad, that he was condemned as a criminal by the senate, and that he prudently withdrew himself by a voluntary death. But Victor, he says, belonged to a powerful party (Christians) whom Dioclesian had *disobliged*, which makes his testimony questionable.

Licinius was the last of the pagan suns. Notwithstanding the proofs this man had of the divine interposition in favor of the gospel during his contest with Maximin, his old prejudices operated in conjunction with the depravity of the human heart, and the temptation of Satan induced him again to put forth his hand to vex the church in a variety of ways. He murdered bishops, destroyed churches, expelled from his court and army those who would not sacrifice. He used enchantments, and seemed hurried on by a diabolic influence to his own destruction — to hazard his throne and his life on the truth or falsehood of the gospel, and he lost them both. He was taken prisoner, and through the intercession of his wife and sister, his life was spared, and honorable privilege guaranteed him. But his restless spirit, like the old Maximian, must be engaged in plots. The exact manner of his death is not known, but it was by violence, whether by his own hand, or the hand of an executioner, is uncertain.

Not an event in history is better authenticated than the Dioclesian persecution of ten years. Gibbon is a good witness of the fact; he recognizes it everywhere in his sneers and bitterness against christians; he more than half insinuates that Marcellus merited death for desertion and disobedience to military orders: the rashness of the man who pulled down and tore the edict, he blames, and insinuates such things are not unfrequent with christians: the burning of the city in Phrygia with its inhabitants he admits, but says, the gates were open, all who chose might have come

out: yes, and sacrificed, which was the condition. He has an eagle eye on the indiscretion and rashness of christians, in taking their own lives: not a misstep of a christian in the whole scene but he sees it, which shows that he was familiar with the whole. He admits that the persecution of Dioclesian was ten years, but it was much lighter and milder than represented by christians.

The fact that there was such persecution cannot be controverted.

We will briefly review or compare the characters and spirit manifested by the parties, as they have passed before us. It cannot be disputed but there were imperfections found among the christians: individuals did not in all cases submit to the injuries imposed on them as the gospel requires. Marcellus might have left the service without manifesting so much spirit: pulling down and tearing the edict wanted christian passiveness: christians under any exposure to dishonor or torture, as the lady and her two daughters at Antioch, to take their own lives was wrong; suicide is contrary to the gospel under all possible circumstances. Two instances of indiscretion we have passed over, which are too interesting to be omitted. The first, Apphian, a young man under twenty, who had received a polite education at Berytus, left all his secular emoluments and hopes for the love of Christ, and came to Cæsarea, where he was so transported with zeal as to run up to Urbanus the governor, then making a libation, to seize him by the right hand, to stop his religious employment, and exhort him to forsake idolatry, and turn to the true God. The consequence, as might have been expected, was that he was martyred with the most dreadful and protracted tortures. The other was Aedesius, a brother of Apphian. He had suffered much before by imprisonment and drudgery in the mines of Palestine, which he had endured with great patience and fortitude: at length he came to Alexandria, and there saw the judge raging with frantic fury against christians, treating the men with various abuses, and giving up chaste virgins, who had devoted themselves to a single life, to pimps, to be treated in the vilest manner. Fired at the sight, he lost all patience, rebuked the magistrate, and struck him. Upon which he was exposed to a variety of tortures, and thrown into the sea. We will add still more from Milner, and invite the reader to read the whole of his account of this persecution, and all the pagan persecutions, and compare it with Gibbon's chapter on the conduct of the Roman government towards the christians. We would have given the whole of this persecution, but it would have occupied too much space, and to attempt to abridge the whole we found too painful. Milner says, of all the martyrologist of this persecution, none are more replete with horror than those which describe the sufferings of Paracus, Probus, and Andronicus, at Porsus in Cilicia. But he does not give the details, supposing his readers already wearied with such painful scenes, which admit of no entertainment, no coloring, no embellishment. One of the best lessons to be learnt from them is, that here human nature is discovered in the height of its enmity against God; and any man may see of what malignity he is capable, if left at large to his own dark designs. "I have looked over," says Milner, "the acts of these martyrdoms, which are tedious: I suppose that Mr. Gibbon did the same, and his remark on what he had read is this, 'that there was an asperity of behaviour in the martyrs, which might have irritated the magistrate.' But are words to be compared to deeds? What

if torments so terrible, so unprovoked, inflicted on innocent, worthy citizens, did extort a few passionate complaints and indignant speeches? This was the case, I see, with Andronicus, and it is all that appears on the face of the narrative that was blame worthy. Is this to be an apology, or even an extenuation, for such a barbarous persecution? Teraius firmly owned the truth. On being asked whether he did not worship two gods, because he worshipped Christ, he confessed that Christ was God, being the son of the living God: he is the hope of christians; he saves us by his sufferings. Probus, on being required to sacrifice to Jupiter, says, 'What! to him who married his sister? that adulterer, that unchaste person? as all the poets testify.' In such testimonies as these, truth was delivered without violation of decorum." These instances are all that we have noticed, which the eagle eye of Gibbon discovered in that long and bloody persecution, where the christians offended against the state, and acted contrary to their profession. What a testimony in their favor, that malignity itself could find nothing worse! But, as Milner says, "enmity knows not what candor means; and lest such bigots to infidelity as Gibbon and his disciples should misconstrue what I have said, of the great decline of godliness in the christians of these times, it ought in justice to be owned in their favor, that a persecution which intended their total destruction was carried on against a race of men, who were even then, with all their faults, the most loyal, peaceable, and worthy citizens in the whole empire."

Persecutions in every age of the church have been the best tests of her spiritual state; they have ever been as the refiner's fire, to burn out stony ground disciples and false professors: a summary excision of rotten branches. This work goes on rapidly in the first outbreak of a persecution. Up to the middle of the third century, after the stony ground disciples had cleared out, it is sorrowful—yet more than counterbalanced with joyfulness—to see the consistent, joyful triumph of the martyr yielding up his spirit in the midst of torments. Up to the Dacian persecution, about A. D. 260, we find few things to be mourned over in real martyrs. It is mournful to see the relapsed go away. But the church have understood and obeyed "resist not evil, but overcome evil with good." In every age has been accomplished in them, "and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death." And this is their only offence, that they rely wholly on the blood of Jesus Christ for pardon and justification before God, and they boldly profess this dependence on him. Give this up, and they might live and be what they pleased. "But the intolerance of christians," says Gibbon, "was their offence, idolators were tolerant, and let every man choose his own God; had christians done so, they would have escaped persecution." Doubtless, he was right, and polytheism would have remained to this day. But they overcame the dragon, and his religion, polytheism, by the word of their testimony, and by this they achieved their victory and delivered civilized men from polytheism, by constantly affirming there was but one living and true God, existing in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that the gods of the heathen were vanity and a lie; that men should turn from these dumb idols to serve the living God; that men were dead in trespasses and sins, under condemnation and the wrath of God abode on them, and that there was no salvation or deliverance but by faith and reliance on the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, who gave himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, sealed to be-

lievers by the Holy Spirit. This was the word of their testimony, which they were ready to seal with their blood—"for they loved not their lives unto the death." This, their testimony, was their only offence; in other things they were blameless; loyal and faithful to Government; patient under sufferings; meek under injuries; forgiving and praying for enemies; tranquil and joyful under the most grievous torments; with hopes full of immortality; declaring that Christ dwelt in them, comforting and strengthening them. Such were the martyrs, even in this time of declension, with few exceptions. If there is a holy and merciful God on the throne of the universe, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity: and the bible is a revelation of his mercy to lost, ruined man, through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus, sealed to believers by the Holy Spirit—were not these martyrs under the influence of this Spirit? And did they not bear a striking likeness to their head while he dwelt in the flesh? And what shall we say of their adversaries? We need not bring against them one railing accusation, but point to their acts. In what could they be exceeded in malignity, hate, and delight in inflicting and witnessing suffering? If there are such beings in the universe as devils and evil spirits, whose delight is to promote wrong and misery in the moral system, and they have access to men, must not these persecutors have been under their influence—their servants, to do their pleasure? Which of these two influences would it be desirable should prevail and govern the world?

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## CHAPTER V.

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### THE FACT THAT ANCIENT IDOLATRY WAS OVERTHROWN AND CAST OUT AS THE RELIGION OF CIVILIZED MEN IN THE EVENTS WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING.

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We know that when the apostles went forth to preach the gospel to the nations, the whole world was sunk in idolatry, or polytheism—multitudes of gods of all characters, made of all kinds of materials, and worshipped by a great variety of rites. This was the religious state of the world at the beginning of the christian era, and had been from the earliest ages, with the exception of a small remnant of the worshippers of the one living and true God. The Jews from this time had been delivered from outward idolatry, as well as a few Gentiles, who had been recovered through their influence, and the scriptures scattered sparingly among the nations. Except these, the whole world was given up to idolatry—to worship the works of their own hands,—“gods made by art and man’s device.” Not only the ignorant multitude, but their philosophers, historians, moralists, poets, heroes statesmen, gave their influence and support without an exception, to sustain polytheism, (whatever might be their secret belief,) and they always joined in persecutions against those who avowed their belief in the unity of the godhead. This was the sum of the charge against the christians, that they contemned their gods, and avowed and taught that there was but one living and true God; and but one Mediator between God and man—the

Man, Christ Jesus, through whom alone was there access and acceptance with God for sinners; and that all the idols of the nations were vanity and a lie. And for this they were persecuted up to the revolution we have considered. On this, Mr. Gibbon manifests a deep sympathy, and more than half insinuates that for this intolerant denunciatory spirit of the christians, they more than half deserved all they suffered. He says the idolators were tolerant and let every man choose and worship the idol they pleased, without molestation, or imposing his god on his neighbor. He thinks had the christians exercised the same tolerant spirit, and let the idolatry of the world alone, they would have escaped persecution; and doubtless the man is right. Had christians let idolatry alone, very probably he and his brethren Hume, Paine, and many tens of thousands of their disciples, instead of spending their lives in sneering at christianity, would all of them been bowing down to gods made with hands, and some of them might have been priests and high priests to Jupiter, and the thousand gods of the refined Greeks and Romans. But to return. We were saying that the whole world, in high and low places, in all departments, was given to idolatry, with the exception before noticed. We will refer to a few distinguished men: Socrates, Seneca, Tacitus, Homer, Plutarch, Pliny, Trajan, Adrian, Marcus, and all the eminent men, not Jews or Christians, were polytheists without an exception; avowedly such, and gave their influence to support the system, and defend it by persecution when called to it, and that up to the beginning of the fourth century. The whole world, with the exception above, appeared an unbroken phalanx in defence of idolatry. Another exception, some may think, ought to be made. Early in the third century, a sect of philosophers arose out of the church, who undertook to mix christianity with philosophy. They improved their philosophy in its outward aspect, but corrupted the gospel with the unholy mixture; and this was one of the principal ingredients in producing that fearful decline we shall witness in the history of the church.

Such was polytheism up to A. D. 302. Then a persecution commenced, designed simultaneously to affect the four great divisions of the Roman world. This persecution against the christians was carried on with such intensity and success, more than ten years, that the pagans shouted victory, and erected pillars, and struck medals to commemorate the triumph. But God sustained his church that she did not utterly fail before him. Several political revolutions favored her when she seemed ready to be swallowed up, as we have noticed. And in the year 324, Paganism received a deadly wound from which it has never recovered. Though the dragon struggled hard till he was merged in the beast, in the beginning of the eighth century, when he gave his power and seat and great authority to the beast, in whom he reigns, and is the prime agent, and through whom he receives divine honors: "and they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." Yet the dragon, as dragon, has never attempted, with any considerable success, the re-establishment of polytheism among civilized men. The beast, we know, acknowledges one supreme God existing in Trinity. Yet of his god protectors and mediators, there is no end to the number to which worship is required to be paid. Though as abominable and idolatrous, and as really worshipping the dragon, as ancient idolatry, yet it is not exactly polytheism. For the beast teaches there is one supreme God. We said the dragon has made

no successful attempt to re-establish ancient idolatry since his overthrow in the fourth century. There have been spurts, like as in the mad reign of Julian of eighteen months; but this seemed more like a malignant attempt to vex the church than any rational hope of success. After this overthrow we no more hear philosophers and learned men, the enemies of the gospel, pleading for ancient idolatry, than infidels in our days. From the middle of the fourth century, the enemies of the gospel, as they now do, opposed it with scoffs and ridicule. And it is rather remarkable that there should not be more variety among such a diversity of talent,—that the old stereotype version should continue down through so many generations. All that are not atheists profess to believe in one supreme God. Polytheism does not now exist but in the dark corners of the earth. In heathen countries, where they have not received the gospel, the intelligent part even there believe in one supreme God. Mahometans believe in one God, so do protestants who are not atheists. And Roman Catholics, as we have seen, believe in one supreme God. Though the dragon has been careful that they should leave no place for *him* among their multiplied god protectors and mediators.

If these things are so, and as far as we have had opportunity to examine, we have found they were, the fact is established: not but that ancient idolatry lingered in the Roman empire until it was broken to pieces, and the man of sin revealed, in the eighth century, as before noticed. He is recognized in the prophecy as the dragon up to that period. His work in this interval is intimated: "Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."—Rev. xii. 12. Doubtless this has reference to those tremendous earthly calamities predicted in the four first trumpets, by which the empire was rent asunder, as they fall within that period. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."—13th verse. That is, when idolatry was cast down from civil authority, and cast out as the religion of the world, he still persecuted the church, and the prophecy informs how, beside by open violence: "The serpent cast out of his mouth waters as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."—15th verse. This represents, or predicts, those multiplied devices (well compared to the waters of a flood) which the dragon and his angels resorted to, to corrupt and overwhelm the church, as before noticed, as we shall see if spared to review that period. In this manner the dragon, as dragon, employed himself as dwelling in his angels the four following centuries, till he was fully established on the Pontifical throne. But the grand efforts of his angels were in the nominal church, to substitute another gospel than that of Jesus Christ. And since ancient idolatry, as the religion of the nations, was cast out, philosophers, poets, historians, moralists, statesmen (except Julian) have left polytheism to die unattended and unpitied. We shall see the process through which the deadly wound of this power was healed, "when he gave his power and his seat and great authority to the beast:" in whom he is resuscitated and lives again in all his power and malignity, the enemy of God and all righteousness; and has been left to practise and prosper, to trample on those "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."—17th verse.

Another thing ought not to be passed over without notice, which contributed to effect this great revolution, viz. those things approaching more to the nature of miracles than we find in ordinary history. Yet the greatness of the contest shows at once the propriety of such signal divine interposition, and renders them more credible.

Here we will turn back to secular history, and notice the relative strength of the rival emperors, especially Maxentius and Constantine. Maxentius had collected an army of 170,000 foot, 18,000 horse, with immense supplies drawn from the cities of Italy and the provinces, for the invasion of Constantine's dominions. While Constantine's whole army consisted of but 90,000 foot, and 8,000 horse. More than half of these it would require to defend his extended frontier. With forty thousand men he resolved to anticipate Maxentius, and carry the war into Italy. Constantine seemed to have a full view of his situation: and however ambitious he might have been, he had but the chance to reign or die. Though Maxentius was himself a dissolute inexperienced prince, yet Constantine knew full well the superior ability and valor of many of his officers, who had been his companions in arms, and the courage and discipline of the veteran legions they commanded. This, together with the events of the two late invasions of Italy, must have filled his mind with intense solicitude.

We will here quote Milner, who says, "This emperor from early life had some predilection in favor of christianity. His father Constantius, like Agrippa, had been almost persuaded to be a Christian, and probably the fear of man and love of the world operated as a check upon both. This, however, we are informed concerning him, that he condemned the polytheism of the times, and worshipped one God the maker of all things; that he had multitudes of christians in his palace, and, among these, ministers of the gospel, who openly prayed for the emperor. The knowledge of these things, joined to the remarkable contrast between the moral character of his father and that of the other emperors, made some impressions in favor of the christian religion on the mind of Constantine, though more pungent views of internal depravity and guilt be needful to induce the mind to enter fully into the spirit of the gospel. But even a worldly mind may feel the need of divine assistance, when dubious under the prospect of important secular events. And Constantine, marching from France into Italy against Maxentius, on an expedition which was likely either to exalt or ruin him, was oppressed with anxiety. Some God he thought needful to protect him. The God of the christians he was most inclined to respect; but he wanted some satisfactory proof of his real existence and power; and he neither understood the means of acquiring this, nor could he be content with atheistical indifference, in which so many generals and heroes since his time have acquiesced. He prayed; he implored with much vehemence and importunity; and God left him not unanswered. While he was marching with his forces in the afternoon, the trophy of the cross appeared very luminous in the heavens, higher than the sun, with this inscription, "*Conquer by this.*" He and his soldiers were astonished at the sight. But he continued pondering on the event till night. And Christ appeared to him while sleeping, with the same sign of the cross, and directed him to make use of that symbol as his

military ensign. Constantine obeyed, and the cross was henceforward displayed in his armies.\*

Constantine, who hitherto was totally unacquainted with christian doctrine, asked the pastors who this God was, or what was the meaning of the sign? They told him that it was God the only begotten Son of the only true God; that the sign was the trophy of the victory which, when he was on earth, had gained over death. At the same time they explained to him the cause of his coming, and the doctrine of his incarnation. From this time Constantine firmly believed the truth of the christian religion. He would have acted irrationally if he had not: and it were an inexcusable want of candor to ascribe to motives merely political a course of conduct in favour of christianity, in which he persevered to his death; and which was begun at a time when the ascendency both of the christian cause and the success of his arms, as connected with it, were extremely dubious. He began after this to read the scriptures, and zealously patronized the pastors of the church all his days. Whether he really loved the gospel, and felt its influence on his own heart, is a doubtful question; but that he believed it to be divinely true, is certain, if a consistent and long course of actions be admitted as evidence.

By turning back to secular history, at this time we find that Galerius was dead, Maximin and Licinius had divided his territory between themselves. The provinces of Asia fell to the share of Maximin, and those of Europe augmented the portion of Licinius. The Hellespont and the Thracian Bosphorus formed their mutual boundary. Licinius had the whole of Europe except Italy, which Maxentius claimed, and Spain, Gaul, and Britain, which belonged to Constantine. Italy with Africa had belonged to the old emperor Maximian; after his abdication was assigned to Severus; and after he fell, and the retreat of Galerius, Maxentius claimed Africa as well as Italy as his rightful portion. Constantine's share in the empire, neither in territory, men, or means, was one-third of either of his compeer emperors—beside he had an extensive frontier to defend.

There is another consideration worthy of notice. The other three emperors were the sworn enemies of the gospel, who had made themselves drunk with the blood of the saints. In that dreadful war in heaven, which had raged for the last eight years through the Roman world (Constantine's dominions excepted) † the dragon, in his angels, had fought, and sought to exterminate christianity and re-establish polytheism beyond further disturbance, and had, in the conflict, more than once shouted victory. The events, for years, had been shaping to his cries. The arrangement was now complete—the belligerents in the field. The dragon, in his numerous and potent angels, inspiring and urging them on:—Christ, in his poor, persecuted, down-trodden people, sustaining, comforting, and making them joyful in all their tribulations—purifying them in the furnace

\* Milner here, in a note says, Eusebius says he had this account from Constantine himself, confirmed with an oath, long time after.

† If it should be said that Maxentius had not as yet exercised his authority against the church: state policy might have imposed a temporary restraint. In other things he was the most cruel and abandoned of men. The son of the cruel Maximian, and son-in-law to the monster Galerius. His time was at hand, that he should be cut off in his wickedness.

of affliction. And now God is about to avenge them on their adversaries, though he has borne long with them. "I tell you," says the Saviour, "he will avenge them speedily." The set time of deliverance was near—the shortest time that was best for the church and the glory of her Lord and Master. And now in such a crisis, "When the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us:" Psalm ii. 2, 3:—and why, we ask, in such a crisis, should not God marvellously interpose for his cause and his people? And that in such a manner, that it should be known to all future generations, "That he that sitteth in the heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."—4th verse.

No event in history is better authenticated than that of the appearance of the cross in the heavens, seen by Constantine and his army. Would an army of 40,000 men, to a man, connive at, or assent to such a relation, if it were a falsehood? Constantine immediately exchanged his standard for that of the cross, and his whole subsequent life is in accordance with such a conviction. Gibbon passes over this event in entire silence, and why? Doubtless, because he would not risk his veracity as an historian by denying the account.

Another thing should be taken into the consideration—the exceeding low state of religion at this time. Faithful instructors of divine truth were scarcely to be found. If there were such, their names have not been handed down to us. The mind was darkened by superstition and error. Constantine, it would seem, needed something extraordinary to fix his attention, to remove his difficulties, and establish his confidence that the God of the christians was able to save those who trusted in him.

Another thing at first view may seem an objection of some weight, *i. e.* the idolatrous use which has been made of the symbol of the cross, as though there were some sanctity in the simple figure, no matter of what materials made. This is an abominable superstition, then growing into use, and christians were known to be partial to this figure as a symbol of their God on the cross; this being so, the enemies of the gospel would understand that those marshaled under this banner considered themselves under the protection of the crucified One. Yet Constantine did not understand the figure till it was explained to him, though it has led the darkened minds of men to venerate the mere figure of the cross, and this may have helped on the superstition of the times. There is nothing but what the carnal heart of man can pervert to idolatry. The Israelites could worship the brazen serpent, and the idolatrous anti-christian church can worship the bread and wine, and materialize the whole gospel. But attention to the word of God, and faithful instruction, and a spiritual mind will correct these evils. But if men will reject this, and materialize the gospel and rely on figures and similitudes to save them, they will perish and their blood will be on their own heads; and God often gives occasion, or does that from which they will take occasion, to show out what is in their hearts.

Again, we will add that this was not, as it respected the combatants, a religious war. Constantine did not go to war to support christianity, but simply sought for himself to live and reign, and had no higher views in his earnest supplication but to secure these interests. He was led to confide in the God of the christians to protect and prosper him, and He did not

fail him. Neither did Maxentius go to war to defend his gods, but to destroy Constantine and add to his dominions the western provinces. Before he left Rome to meet Constantine in the field he consulted the Sybilline books, the guardian of the ancient oracle. They gave an ambiguous answer; and the event, either way, would support the credit of the oracle. On what else he hoped for success, other than his superior force, we know not. He fell. Maximin would secure the favor and power of Jupiter by a vow, that if he would give him the victory he would destroy the christian name. He was defeated, and died most wretchedly. Licinius was led to supplicate the one Supreme God, and obtained a signal victory, with a far inferior force. This was a direct contest between Jehovah and Jupiter, though both the emperors were wicked men. Yet God did not disappoint the hope or confidence which had been placed in him. This should have led Licinius to enquire after the God who had heard and protected him, and it shows the desperate madness of the heart of man, and the power of Satan over him, that he could be persuaded by enchantments and his great preparations, that he should prevail against this God and overthrow his servant who trusted him and to whom he had granted such signal success. This, too, was a direct contest between Jehovah and the gods of the heathen. Yet Constantine did not go to war to protect or extend christianity, but under the protection of, and confiding in the God of christians. We will only request those who read to find God in history to notice the extraordinary success of Constantine at Susa, Turin, Verona, and his final victory at Salsa Rubra, by which he obtained the entire dominion of Rome, Italy, and all of Africa dependent on Rome—the strong places he captured; the experienced generals and victorious legions he vanquished with far inferior forces; together with the rapidity of his movements, all accomplished within four months after his departure from the Rhine. All this being achieved, three-fourths of the empire were freed from persecution.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A COMPARISON OF THE EVENTS NOTICED WITH THE PROPHECIES PREDICTING THEM.

We are now prepared to compare the things of which we have heard, with the emblems of the sixth seal by which they were predicted. We have before stated, and it is important to be borne in mind, that the seals and the trumpets relate to earthly things, except those in which the state of the world and of the church are both represented, as in the first seal—the white horse; also, the fifth seal is not a political event, but represents the intense sufferings of the martyrs during the long and dreadful persecution, called the Dioclesian. In looking back on the sinking and desponding state of the church under the subtle, savage Maximin, we can almost hear them cry, "How long, oh Lord, holy and true, dost not thou judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" It is the language of an-

guish; not of despair and murmering, but of submission and confidence—How long, oh Lord, holy and true." How gracious and comforting the answer in the 11th verse, and though not immediate deliverance from persecution, yet it is called a "rest,"—"And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should REST yet a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren, that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled." By turning to the history of the event, we find after the affairs of the church were brought to the lowest and most discouraging point, light sprang up for them in the calamities which befel the empire. Maximin staked his all on the persecution, and was soon cut off. But Licinius revived it in another part of the empire, which may also be intimated by "until their fellow-servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Here are fellow-servants, companions, also brethren. We know in the figurative language of the prophecy it is said, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." If we would interpret this literally, it would be the spirits of departed martyrs, who cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long," &c.; and then the language would have been more proper *had* been slain, than *were* slain. Our impression is, that it represents the language of the suffering church and martyrs, at this time of their greatest extremity, to impress future generations how great they were, and that they were comforted and delivered in due time—that none who wait upon God need be discouraged.

We should bear in mind, would we not get confused in the interpretation of this book, that the little book contains the history of the church during the same period as the seals and trumpets do of the world, and that the casting out of the Dragon and his angels from the religious world, was contemporaneous with his overthrow in the political world.

We will now proceed to compare the events we have been considering with the figures or emblems of the sixth seal.

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo! there was a great earthquake." This figure must represent great convulsions, overturnings and revolutions. We have certainly found such in the history of this period. We know of none in our world in which the political and religious effects have been so great, so surprising, so unexpected by all the parties. The pagans would have blotted out the christian name. If they failed, they apprehended no danger to themselves. The christians desired deliverance from so great tribulation, but had not dreamed of seeing their enemies subdued under them. It was a great political and religious earthquake—surely great overturnings, and castings down.

"And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." We will now glance back and notice the setting of these pagan suns—these angels of the dragon which were cast out. The first in the list, was Severus, of whom we know little except that his destruction was sudden and unexpected, and he was compelled to take his own life. Maximian, who had made himself drunk with the blood of the saints, seemed hurried to "set in blackness as sackcloth of hair. In the awful exit of Galerius, we almost see literally the gnawing of that worm that never dies. What a horror of darkness shrouds his departure! We see Maxentius satiated with his lust and blinded by his oracle, plunging himself into destruction—his memory damned to eternal infamy. In the departure of

Maximin, we see earnests "of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

The great Dioclesian in declining life, was most wretched, and took his own life. In what horror of darkness his sun went down. In Licinius we see a man blinded by Satan, and the enmity of his heart against God infatuated by ambition and restlessness hurried on to his own sure destruction. There are many great men with much defect of character, yet with some redeeming trait, whose names and exploits have been handed down with honor. But these men, though great as warriors, are, by universal consent, damned to eternal infamy.

Surely this was a great earthquake. It was a great moral and political convulsion which shook the world. These pagan suns did "become black as sackcloth," and the moon (their satellites, generals, and high officers) "become as blood,"—drenched in their own blood.

"And the stars of heaven fell to the earth."—The pagan priests, ministers of idolatry, and the magistrates who condemned the martyrs, fell "even as a fig tree casteth forth her untimely figs when she is shaken by a mighty wind."

"And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together."—Polytheism, or the dragon's system of religion, was then wound up, not to be unfurled again; or, polytheism then received a deadly wound, ultimately to die and cease to exist.

"And every mountain and island moved out of their place."—A figure which represents the great difficulties which opposed this mighty revolution. And to ascertain what mountains and islands there were, look at the prospect when Constantine was meditating his Italian expedition. On the side of the church it might be truly said, "Behold the tears of the oppressed, and they had no comforter:" on the side of their oppressors there was power. But they had no comforter, no human arm to look to, or hope from, even after Constantine had been led to commit himself and his cause to the protection of the God of the christians. How great the disparity of the antagonists. The angels of the dragon were numerous, potent, and disciplined. Perhaps in no period of the world had military discipline been carried to so great perfection as at this time,—so many able, experienced generals and officers of all grades, and so many veteran troops in the field. Claudius, Probus, Aurelian, and Carus, who were the instruments of delivering the empire from the bloody anarchy which so long wasted it within, and drove back the barbarians beyond their frontiers, were great military men, and carried military discipline to a high state of perfection. Dioclesian and his Cæsars and officers were trained under these accomplished princes, and with all their atrocity of character were mighty men, and able to train up and command mighty men, all, we believe, foreigners, not dissipated Italians. Constantine was trained up in the same school, and was himself a mighty man, but his forces and other resources were not one-third of either of his rival emperors.

Besides, philosophy, sarcasm, and subtlety were all on the side of the dragon and his angels. What mountains and islands these, to be removed by such feeble instruments!

Besides, look at the low and fallen state of the church at this time: though there were during that long and intense persecution great multitudes who witnessed a good confession, "and overcame him (the dragon) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they

loved not their lives unto the death." Yet during this whole period, no Cyprin or Dionysius appeared to check, to regulate, or to control the spirits of christians, and to discipline them by scripture rules. God, it would seem, eminently designed to show that the weakness of God was stronger than men, and the foolishness of God wiser than men. He would let his adversaries gather themselves together, gird on their whole strength, yet they should be broken, and that too by instruments the most weak and contemptible to the proud sense of men.

"With worms he would thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff"—Isa. xli. 15. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain! before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings crying grace, grace unto it"—Zach. iv. 6, 7. "And the kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves, in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"—Rev. vi. 15—17.

This is the language of terror and consternation which seized the vanquished under their final overthrow. We may imagine that it must have been great from the circumstances that attended it: 1. From the irresistible manner in which it came upon them, their skill and valor availed them nothing: and 2. They saw that it was the hand of God which had smitten them; and of that crucified one they had so reviled and blasphemed—whose servants they had persecuted and slain, and *that* for their fidelity to *him*. And now the great day of his wrath is come; "*of him* that sitteth on the throne and the wrath of the *Lamb*, and who shall be able to stand?" With all grades and conditions of men this was a personal concern. A mere change of political masters was of little moment to those in the humble walks of life. But not so in this; all were equally involved. Their gods were gone, which showed that they were unable to deliver them! and they had fallen into the hand of that God against whom the temper of their hearts, and the tenor of their lives, had been unbroken enmity. "And now the day of his wrath is come:" they had also fallen into the hands of his servants, whom they had hated and persecuted in cruel wrath for their likeness and fidelity to him. "And now the day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

But we are not left wholly to conjecture what might have been the terror and consternation of those involved in these scenes; for we have some instances. Galerius, Maximin, and several others, beside their outward sufferings, the horrors of their minds were indescribable. Could rocks or mountains have hid them from their unutterable anguish and fearful forebodings, how they would have fled to them! Or could they have hoped for annihilation, it would have mitigated their anguish. But annihilation is as far from the soul under the terrors of an awakened conscience, as heaven is from hell. It is the insensible—the blinded conscience that can take shelter in annihilation. Have not some of us seen persons (or felt ourselves) who, under the terrors of an awakened conscience, could find no shelter there, however, in their insensibility and

strength, they might have scoffed at future retribution. This refuge failed them now, as well as every hope of escape, unless led to seek it through the merits of the blood of Christ.

In this awful discomfiture, and manifestation of the divine power, these feelings of terror and alarm might have prevailed to an extent of which we may have no conception, from any thing we have seen, and the language implies that it was extraordinary: and while many perished in hopeless despair, we have reason to hope that multitudes were brought to true repentance, and to embrace the hopes of the gospel. We know that great numbers soon after professed faith in Christ, and visibly joined themselves to the Lord.

We will now give a summary of the ground we have passed over, or the events indicated in the prophecies.

Ist. We noticed the wars and rumors of wars, the first sign preceding the destruction of Jerusalem; the convulsion of the world on the fall of Nero, A. D. 69 to 70.

2d. The fall and desolation of Jerusalem and the land of Judea, A. D. 70.

3d. We entered on the prophecies contained in the book with seven seals. The first seal, the White Horse, we interpreted as the remarkable peace of the world, and the triumphs of the Gospel from the year 100 to 180. The peace and prosperity of the world we have only dwelt on, as belonging to secular history; and will only remark here, that during the above period, a remarkable missionary spirit prevailed, and the gospel was preached with great success in regions where before it was unknown.

The second seal, the Red Horse, commenced at the close of the former, 180, and continued to 288. Yet the calamities of the Black and Pale Horse, growing and mingling in the second seal, were all consummated in the above 288. From this period the providence of God appears to be shaping and carrying forward events to the consummating of the great revolution in 324.

The fifth seal was interpreted, not of any specific event, other than a representation of the intensity of the sufferings of the martyrs in the long and cruel persecution called the Dioclesian, with the consolations they experienced under that great affliction.

Now, we have little fear, but that those who will acquaint themselves with the history of the times we have passed over, searching to find God in history, carrying into effect his declared purposes, will find events answerable to the figures of the prophecies foretelling them, or that they will object to the application of the events as foretold by John—except the last great revolution. That such an astonishing event did take place, none will dispute who acquaint themselves with the history of that period. But the difficulty we apprehend will be that the figures are too bold and extravagant. That the greatness of this political and moral revolution, was not equal to the representation and appearance in the visible heavens. To this we will only say, we may have as little conception of the effect of this moral and political commotion, the consternation of the vanquished at that time; as we have, should the things literally take place in the visible heaven. The figures are designed to impress men with the surprising magnitude of that event. Yet the difficulty may still remain that the figures are beyond the reality; therefore, that event was not intended and cannot be applied to the fulfilling of that prophecy. The event did occur, and it

was one of the most astonishing, taking all its circumstances into the account, that has occurred among men. And if it is not contained in the figures of the sixth seal, then it was not predicted—it was not foretold. The sixth seal stands in a regular succession of events, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; if this is not the sixth, that is wanting. We have found the others following and mingling in regular succession. But this is a blank, if the events we have noticed are not the fulfilment.

We know it has been interpreted of the Day of Judgment. But it cannot be that—1st. Because the prophecies of this book are figurative. If this is the Day of Judgment it must be literal. And 2d. It would bring the Day of Judgment before the opening of the seventh seal, which contains more than three times as much as the six first seals. And lastly, the figures of the sixth seal are essentially like those used by the Saviour, predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, of which he said “that that generation should not pass away until all was fulfilled.” But doubtless both these events were lively figures, and earnests of that event, as the believer in this life has earnests and foretastes of heaven; but it is not heaven itself. And so the soul which departs in the horrors of despair, has an earnest of that fire which shall never be quenched; but it is not the thing itself.

What a dark world this would be, without the light of revelation! From the history of the past, not a gleam of hope can be gathered for the future. But that the same succession of crime and wretchedness will continue. The world, a desert of wickedness, without a green spot, except a small remnant borne from above. Nations only rising, maturing corrupting, to be destroyed. Cities built and embellished to be made ruinous heaps. Every where, and at all times, may be seen the tears of the oppressed, and they have no comforter; “on the side of the oppressors there is power, but the oppressed have no comforter;” and they are neither humbled nor reformed by their afflictions, but often made more desperate. There can be no mistake—it is an apostate world from God and all that is good; lying in the wicked one. By nature there is not one that doeth good—no, not one. Yet, in such a world, God in his providence “has not left himself without a witness, in that He did them good in giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling his rebellious subjects with food and their hearts with gladness—but no thankfulness.” O! how cheerless and hopeless the state of our sin ruined world! but for the revelation of divine mercy made known in his word. And what a brilliant light the Word of God sheds on this dark world. In the past we can see the footsteps of God walking in the midst of his rebellious subjects, manifesting the perfections of his nature in his dealings with them—shewing his goodness in providing so many comforts for such ungrateful creatures, who only pamper their lusts with his bounty, and his patience and justice in the fearful judgments he has so often visited guilty nations, communities and individuals, who have filled the measure of their iniquity; and also his mercy, and grace, and power to save all who return to him penitent sinners, by Jesus Christ, the only mediator. We see God every where in his word acting out the declaration he made of himself to Moses: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin, who will by no means clear the guilty—visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” God has left his rebel-

lious creatures free to shew themselves, and act out what is in their hearts and exhibit the character of sin, and that he is righteous when he taketh vengeance. Yet he holds them in his hand—they are free, and only seek to accomplish their own ends. yet can only effect what his hand and his, counsel had before determined should be done, as he had declared by his servants, the prophets. By the light of revelation, in the history of the past we can see the footsteps of God walking in the midst of the raging of the elements, collisions, dashing and breaking of nations. Wickedness every where abounds; all men are supremely selfish, and at enmity to Him. Yet God is on his holy hill of Zion, overruling all things to the display of his infinite perfections, in the developing and bringing forward to its consummation the work of redemption—the chief of all the works of God—that which the angels desired to look into, which could not have been displayed but in such a world as this. It is by the light of prophecy that we trace the footsteps of God in the past, where we find “thus it was written,” and thus it has been. In this way the children of God have been built up in faith and comfort in every generation; they are ever able to sing “great is thy faithfulness—thy faithfulness endureth to all generations.”

It is most evident that before the revelation of God was completed—while he yet inspired men to write his will, declare his prophecies, and chronicle their fulfilment in his providence, no generation was left unwarned of what was before them. No calamity overtook them unforetold, beyond which was not promised deliverance. These prophecies were not in generals only, but detailed a succession of events affecting every generation. So that those who believed God’s word, and took heed to the voice of his prophets, were never taken by surprise by any unforewarned event. To the Old Testament prophets it was not only given to exhibit the details of events to the generations near them, but a general summary of events to the end of the world. The New Testament prophets, especially John, were inspired to give the succession of events affecting every generation to the end of the world. Would we acquaint ourselves with what God has been doing in the history of the world, we should find in every finished event, thus it was written in the prophecy. And to encourage our research, no book in the bible is so urged on our attention as the Book of Revelations, which is prefaced with—“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.”—Rev. I, 3. And it is closed with “like benedictions on those who give it their attention.”—Rev. XXII, 7. Those who attain to this blessing will find that it sheds a brilliant light on the past, and will illuminate the future to the end of the world. “This, then, is the message which we have of him and deliver unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” 1st John, I, 5.

## CHAPTER VII.

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### CHURCH HISTORY.

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Apostolic men—Clement—His letter to the Corinthians—Ignatius—Extracts from his seven epistles, written on his tour from Antioch to Rome, where he suffered martyrdom—The period of the First Seal—Missionary zeal and remarkable success of the Gospel—Remarks on modern missions—Quadratus' labors—His apology—Origen—Account of the effects of the Gospel on the Athenians—Aristides' apology to Adrian—Letter from the Pro-Consul of Asia—Adrian's answer, about A. D. 130.

The Apostle John says: “I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning.” By this we are not to understand that the true knowledge of the Gospel is confined to those who heard the apostles preach in its first promulgation: “for no scripture is of private interpretation,” or restricted to one generation. But it means there are no novelties in the religion of the bible. The gospel admits of no improvement. Would we learn its true nature, we must apply ourselves to know what it was as it came pure from the hand of its founder, and as preached by the apostles. There are but two writers of the first century whose works have come down to us—beside the bible, which reaches a considerable way into it. St. John wrote near the close. The first of these is Clement, the person Paul mentions. He was bishop, or pastor, at Rome. What remains of him is an epistle written to the Corintians, who had applied to him concerning some dissensions which had again arisen in that church. We shall pass over every thing in this epistle of a local character, and only notice his doctrinal and practical views, adapted to all times and circumstances; and these not in any accurate method, only as they fall in with his practical instruction and warnings. “Yet we may see the fundamentals of godliness, Salvation only by the blood of Christ—the necessity of repentance in all men, because all men are guilty before God;” these, he supposes and builds on continually, as we shall see in the following extract: “Let us,” says he, “stedfastly behold the blood of Christ, and see how precious it is in the sight of God, which, being shed for our salvation, hath procured the grace of repentance for all the world.”

Again. “The nature and necessity of lively faith, as a principle of true godliness, and happiness, and perfectly distinct from the dead historical assent, with which it is by many unhappily confounded. It is well illustrated in the case of Lot’s wife. ‘She had another spirit, another heart; hence, she was made a monument of the Lord’s indignation—a pillar of salt to this day, that all the earth and all generations may know that the double minded, who stagger at the promises of God, and distrust the power of his grace in unbelief shall obtain nothing of the Lord but the signal display of his vengeance.’ ”

The divine dignity and glory of our Saviour is thus described. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the sceptre of the majesty of God, came not in the pomp of arrogance or pride, though who can understand the thunder of his power? But he was meek and lowly."

The doctrine of election runs remarkably through the epistle in connection with holiness, (says Milner,) as the scriptures always state it. A passage may be properly quoted here to show that it was a primitive doctrine: "Let us go to him in sanctification of heart, lifting up holy hands to him, influenced by the love of our gracious and compassionate Father, who hath made us his election, his peculiar people. Since we, therefore, are the elect of God, holy and beloved, let us work the works of God."

"The distinguishing doctrine of christianity (says Milner, whom we largely quote,) without which the gospel is a mere name, and incapable of consoling sinners, is doubtless Justification by the grace of Christ through faith alone." See Clement's testimony. It deserves to be distinctly remembered as an unequivocal testimony of the faith of the primitive church.

"All these," (he is speaking of the Old Testament fathers,) "were magnified and honored, not through themselves, not through their works, not through their righteous deeds, which they performed, but through his will. And we, also, by his will, being called in Christ Jesus, are justified, not by ourselves, nor by our wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or by the works which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but faith, by which the Almighty hath justified all who are or have been justified from the beginning."

"His quick perception of the common objections, what need then of good works? His ready answer, and his manner of stating the necessity of good works, and placing them on their proper basis show how deeply he had studied, and how exquisitely he felt St. Paul's doctrines. But what then? Shall we neglect good works? Does it follow from hence that we should leave the law of loving obedience? God forbid. Let us rather hasten with all earnestness of mind to every good work; for the Lord himself rejoices in his works. Having such a pattern, how strenuously should we follow his will, and work the works of righteousness with all our might."

First, the doctrine of the Spirit's work on the heart and of the experience of his consolations in the soul—take the following passage:

How blessed, how amazing the gift of God, beloved! Life in immortality, splendor in righteousness, truth in liberty, faith in assurance, sobriety in holiness? And thus far in this life we know experimentally. If the earnest of the Spirit be so precious, what must be the things which God hereafter hath prepared for those who wait for him?

What men are by nature—how dark and miserable—what by converting grace in the renewal of the understanding, is thus expressed: "Through him, that is Jesus Christ, let us behold the glory of God shining in his face: through him the eyes of our hearts are opened; through him our understanding, dark and foolish as it was, rises again into his miraculous light; through him the Lord would have us taste of immortal knowledge."

This epistle, says Milner, seems to come as near to apostolic simplicity as any thing we have on record. The illustration of its spirit would show this abundantly. It is difficult to show this by a single passage. A temper so heavenly, meek, holy, charitable, patient, yet fervent, pious and

humble runs through the whole. Take a sentence or two by way of illustration—"Christ is theirs, who are poor in spirit, and lift not up themselves above the flock, but are content to be low in the church. Let us obey our spiritual pastors and honor our elders, and the younger be disciplined in the fear of God. Let our wives be directed to what is good, to follow chastity, modesty, meekness, sincerity. Let them evidence their power of self government by their silence, and let them show love, not in the spirit of a sect or party, but to all who fear God. Again, Let not the strong despise the weak, and let the weak reverence the strong. Let the rich communicate to the poor, and let the poor be thankful to God, for those through whom their wants are supplied. Let the wise exert his wisdom, not merely in words, but in good works. Let the humble prove his humility, not by testifying of himself how humble he is, but by conduct that may occasion others to give testimony to him. Let not the chaste be proud of his chastity, knowing that from God he has received the gift of continency. Have we not all one God, one Christ, one spirit of grace poured upon us, and one calling in Christ? Why do we separate and distract the members of Christ, and fight against our own body, and are come to such a height of madness as to forget that we are members one of another?"

"Is any among you strong in faith, mighty in knowledge, gifted in utterance, judicious in doctrine, and pure in conduct! The more he appears exalted above others, the more need has he to be poor in spirit, and take care that he looks not on his own things, but that he study to promote the common good of the church."

"Every one whose heart has any good degree of the fear and love which is the result of our common hope, had rather that he himself be exposed to censure than his neighbor; and had rather condemn himself than break that beautiful bond of brotherly love which is delivered to us."

After pressing the beautiful example of charity of Moses, in the book of Exodus, XXXII, he says: "Who of you has any generosity of sentiment, or bowels of compassion, or fulness of love? Let him say, if the strife and schism be on my account, I will depart, wherever you please, and perform whatever the church shall require, only let Christ's flock live in peace with their settled pastors. Surely the lord will smile on such a character."

Clement occasionally introduces also a piece of history. He refers to the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, as a fact well known in perfect agreement with what we learn from Irenæus, which he says he had from Polycarp, a disciple of St. John. Clement says:—"Set before your eyes the holy apostles. Through envy, Peter underwent a variety of afflictions, and having suffered martyrdom, went to the due place of glory. Through envy, Paul obtained at length the reward of his patience, having seven times been cast into chains, being scourged, stoned, having preached the gospel in the east and the west, he obtained a good report, through faith, preaching righteousness through the world to the utmost bounds of the west, and suffering martyrdom from princes, he left this world, and reached the shore of a blessed immortality, the most eminent pattern of those who suffer for righteousness' sake. Through the godly conversation and labors of these men, a great multitude of the elect was gathered together who through envy were afflicted with cruel torments, and obtained a good report through faith among us. Through the same evil principle, even women

among us have sustained the most cruel and unrighteous sufferings, and finished in patient faith their course. and received, notwithstanding the weakness of their sex, the prize of christian heroes."

Clement is said to be the only writer of the first century, after the "close of the canon of scripture whose works have come down to us except Hermas, probably the person mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews. It is pious, but the composition is of inferior merit. There are epistles bearing the name of Barnabas, but they are considered to be spurious. To allow otherwise would be very injurious to his character. To believe, to suffer, not to write, was the primitive taste."

But Ignatius was an apostolic man, a disciple of St. John, though he lived into the 2d century. He was martyred A. D. 107. Yet he may as well be introduced here in the enquiry after the faith and practice of primitive christianity.

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch. He suffered martyrdom under Trajan, who being now on his way to his Parthian expedition, stopped at Antioch. Ignatius, either to divert the attention of the emperor from his flock, or to save an arrest, or the involving of others by concealment, perhaps mingled with a vain glory of martyrdom, went voluntarily into the presence of Trajan, who appeared to have had some knowledge of him. The emperor, much enraged at his boldness in coming into his presence, not only reproached him for transgressing his commands in refusing to sacrifice to the gods, and also inveigling other souls into the same folly to their ruin, and calling him an impious wretch, Ignatius replied that he ought not to be called "impious, for wicked spirits had departed from the servants of God. But if you call me impious because of hostility, I own the charge in that respect. I dissolve all their snares, sustained inwardly, by Christ, the heavenly king."

Ignatius had called himself Theophilus. Trajan inquired what he meant by that name? Ignatius answered, "He who has Christ in his breast." Trajan replied, "that the gods also resided with them, and fought their battles." Ignatius, "You mistake in calling the demons of the nations by the name of gods. For there is only one God, who made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; and Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, whose kingdom be my portion." Trajan, "His kingdom, do you say, who was crucified under Pilate?" Ignatius, "His, who crucified my sin with its author, and has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under their feet, who carry him in their heart." Trajan, "Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee?" Ignatius, "I do; for it is written, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them.'" Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him: "Since Ignatius confesses that he carries in himself him that was crucified, we command that he be carried, bound, by soldiers, to great Rome, there be thrown to the beasts for the entertainment of the people."

Here, we have a literal exposition of the text—"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death." The doctrine of union with Christ by faith, now so much discarded, appears here in its full glory, and if ever we be called to scenes like these, we shall feel its importance.

The merciful appointment of God should not be overlooked in influencing the mind of Trajan to send Ignatius the long journey to Rome for execution, the delays that were experienced, the indulgence of the guards, the

opportunities of seeing so many christian brethren and writing seven epistles which have been preserved. "The scene before us is august, (says Milner,) the state of christendom at that time is much illustrated by it. The seven Epistles of the great man, undoubtedly genuine as they are, and accurately distinguished from all corrupt interpolations, will come in aid to the acts of his martyrdom; by them he being dead, yet speaketh; and what the gospel can do for men who really believe it, and feel the energy of the spirit of its divine author, has not been more illustriously displayed."

From Antioch he was hurried by his guards to Seleucia; sailing from thence he arrived at Smyrna. While the ship remained in port, he was allowed the pleasure of visiting Polycarp, who was bishop of Smyrna. They had been fellow disciples of St. John. The holy joy of their interview can be conceived only by those who have experienced what is the love and fellowship of the Spirit. There is a glow of affection and sympathy, running through their intercourse, and in Ignatius' epistles that looks as though christian love was a reality, and that christians were really members one of another. It was like the glowing epistles of the apostles to the churches, and the admonitions of the Saviour for his disciples to love one another. This seems remarkably the spirit of christians at this time. Deputies were sent from the various churches of Asia to attend and console him, and to receive benefit by his spiritual communications. From Smyrna four of the seven letters were written and sent by their deputies to the churches in Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles and Rome. Ephesus appears from his epistle to them to have maintained her character of evangelic purity, as when the apostle wrote to that church. Ignatius' address to this church is full of the same obnoxious doctrines as those of St. Paul. "Ignatius to the worthy and happy church in Ephesus of Asia, blessed in the majesty and fulness of the Father, predestinated before the world to be perpetually permanent in glory, immovable, united, and elect in the genuine suffering, by the will of the Father, and of Jesus Christ our God, much joy in Jesus Christ, and in his spotless grace." He speaks of Onesimus, their bishop, with rapture. He calls him "inexpressible in charity, whom I beseech you to love according to Jesus Christ, and all of you to imitate him. Blessed be his name, who has counted you worthy to enjoy such a bishop." With him he honorably mentions some presbyters or deacons.

He labours the point with earnestness to maintain love and union among themselves, and also to obey those that have rule over them, and submit themselves, that they may not grieve them, and render their labors unprofitable to themselves. This they would not do but by being clothed with humility, and abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ignatius distinctly speaks of three orders of teachers or rulers in the church. But as we purpose, if the Lord permit, more fully to speak on this subject, we will only here say there must be authority in the church and that authority obeyed, or all is confusion and every evil work: by pride cometh contention, but with the lowly is wisdom.

In conclusion to the Ephesian, he says: "Frequently assemble for thanksgiving and prayer; for when you assiduously attend to these things, the powers of Satan are demolished, and his pernicious kingdom is dissolved by the unanimity of your faith. Remember me as Jesus Christ does also you."

To the Magnesian church, he gives the following testimony of the Deity of Christ and to justification by his grace through faith, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, in opposition to Judaism, which, at that time, was continually infesting the church. He says: "Be not deceived with hetrodox opinions, nor old unprofitable fables; for if we still live according to Judaism, we confess that we have not received grace; for the divine prophets lived according to Jesus Christ. For this they were persecuted; being inspired by his grace to assure the disobedient, that there is one God, who manifested himself by Jesus Christ his son, who is his Eternal Word. If they, then, have cast off indeed the old state and are come to a new hope in Christ, let them no longer observe the Jewish sabbath, but live according to the life of the Lord, (the Lord's day) in which also our life rose again by himself and by his death, which some deny, by whom we have received the mystery of believing, and on account of this we endure, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher. How can we live without him, whose disciples even the prophets were, and in spirit expected as their Teacher. Let us not, then, be insensible of his loving kindness. For if he measure to us according to what we have done, we are ruined. Therefore being his disciples, let us learn to live according to christianity: for he who follows any other name than this, is not of God. Lay aside, then, the old bitter leaven, which is not of Jesus Christ: for christianity does not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity, that every tongue believing in, God might be gathered together. Of these things I warn you, my beloved, not because I have known some of you thus disposed, but as the least of you, I am willing to admonish you that ye fall not into the snares of vain glory; but that ye may be well assured of the nativity, suffering, and resurrection, during the government of Pontius Pilate, of which, literally, Jesus Christ was a subject, who is our hope, from which may none of you be turned aside. I know that ye are not puffed up: for ye have Jesus Christ in yourselves, and the more I praise you, the more I know ye are ashamed."

(Beautiful view of their genuine humility!)

"Study then to be confirmed in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles that in all things which ye do, ye may have good success in flesh and spirit, in faith and love, in the Son and the Father, and the Spirit; knowing that ye are full of God, I have briefly exhorted you. Remember me in your prayers, that I may come to God, and to the Church in Syria, of which I am unworthy to be called a member."

The primitive church believed in a literal abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ, as taught in the xv chap. of John, and through the Bible,—though it was spiritual union, yet a reality—a simple reliance on the merits of his blood for justification, and the power of his grace through the influence of the Holy Spirit to overcome evil, and bear fruit unto holiness. They really rejoiced in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh. They come out of themselves and believed that he was made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. They also believed in opposition to the speculations of the various heretics of those times, who would mystify the whole gospel. They believed that Jesus Christ was really man—really God—one person—that he really suffered for the sins of the world, and really rose from the dead for the justification of all those who believe.

What Ignatius says to the church at Tralles, which, it appears, had been lately planted, may, with much more propriety, be said of us and christians

in our day. After speaking of his attainments; that he had a strong "savor of God," he recalls it, as it may be an over estimate. He fears lest he perish by boasting, and being inflated with pride, he says:—"I love indeed to suffer, but do not know whether I am worthy; I need gentleness of spirit by which the prince of this world is dissolved, or I cannot write to you of heavenly things. But I fear lest I should hurt you, being infants. Excuse me, then, lest through incapacity of receiving, you be suffocated."

Who does not feel that they are infants in their experience—in that simple dwelling in Christ, walking in him, and in the intimate communion with him of whom Ignatius speaks. Shall we call it superstition, because it is beyond what we have seen and experienced? The world has been full of superstition, but not of this character. Superstition puffs up; but this spirit humbles, and makes men lowly and loving. Besides if this were superstition, then the prophets and apostles were superstitious.

Ignatius goes on to warn this church against schisms and heresies; that the foundation of the gospel is Christ and him crucified; he urges obedience to their pastors, and thus modestly concludes:—"As yet I am not out of the reach of danger, but the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ, to fulfil my petition and yours, in whom may we be found blameless."

The purport of his letters to Roman christians was to persuade them not to interfere to prevent his martyrdom. We will give a short quotation to show the ardor of his spiritual desires and his wish to depart.

"Pardon me; I know what is good for me. Now I begin to be a disciple, nor shall any thing move me, of things visible and invisible, that I may enjoy Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross, the companies of wild beasts, let the breaking of bones and the tearing of limbs, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of the devil come upon me; be it so, only may I enjoy Jesus Christ, all the kingdoms of the world will profit me nothing. It is better for me to die for Jesus Christ, than to reign over the ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us. Him I desire who rose again for us. He is my gain, laid up for me; suffer me to imitate the passion of my God. If any of you have him within you, let him conceive what I feel, and sympathise with me, knowing what a conflict I have. The prince of the world wishes to carry me away and corrupt my purpose towards God. Let none of you present assist him. My love is crucified, and there is no fire that loves water, or its own extinction, but living and speaking in me it says, come to the Father. I have no delight in the bread that perisheth, nor in the pleasures of this life. I long for the bread of God, the flesh of Jesus Christ, of the seed of David; and I desire to drink his blood incorruptible in love." If this were the spirit which animated martyrs, we may cease to wonder at the serenity, joyfulness and triumph with which they suffered and expired in the midst of tortures.

Milner says, "No words can express in a stronger manner the intense-ness of spiritual desire, and one may look down with contempt and pity on all the magnanimity of secular heroes and patriots, as compared with it. Yet he says he has some doubt whether all this flame, strong and sincere as it unquestionably was, had not something mixed with it by no means of so pure a kind. In his zeal for martyrdom, he thinks he was wrong to dissuade the Roman Christians from saving his life if by lawful means. "There is not a just man on earth who doeth good and sinneth not."

The four epistles which we have noticed were written from Smyrna. They now sailed for Troas. Providence so far restrained the inhumanity of the guards, that the messengers of the churches sent to salute him, were allowed free intercourse with him. From this place he wrote three other epistles, one to Philadelphia, which church retained the honorable character exhibited in the book of Revelation.

We may see the manner in which primitive christians enjoyed the grace of God, and admired and loved it as it appeared in one another, by his admiration of the Philadelphian Bishop, whose name is not given to us: "whom," he says, "I know not from himself nor by men to have obtained the ministry for the common good of saints, nor through vain glory, but in the love of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am perfectly charmed with his meekness: when silent he exhibits more power than vain talkers." He recommends them to preserve a unity in the administration of the Lord's Supper; "for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of his blood, one altar, as also one bishop, with the presbyters and deacons my fellow servants, that ye may do whatever ye do according to the will of God."

In his defense of the faith and zeal against self-righteousness, he says: "If any interpret Judaism to you, hear him not. For it is better to hear the gospel from a circumcised person, than Judaism from an uncircumcised one. But if both speak not Jesus Christ, they are to me pillars and sepulchres of the dead, on which are written only the names of men."

Having spoken of the ancients, he says, "the ancient things to me are Jesus Christ, the ancient things inaccessible to men, his cross, and death, and resurrection, and faith which is in him, in which I desire (through your prayers) to be justified."

He wrote also from Troas to the Smyrnians: and his commendations of them, says Milner, are consonant to the character they bear in the book of Revelations. They had weathered the storm of persecution which was there prophesied of, and had probably enjoyed the ministry of Polycarp from St. John's time. The most striking feature in this epistle is the zeal with which he warns them against the Decetæ. The evil of this heresy lay, in that it took away the atoning blood of Christ, and the hope of a blessed resurrection. In what lies the real glory of the christian religion, in Ignatius' views, cannot be misunderstood: "I glorify Jesus Christ our God, who hath given you wisdom, for I understand that you are partakers of the immovable faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was really of the seed of David according to the flesh: born of the Virgin, really, who really suffered under Pontius Pilate. For all these things he suffered for us, that we might be saved; and he truly suffered as also he truly raised up himself, not as some infidels say that he seemed to suffer, themselves only seeming to be, as they think it shall happen to them. I forewarn you of these beasts, who are in the shape of men, whom you ought not only not to receive, but if possible not even to meet with — only you ought to pray for them, if they may be converted, which is a difficult case. But Jesus Christ, our true life, has the power of this." It seems these heretics attempted to work themselves into the good graces of Ignatius. He sees through their designs, and says, "For what doth it profit me, if a man command me, and yet blasphemeth my Lord, denying him to have come in the flesh? They separate from the eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the

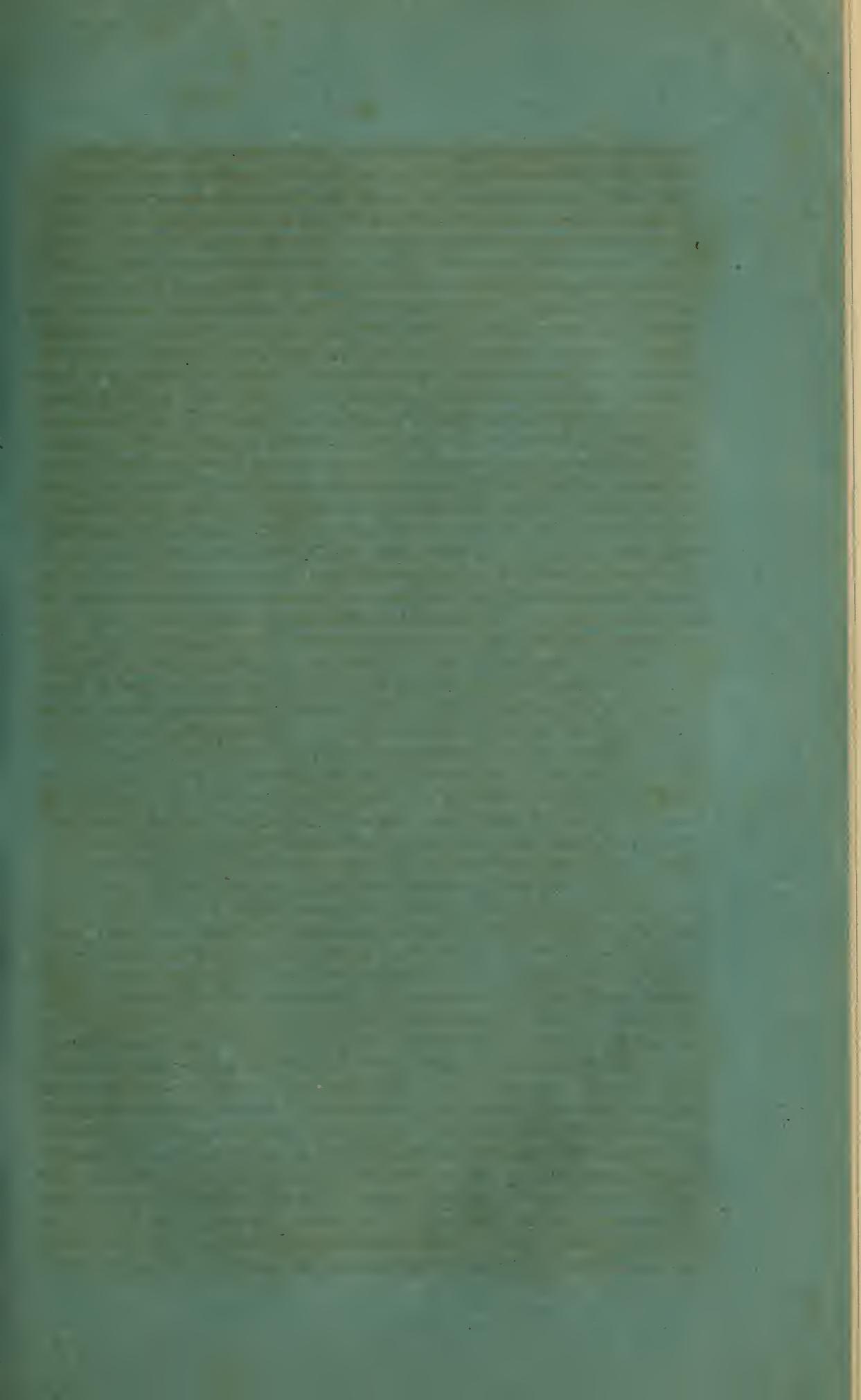
eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered for our sins. They who contradict the gift of God, die in their own reasonings."

One letter only remains to be mentioned — that to Polycarp. The whole of it, says Milner, deserves to be studied by all ministers:—

"I exhort thee, by the grace with which thou art clothed, to apply thyself to thy course, and to exhort all that they may be saved. Do justice to thy station in all diligence both temporal and spiritual. Be studious of the best of blessings — unity. Bear with all, as also the Lord doth with thee. Bear with all in charity, as thou also doest. Find time for prayer without ceasing. Ask for more understanding than thou hast at present. Watch, possessing a spirit ever attentive. Speak to each separately, according to the help of God. Bear with the diseases of all, as a perfect combatant. The more labor the more reward. If thou only be the obedient disciple, thou evidest no grace. Rather bring into orderly subjection the turbulent in meekness. Every wound is not cured by the same method of application. Watch as a divine wrestler: thy theme is immortality and eternal life. Let not those who seem experienced christians, and are yet unsound in the faith, stagger thee. Stand fast as an anvil continually struck. It is the character of a wrestler to be mangled, and yet to conquer. Be more studious than thou art. Consider the times, and expect *Him* who is above all time — who is unconnected with time — the invisible one made visible for us — the impossible but possible for us — who bore all sorts of sufferings for us. Let not widows be neglected: next to the Lord do thou take care of them. Let nothing be done without thy cognizance. Do thou nothing without the mind of God. Let assemblies be more frequently held. Seek out all by *name*. Despise not *slaves* of either sex; yet let them not be puffed up, but serve more faithfully to the glory of God, that they may obtain a better liberty from God. Let them not desire to be set at liberty at the charge of the church, lest they should be found slaves of lust. If any one remain in chastity for the honor of the Lord, let him do so, without boasting. If they boast they are lost: and if a man set himself above the bishop he is lost. It behooves the married to enter into that connection with the consent of the bishop, that their marriage may be after the will of God, and not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

For further account of Ignatius' travels and martyrdom, see Milner, 172, beginning "From Troas," 173 and 4 to the end of the chapter. Milner says, "I know not how the reader may conceive: but to my mind, under all the disadvantages of a style bloated with Asiatic tumors, (as our Anglo Saxon is by all kind of tumors in our times,) the ideas I have quoted, and the greatest part of the epistles is little inferior." He is here speaking of the epistle to the Ephesian church, which we have not quoted so fully; but we would apply it to all the epistles we have noticed. We see in them the charitable and heavenly mind of Ignatius, and in the commendation and counsel given to the churches, a fair pattern of real christianity, alive in its roots and in its fruits. We see here what christians once were, and what the doctrines of divine grace are, and oh! how it rebukes us. Where is that simple abiding in Christ and his word abiding in professed disciples? Do we not live in an apostate age? Are we not puffed up with our attainments and self-sufficiency?

We now enter the period of the first seal of Revelation: "And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat thereon had a bow; and a



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This is an experiment; and on the success of the first three numbers will determine whether the work will proceed.

No. III.

# GOD IN HISTORY:

OR THE

## ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS PURPOSES

AS DECLARED BY HIS SERVANTS

## THE PROPHETS,

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE

## CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. JABEZ B. HYDE,

First received Missionary among the Seneca Indians.

"SURELY THE LORD GOD WILL DO NOTHING, BUT HE REVEALETH HIS SECRET UNTO HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS;"—AMOS 3: 7.

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crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer." We need not here repeat that this prophesy could not have been published till near the close of the first or beginning of the second century, and was of things which should be hereafter; therefore, the success of the first preaching of the gospel by the apostles, could not be intended. But we must look for it afterwards. It was the first event which John saw.

As we have given the secular history of this period and shown that it was a time of unparalleled peace and prosperity to the Roman world, from A. D. 100 to 180, we shall not recur to it again. Milner after speaking of the persecutions of the church under Trajan, and the effects of his edicts in the early part of Adrian's reign, says: "In the mean time the gospel spread more and more. A number of apostolical persons demonstrated by their conduct, that the spirit which had influenced the apostles rested upon them. Filled with divine charity, they distributed their substance to the poor, and travelled into regions which, as yet, had not heard the sound of the gospel; and having planted the faith, they ordained other persons as pastors, committing to them the culture of the new ground, and passed themselves to other countries. Hence numbers, through grace, embraced the doctrines of salvation, at the first hearing, with much alacrity. It is natural to admire here the power of grace in the production of so pure and charitable a spirit, to contrast it with the illiberal selfishness too prevalent even among the best in our days, and to regret how little is done for the propagation of the gospel, through the world, by nations whose aids of commerce and navigation are so much superior to those enjoyed by the ancients. One advantage these christians possessed indeed which we have not. They were all one body, one church, of one name, and cordially loved one another as brethren. The attention to fundamentals, to real christianity, was not dissipated by schismatic peculiarities, nor was the body of Christ rent in pieces by factions."

In the foregoing we have followed Milner verbatim, who wrote some forty years since, in the infancy of missionary operations. But with all our advance in missionary effort; in two important particulars, we fall far short of these ancient missionaries. 1st. We lack their self-denying and devoted spirit. 2nd. In raising up laborers out of the converts to carry forward the work. We will only speak of what we have known among the Indians of our country. None acquainted with the facts, will, we think, venture to hope, in our present course, that we are so near, or that the prospect is so promising of raising up teachers among this people, to sustain the interests of religion as they were 190 years ago, in the time of Elliot, and his Indian bible. Had these zealous missionaries whom we have noticed, sent their young converts to Antioch, Alexandria or Athens, to receive a liberal education before they were allowed to preach, doubtless they would have experienced the same result that we have for two centuries. They would have returned spoiled.

The good men of our country seem to have departed from the primitive way, which was to put all their converts into catechetical schools to be taught christian doctrines and christian duties more perfectly—not in a foreign, but in their own native tongue. This would diffuse general intelligence, develope character, and bring out those capable of teaching and presiding over their brethren. As the Indians are shut out by the pride of caste from mingling in social intercourse with those who have wrested from

them their country, how urgent and imperative the call on our compassion and benevolence that we should impart to them the word of God in their own language, and nurse them up a christian and intelligent people in their own communities. And this might have been done with much less expense than what the foreign missionaries sustained among them have cost. And teachers raised up of their own people — men of capacity, understanding the word of God in their own tongue, and experiencing its power in their own hearts; with limited attainments at first, would, by applying themselves, be able to keep in advance of their people in knowledge — able to teach, and knowing the peculiarities of their people, would, with comparatively far less general knowledge, exceed foreign teachers, of high literary attainments,— be able to furnish their own ministers and send missionaries to other tribes — the most hopeful of missionaries to their brethren. But O! must another two centuries go on as the past, should the patience of God endure so long? We would gladly have spared these remarks had we not been persuaded that the interests of souls, and the honor of the gospel was concerned to an extent beyond what angels can conceive. But to return to Milner. He says: "There were indeed many heretics; but real christians admitted them not into their communities; the line of distinction was drawn with sufficient precision, and a dislike of the person or offices of Christ, and of the real spirit of holiness, discriminated the heretics; and separation from them, while it was undoubtedly the best mark of charity to their souls, tended to preserve the faith and love of true christians in genuine purity.

"Among these holy men Quadratus was much distinguished. He succeeded Publius in the bishopric of Athens, who suffered martyrdom either in this or the foregoing reign. He found the flock in a dispersed and confused state — their public assemblies were deserted — their zeal grown cold and languid, their lives and manners were corrupted, and they seemed likely to apostatize from christianity. Quadratus labored to recover them with much zeal and with equal success. Order and discipline were restored, and with them the holy flame of godliness. One of the strongest testimonies of these things, is the account which the famous Origen, (who lived some years after) in the second book of his treatise against Celsus, gives of the Athenian church. While this great man is demonstrating the admirable efficacy of christian faith, on the minds of men, he exemplifies his position by this very church of Athens, on account of its good order, constancy, meekness and quietness, infinitely superior to the common political assembly at Athens, which was factious and tumultuary, and no way to be compared with the christians in that city: he affirms that it was evident that the worst parts of the church were better than the best of their popular assemblies. This is a very pleasing testimony to the growth of christianity, since the time a handful of seed was sown there by St. Paul: and let the testimony of so penetrating and sagacious an observer as Origen, be considered as one of the many proofs that might be given of the happy effects which real christianity has on human society. To a mind not intoxicated with vain ideas of secular glory, the christian part of Athens must appear infinitely more respectable than that commonwealth ever had been in the meridian of its glory."

Such boldness, zeal, and faithfulness as seem to have distinguished the teachers and the church generally, and the success which crowned their

efforts, could not fail to stir up the enmity of the enemies of the gospel to acts of violence and blood. Adrian, at this time, had made no public declaration as to his line of policy towards his christian subjects. But he left in full force the edicts of Trajan, which left christians in the power of any disposed to injure and persecute them on the charge of being christians. And the magistrate was compelled by the edict to enforce the penalty of death, on any avowing or being convicted of christianity.

In the sixth year of his reign, Adrian came to Athens to be initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries. This prince was remarkably fond of Pagan institutions. This circumstance demonstrates a spirit foreign to christianity. The persecution proceeded with sanguinary vigour; when at length Quadratus presented an apology to the Emperor, defending the gospel from the calumnies of its enemies.

Aristides, a christian writer, at that time in Athens, addressed himself also to Adrian in an apology on the same subject. The good sense of the emperor at length was roused to do justice to his innocent subjects. The sound sense and equitable appeal of these writers to the emperor may be supposed to have had some effect on his mind. Yet a letter from Serenius Granianus, pro-consul of Asia, doubtless moved him still more. He wrote to the emperor that it seemed to him unreasonable, that the christians should be put to death, merely to gratify the demands of the people, without any crime proved against them. This appears the first instance of any Roman governor daring publicly to throw out ideas contradictory to Trajan's iniquitous maxims, which inflicted death on christians as such, abstracted from any moral guilt. And probably the severe sufferings of christians at this period, which appear to have been very great in Asia, were more owing to the active and sanguinary spirit of persecution itself, which, from Trajan's example was become fashionable, than to any explicit regard for his edicts. We have Adrian's rescript addressed to Minucius Fundanus, the successor of Granianus, whose government seems nearly to have expired when he wrote to the emperor.

To MINUCIUS FUNDANUS.—“I have received a letter written to me by the very illustrious Serenius Granianus, whom you have succeeded. To me, then, the affair seems by no means fit to be slightly passed over, that men may not be disturbed without cause, and that sycophants may not be encouraged in their odious practices. If the people of the province will appear publicly and make open charges against the christians, so as to give them an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamors. For it is much more proper if any will accuse them, that you should take cognizance of these matters. If any, then, accuse, and show that they commit any thing against the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime. But, by Hercules, if the charge be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of the offence, and punish it as it deserves.

It is clear that Adrian did not mean to make the conduct of his predecessor the model of his own, and we shall see in the next reign the equity of his views. It is but justice due to this emperor, to free his character from the charge of persecution; and christians of that or any age, could not object to the propriety of punishing them, equally with other men, if they violated the laws of the State. But it is the glory of the time we are now reviewing, that no men were more innocent, peaceable, and well dis-

posed citizens than they; but the enmity of men's minds against real godliness, so natural in all ages, laid them under extreme disadvantages, unknown to others, in vindicating themselves from unjust aspersions. This forms indeed one of the most painful crosses, which good men must endure in this life. One of these disadvantages was, there were many heretics wearing the name of christian, who were guilty of the most detestable enormities. These were indiscriminately charged by the pagans, on christians in general. This circumstance, in addition to other important reasons, rendered them careful in preserving the line of separation distinct: and by the excellency of their doctrine and the purity of their lives, they were enabled gradually to overcome all uncandid insinuations. They appear to have lived down calumny, and through the protection of those two excellent princes, Adrian and Pius, whom God raised up for their defence, (though they knew him not)—they were remarkably delivered from the malice of their enemies,—the gospel spread, and christians enjoyed in a good measure, for a season, the protection of law as other citizens.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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Insurrection of the Jews under the imposter Barchochobas—their awful Destruction—The effect on the Jewish church—Adrian succeeded by Antoninus Pius—The unsuccessful efforts of the pagans to stir him up to renew the persecution—The emperor's reply—Brief notice of the character of this prince—Remarks on Justin Martyr—His education and remarkable conversion—Marcus Antoninus succeeded Pius, after a reign of 23 years. Marcus was a proud philosopher. Gibbon says, “as a philosopher he despised the christians, and as a sovereign he punished them.” He was a bitter persecutor all his reign of 19 years.—Tertullian—His character and testimony to primitive christianity—Remarks on superstition.

We had prepared some general outlines of the plan, or the object aimed at in entering on a history of the church,

1st. To learn what she was in her primitive state, as to her doctrine and practice, as might be gathered from her earliest writers and incidents of her history.

2d. To notice the accomplishment of the religious feature of the First Seal, in the remarkable spread of the gospel, and the purity and protection of the church in the period referred to.

3d. The historical incidents, and extraordinary persons raised up, shedding light on the history of the church, and on the ways of God in accomplishing his purposes, and in administering his moral government.

4th. The testimony of enemies.

5th. The pagan persecutions, and the spirit with which christians endured them.

Something like this seemed to be needful to direct the eye to see God in History; and that those events which may appear isolated, all have their relative position and office in the wonderful machine of divine providence. Something like this was intended as introductory to Church History, and to have immediately followed the contents of the 7th chapter. Now, as the only expedient left us, we insert it here, belonging as above. The first two have been considered: i. e. the writings of the early fathers, and the religious features of the first seal. Again, on page 64, is an important omission. Ignatius is left on his journey to Rome for execution, without any account of what became of him, except a reference to Milner, which very probably few readers possess. It was not the intention of the author to have left it so: he has no excuse, however, but being taken off by sickness, or neglecting to provide beforehand for such an event. Further account of Ignatius we will insert here. We left him at Troas, from which place he seems to have gone on foot through Macedonia and part of Epirus, having found a ship in one of the sea-ports, his conductors sailed over the Adriatic, and from thence entered the Tuscan sea. The wind continuing favorable, in one day and night, says his friend who accompanied him, "we were unwillingly hurried on, as sorrowing to think of being separated from the martyr. But to him it happened according to his wish, that he might leave the world the sooner and depart to his Lord, whom he loved. Wherefore, sailing into the Roman port, and these impure sports being over, the soldiers began to be offended with his slowness, but the bishop joyfully complied with their hastiness." The port where they landed was Ostia, some miles from Rome, and here he was met by the Roman christians, who intimated their strong desire for his preservation, but Ignatius was inflexible. He was now brought to Rome and presented to the prefect of the city.

When he was led to execution he was attended by a number of the brethren, and was allowed to join in prayer with them. And he prayed to the Son of God in behalf of the churches, that he would put a stop to the persecution, and continue the love of the brethren toward each other. He was then led into the amphitheatre, and speedily thrown to the wild beasts. He had here, also, his wish. The beasts were his grave, a few bones only were left, which the deacons gathered carefully and preserved; and afterward buried them at Antioch.

The writers thus conclude, "We have made known to you both the day and the time, that being assembled together according to the time of this martyrdom, we may communicate with the magnanimous martyr of Christ, who trod under foot the devil, and completed the course which he had devoutly wished in Christ Jesus our Lord, by whom and with whom all glory and power be to the Father with the blessed Spirit for ever, amen." Here we find the first notice of saint days, or anniversaries held to commemorate, and communicate with departed martyrs. And we shall be astonished in a few centuries to find to what an enormous height this superstition grew, even to open and direct idolatry. Ignatius erred in judgment in his zeal and forwardness for martyrdom, which was contrary to the express command of Christ. His desire that the beasts might be his grave, might have arisen from an appearance of this veneration for martyrs of which honor he thought himself unworthy.

But to return to the subjects of the chapter. The same equitable rule of government which forbade Adrian to punish the christians, led him to be

very severe against the Jews; for now appeared Barchochebas, who pretended to be the star prophesied of by Balaam. This miserable people, who had rejected the true Christ, received the imposter with open arms; who led them into horrid crimes, and among the rest into a cruel persecution of the christians. (See Wilman's history of the Jews, vol. 3, p. 202.) Within the memory of some who witnessed the first destruction by Titus, came another mere sweeping to the remaining Jews—a destruction more complete through the whole land. Again more than half a million of that infatuated people perished by the sword, famine and pestilence, in a short time. The issue of the rebellion, was the entire exclusion of the Jews from the city and territory of Jerusalem. Another city was erected in its stead, and called after the emperor's name, Alia. We will here notice how the mother church of Jerusalem was affected by this great revolution. The christian Jews previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, had retired to Pella, a little town beyond Jordan, inhabited by Gentiles. The unexpected retreat of Cestius, had given them this opportunity of effecting their escape. They must however have returned before Adrian's time, who coming to Jerusalem forty-seven years after that event, found there a few houses and a little church of christians, built on Mount Sion. Here the church of Jerusalem kept their solemn assemblies, and seemed to have acquired a splendid accession by the conversion of Aquila, the emperor's kinsman, whom he made governor and overseer of the new city. But he, still pursuing his magic and astrological studies, was cast out of the church, strong proof that this church still retained a measure of its pristine purity and discipline. Corrupt churches are glad to retain persons of eminence in their communion, however void of the spirit of the gospel, (as we have abundantly seen in our days.) Aquila incensed, apostatised to Judaism, and translated the old Testament into Greek.

This church we shall again notice under the head of Persecutions. For the present we shall only speak of the revolution under Adrian, which at length put an end to the Jewish church by the extirpation and banishment of this people. A new church however arose in Alia, of the Gentiles, whose first bishop was Mark.

Adrian, after a reign of 21 years, was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, who appears to have been, at least in his own personal character and intentions, always guiltless of christian blood. It was difficult for the enemies of Christ to support a persecuting spirit, with any tolerably specious pretensions. The abominations of heretics, whom ignorance and malice will ever confound with real christians, furnished them with some excuse. Probably these were much exaggerated; but whatever they were, the whole christian name was accused of them. Incest and the devouring of infants were charged on them, and thus a handle was afforded for the barbarous treatment of the best of mankind; till time detected the slanders, and men became at length ashamed of pretending to believe, what was, in its own nature, improbable and supported by no evidence. It pleased God, at this time, to endow some christians with the power of defending his truth, by the manly arms of rational argumentation. Justin Martyr presented his first apology to the emperor Antoninus Pius about the third year of his reign, A. D. 140. He was one of those who, in those days, were called philosophers. His conversion, views, labors, spirit and sufferings we shall notice in their place. Suffice it here to say, that the information and arguments which his first

apology contained, were not in vain. Antoninus was a man of sense and humanity, open to conviction, uncorrupted by the vain and chimerical philosophy of the times, and desirous of doing justice to all mankind.

It will not be aside from our object to dwell longer on the character of this excellent prince, in this most blest period of the world, designated by the *white horse*. The pagans and enemies of the gospel were impatient in witnessing the peace, quietness and extending influence of christianity. Asia Propria was a scene of vital christianity, and of cruel persecution. Thence the christians applied to Antoninus, complaining of the many injuries which they sustained from the people of the country, who, it seems, laid to the charge of the christians, the earthquakes which had lately happened. The pagans were much terrified, and ascribed them to the vengeance of Heaven against the christians. Eusebius and Justin both give the edict of the emperor on the occasion, every line of which, says Milner, deserves our attention.

*The Emperor to the Common Council of Asia.*—“I am quite of an opinion, that the gods will take care to discover such persons. For it much more concerns them to punish those who refuse to worship them, than you, if they be able. But you harrass and vex them, and accuse them of Atheism and other crimes, which you can by no means prove. To them it appears an advantage, to die for their religion, and they gain their point, while they throw away their lives, rather than comply with your injunctions. As to the earthquakes, which have happened in past times, or lately, is it not proper to remind you of your own despondency when they happened; to desire you to compare your spirit with theirs, and observe how serenely they confide in God? In such seasons you seem to be ignorant of the gods, and neglect their worship, and you live in practical ignorance of the Supreme God himself, and you harrass and persecute to death those who do worship him. Concerning these men some others of the provincial governors wrote to our divine father (Adrian) to whom he returned answer, that they should not be molested, unless they appeared to attempt something against the Roman government. Many have signified to me concerning these men, to whom I have returned an answer agreeable to the maxims of my father. But if any will accuse any of them as such (as christians) let the accused be acquitted, though he appear to be a christian, and let the accuser be punished.

“Set up at Ephesus in the common assembly of Asia.” This was not an empty edict, but was really put in execution. Nor did this emperor content himself with one edict: he wrote to the same purport to the Larissians, the Thessalonians, the Athenians, and the Greeks.

As this prince reigned twenty-three years, such vigorous measures must, after some time at least, have had their effect; and we may conclude that during a greater part of this reign, the christians were permitted to worship God in peace. We will add a few remarks on the conduct of this prince.

1st. His tolerant spirit: “Not the most intelligent legislator in any age understood the natural rights of conscience better than Antoninus Pius. He saw that christians, as such, ought not to be punished. His subjects, bigoted and barbarous, were far from thinking so; and it was not until after repeated edicts and menaces that he forced them to cease from persecution.”

"In the conduct of this emperor, (says Milner,) one may see how far human nature may advance in moral virtue by its natural resources, while it remains destitute of the grace of God, and a real principle of holiness. If the advocates of natural morality, considered as abstracted from christianity, were to fix on a character the most able to support the weight of their cause, it would be their interest to put it into the hands of Antoninus Pius. He would defend it, not by pompous systems and declamatory flourishes, but by an amiable, generous and magnanimous conduct. I have been astonished at the character given of him. Doubtless, a more distinct and explicit detail of his life would lessen our admiration. We have not the advantages of knowing Antoninus as we do Socrates and Cicero: the former by the writings of his scholars, the latter by his own. Could this emperor be surveyed as accurately as these men, we might see serious defects; but as it is, he far eclipses them. Despotic power seems to have been in his hands only an instrument of doing good to mankind. His temper was mild and gentle in a high degree; yet the vigor of his government was as striking as if he had been of the most keen and irritable disposition. He took care of his subjects with so great diligence, that he attended to all persons and things, as if they had been his private property. Scarce any fault is ascribed to him, but that he carried his inquisitive temper to excess. Marcus, his successor, says of him, in his meditation, 'that he was religious without being superstitious, and that he was not superstitious in the worship of the gods.' We cannot, therefore, doubt but that he had an opportunity of knowing what christianity was. He knew something of it, and he approved the moral conduct of christians. He gave them the most honorable character; has no fear of them as disloyal and turbulent, and makes comparisons between the mand pagans to the advantage of the former. From an expression in the edict, 'if they be able,' one might suspect that he had very little internal respect for the gods. Were there no God, no divine providence, and no future state, the virtue of this man would, doubtless, be complete. But his case shows, that it is possible, by the united influence of good sense, good temper, favoring circumstances, a secret, restraining influence on the one hand, and an inciting influence on the other, for a man to be extremely beneficent to his fellow-creatures, without the least regard to his maker. Surely, were christianity and mere moral virtue the same thing, Antoninus ought to be called a christian. Yet it does not appear that he ever seriously studied the gospel. A skeptical carelessness and indifference, not unlike what we frequently meet with, seems to have possessed the mind of this amiable prince; and while he attended to the temporal good of mankind, and felicitated himself on his good actions, he seemed to forget that he had a soul accountable to the Supreme Being, and scarcely to think it possible that it should have any guilt to answer for before him—or of his indebtedness to God for what he possessed. The evil of such contempt of God, is what mankind are of all things the least inclined to discern; yet it is an evil of all others the most vehemently opposed, in scripture, under the several branches of idolatry, unbelief, self-righteousness and pride; and without a knowledge of it, and a humble sense of guilt on account of it, the very nature of the gospel cannot be understood. The conclusion resulting from this consideration is, that godliness is perfectly distinct from morality, which always flourishes indeed where godliness is, but is capable of a separate existence.

"The edict of this emperor is a valuable testimony in favor of the christians of that time, (about A. D. 161.) It appears that there were then a race of men devoted to the service of Christ, ready to die for his name, and on account of his religion, rather than renounce it; who exemplified the superior worth of that religion by a superior probity and innocence of manners, so as to appear the best of subjects in the opinion of an emperor of the highest candor, intelligence, and acute observation. They were not inferior to the best of the heathen in morality, and had, besides, what the emperor confesses their enemies were void of, a sincere spirit of reverence for the Supreme Being, an unaffected contempt for death, and that, to which stoicism pretends, a real serenity of mind under the most pressing dangers, and this grounded on an unshaken confidence in God. We see, hence, that the outpouring of the spirit of God, which began at the feast of Pentecost, was still continued. Christians were so in power, and not in name only but by the testimony of a heathen prince; and those who would substitute morality in the room of their religion, would do well to consider, that good morality itself knows of no support like that of christianity. This divine religion comprehends every possible good thing that can be found in all others, and has, over and above, its own peculiar virtues, and a fund of consolations and an energy of support under the prospect of death itself, and points out the only sure road to a blissful immortality."

**JUSTIN MARTYR.**—We have before noticed his apology to Pius. Some further account of him may throw further light on the ways of God, and the history of the church. We know not but with propriety it may be said of him, as the apostle Paul said of himself, "that he was separated from his mother's womb, and called by God's grace to be an apostle." God raised up and endowed Paul with all his capacity; separated and appointed him to be educated at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect law of the fathers. Paul became a master in the Jew's religion; he knew perfectly where their strength lay, and was fully prepared to meet them, and show the Jews how the whole of that dispensation was accomplished in the sacrifice of the Messiah. Justin was raised up and brought on the stage when philosophy was rife, and putting forth its highest claims, and had borrowed from christian ethics its finest ornaments, and not only its splendid theory, but it could show off some of the brightest characters (to human observation) formed in its schools; such as Antoninus Pius, whom we have been considering. At such a time Justin was brought forth, and taught after the most perfect masters of philosophy. He was the first of that class of men who embraced the gospel. His history is briefly as follows:—

He was born in Palestine, in what was the ancient city of Sichem. His father was a Gentile: probably one of the Greek colony transplanted there on the expulsion of the Jews: who gave his son a philosophic education. In his youth he travelled for the improvement of his understanding, and Alexandria offered him all the entertainment which an inquisitive mind could desire from fashionable studies. The stoics appeared to him at first the masters of happiness. He gave himself up to one of this sect, till he found he could learn nothing from him of the nature of God. At length his tutor told him that this was a knowledge by no means necessary. He next betook himself to a Peripatetic, (a follower of Aristotle,) whose anxious desire of settling the price of his instructions, convinced Justin that truth

did not dwell with him. A Pythagorean next engaged his attention, who requiring of him the previous knowledge of music, astronomy and geometry, dismissed him for the present, when he understood he was unfurnished with those studies. In much solicitude he applied himself to a Platonic philosopher, with a more plausible appearance of success, than from any of the foregoing. He gave himself to retirement. As he was walking near the sea, he was met by an aged person of a venerable appearance, whom he beheld with much attention. Do you know me? says he: when Justin answered in the negative, he asked him why he surveyed him with such attention? I wondered, says he, to find any person here. The stranger observed that he was waiting for some domestics; but what brought you here? says he. Justin professed his love of private meditation; the other hinted at the absurdity of mere speculation abstracted from practice; which gave occasion to Justin to express his ardent desire of knowing God, and to expatiate on the praises of philosophy. The stranger, by degrees, endeavoured to cure him of his ignorant admiration of Plato and Pythagoras, and to point out to him the writings of the Hebrew prophets, as being much more ancient than any of those called philosophers, and led him to some views of christianity, in its nature and in its evidences, adding, above all things, pray that the gates of light may be opened to thee, for they are not discernible, nor to be understood by all, except God and his Christ give to a man to understand. "The man having spoken and explained much more, left me," says Justin, "directing me to pursue these things, and I saw him no more. Immediately, a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets, and those men who are the friends of Christ, and weighing within myself his words, I found this to be the only true philosophy."

Justin never received or exercised any office in the church; and he still wore his philosophic garb, which might have been from his retaining too great an affection for the studies of his youth, or he supposed that by still wearing it he might be approached by Gentiles with greater freedom. He disputed and wrote against heretics, philosophers and Jews. On his examination at his trial, before his martyrdom, the judge asked in what place do you instruct your scholars. Justin mentioned the place where he dwelt, and told the judge, that he explained christianity to all who resorted to him. He appears from the first to be a warm hearted, zealous, active man. He shows in his writings the injustice and unreasonableness of charging on christians in general, the enormities said to perpetrated by heretics, with whom they had not the least communion. In his writings we find fresh proofs of the strong line of distinction kept up between christians and heretics. He observes the latter are fond of the name, and yet are not persecuted. There was nothing in their spirit and conduct to provoke persecution. He takes notice of the well known happy effects which the conduct of christians then had on mankind. "Many instances among us," he observes, "we have to show of powerful changes among men, of men being impressed by the sobriety and temperance of their neighbors, in favor of the gospel, or by observing the unexampled meekness of fellow travellers under cruel treatment, or the uncommon integrity and equity of those with whom they transacted business." We see, hence, fresh proofs of the continuance of vital religion in the time of Justin. A man calling

himself a christian, without any practical power of religion, would scarcely have been classed among the brethren.

Marcus Antoninus succeeded Antoninus Pius. He stands high among heathen moralists. He glorified in his philysophy as much as in his diadem; and wrote twelve books of meditations, a kind of moral science. The general administration of his government was firm yet equitable. Under him the Roman world continued its prosperity and quiet, except the christians, of whom he was a bitter persecutor during a reign of almost nineteen years. It was in his reign that Justin suffered martyrdom: and what immediately led to it was Justin's apology to that prince, detailing instances of gross injustice practiced on christians, which he saw was a dishonor to his government, and he would fain believe had not been authorized by him. "Conduct," he says, "unworthy of emperors, such as Pius the last, or Philosophs the present." But this, instead of moving Marcus to do justice to the suffering christians, caused Justin to be hurried among the victims, and he witnessed a good confession, worthy of the life he had lived. His apology and martyrdom are documents worthy of attention.

We have now arrived to the close of the great outpouring of the spirit, which beginning on the day of Pentecost, continued down in full vigor, till A. D. 150, perhaps 170, not without faults and many things amiss, and rebukable, as in the days of the apostles, yet in a good degree stable. We shall still find some excellent men mixed with light and shade, and the shade of a more deep and abiding character—the light still receding—with apparently few who were aware of the decline, or struggling for recovery, the body of professed christians departing further and further from the simplicity there is in Christ. How this was brought about we shall notice in its place.

In the meantime, we will introduce another witness of what the gospel was, in his time. The famous Tertulian, or Afrian bishop, who resided in Carthage. This famed city, once the scene of Carthaginian greatness, now in the second century, abounded with christians. How or by whom christianity was introduced, is uncertain. Tertulian is famous for the amount of his writings, which have been preserved—far more voluminous than any other of the early fathers. He lived in the latter part of the second and beginning of the third century. He is one of those characters who are mixed with light and shade, and sometimes the dark shade seems to predominate. Yet he bears honorable testimony of what christianity was in his time. He appears to have clear and sound views of the doctrine of the trinity in unity. "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." He speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as both God and man, son of man, and son of God, and called Jesus Christ. He speaks, also, of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He observes that this rule of faith had obtained from the beginning of the gospel, antecedent to any former heresies.

In his apology, says Milner, the eloquence and argumentative power of our author, appear most conspicuous. He refutes, in the usual manner, the stale heathen calumnies, of christians feeding on infants. The remarkable power of christians over demons, he states in the same manner as various other fathers have done. He appeals to the consciences of mankind, and a common practice even among idolaters founded on it, as proof of the unity of the Godhead. His description is remarkably striking: "What

God hath given," was an universal mode of speaking. In appealing to God, to say, "God sees it, and I recommend to God, and God will restore to me." A testimony of the soul, naturally in favor of christianity: "And when men seriously pronounce these words they look not to the capitol, but to heaven. For the soul knows the seat of the living God, whence it had its own origin."

A few further quotations will serve to show what real christianity does for man, and what still remained in the Afrian Church at that time. Even when superstition and voluntary humility had made fearful inroads, the relic of better days, and established habits remained.

Tertulian says, (in his apology to the emperor—most probably Severus,) " We pray for the safety of the emperors, to the eternal God—the true and the living God—whom emperors themselves would desire to be propitious to them above all others who are called gods. We, looking up to heaven with outstretched hands, because they are harmless; with naked heads, because we are not ashamed; without a prompter, because we pray from the heart; constantly pray for all emperors, that they may have a long life, a secure empire, a safe house, strong armies, a faithful senate, a well moralized people, a quiet state of the world, whatever Cæsar would wish for himself in his public or private capacity. I cannot solicit these things from any other, than from *Him* from whom I know, I shall obtain them, because he alone can do these things, and I am he, who may expect them from him, being his servant, and who worship him alone, and lose my life for his service. Thus, then, let the hoop pierce us, while our hands are stretched out to God; let crosses suspend us; let fires consume us; let swords pierce our breasts; let wild beasts trample on us. A praying christian is in a frame for enduring any thing. Act in this manner, ye generous rulers; kill the soul who supplicates God for the emperor. Were we disposed to return evil for evil, it were easy for us to revenge the injuries which we sustain. But God forbid that his people should vindicate themselves by human fire, or be reluctant to endure that by which their sincerity is evinced. Were we disposed to act the part, I will not say of secret assassins, but of open enemies, should we want forces and numbers? Are we not dispersed through the world? It is true, we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your places, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, councils, camps, courts, palaces, senate and forum. We leave you only your temples. To what war should we not be ready and well prepared, even though unequal in numbers, we who die with so much pleasure, were it not that our religion requires us rather to suffer death than to inflict it? Were we to make a general secession from your dominions, you would be astonished at your solitude."

" We are dead to all ideas of honor and dignity; nothing is more foreign to us than political concerns. The world is our republic."

" We are a body united in one bond of religion, discipline, and hope. We meet in our assemblies for prayer. We are compelled to have recourse to the divine oracles for caution and recollection on all occasions. We nourish our faith by the word of God; we erect our hope; we fix our confidence; we strengthen our discipline by repeatedly inculcating precepts, exhortations, corrections, and excommunications, when it is needful. This last, as being in the sight of God, is of great weight, and is a strong prejudice of the future judgment, if any behave in so scandalous a manner as

to be debarred from the holy communion. Those who preside among us are elderly persons, not distinguished for opulence, but worth of character. Every one pays into the public chest, once a month, or when he pleases, and according to his ability and inclination: for there is no compulsion. These are, as it were, the deposits of piety. Hence, we relieve and bury the needy; support orphans, and decrepid persons; those who have suffered shipwreck; and those who, for the Word of God, are condemned to the mines, or imprisonment. This very charity of ours has caused us to be noticed by some: see, say they, how they love one another." He afterwards takes notice of the readiness with which the christians paid the taxes to the government, in opposition to the spirit of fraud and deceit with which so many acted in these matters.

Here we have a precious relic of the purity, integrity, heavenly mindedness, and passiveness under injuries, for which the first christians were so justly renowned. The effect of the glorious effusion of the Divine Spirit, was the production of this meek and charitable conduct, and every evidence that can be desired is given to evince the truth of this account.

Tertulian was a stern, severe, harsh man: endured himself, and enjoined on others uncommanded austerities; yet his veracity was never called in question. And we have, also, the testimony—the confession of enemies to the same facts. This will be our next particular to consider.

But before entering on this, we will offer a few remarks on superstition, which has made inroads in the church even before this period—the last of the second or the beginning of the third century. Superstition and true religion can dwell together in the same persons and communities: that is, when superstition is only used as a means of grace, as voluntary sufferings to promote humility, or the relics of holy persons and things are used as means of more sensibly affecting the mind and deepening instruction, while the soul rests wholly on the merits of Jesus Christ, for justification only through faith in his blood. Such may be truly pious. But such appendages have ever been found dangerous expedients, and have resulted in either leading the soul to rest on these superstitious observances, or to believe as the Roman Catholics pretend, that the merits of Christ can reach the soul only through these channels. They say that the blood of Christ is deposited with the Pope, and can flow to other men only through the channels he hath ordained.

True religion and superstition may be found dwelling together. But true religion will not dwell with heresy. They are antipodes—irreconcileable antagonists where fundamental truth is concerned; for the belief and love of the truth are essential to salvation, and none are sanctified only through the truth. Where persons are not brought to see that they are saved wholly as lost sinners, through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus, they have no lot or portion in the salvation of the gospel.

We live in an advanced state of the world; the human mind is developing; "many are running to and fro and knowledge is increasing." Many also believe in an advancement of the church; that the present generation is not only far wiser, but better than any that preceded it. So we boast, and so it must be or we are most dangerously deceived.

None will dispute our attainments in scientific knowledge—the discovery of the power of steam, and its convertible application to facilitate every operation to which it is applied; and also our electric celerity.

But on which of these improvements do we find written "*Holiness to the Lord?*" Are not the general and primary improvements of these facilities consecrated to pamper the lusts and pride of men and hurry them with electric speed through the world without a moment for reflection? O, when shall they be holiness to the Lord? Doubtless in due time.

But as to our moral and religious attainments.—Should we measure ourselves by ourselves, we know who has declared we "are not wise." Suppose we should measure ourselves, as to our humble, self-denying, practical godliness, by those rustic, antique, superstitious Afrians? Shall we find occasion to glory over them, and glorify ourselves as rich, increased in goods, and in need of nothing? One thing seems to appear most evident that we live in a time of most sad delusion, or the religion of the Bible has been greatly changed from what it was at the beginning.

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## CHAPTER IX.

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Testimony of enemies—Story of Peregrinus—Pliny's letter to Trajan—Remarks on the letter—Lucian's testimony—Epictetus' testimony—Celsus' testimony—What may be inferred from it. Aristotle's testimony—Galen's testimony—Porphyry's testimony—What may be inferred from such a cloud of witnesses.

We will now proceed to adduce the testimony of enemies to the character of christians. We will begin with the story of Peregrinus, as told by Lucian the Satirist. This Lucian was as celebrated as a satirist as was Cicero as an orator. He seems to have aimed his satire at whatever came in his way. Gibbon complains that Lucian's satire of the gods, their worshippers and rites, furnished the christians with their best armor to oppose idolatry. This Peregrinus, the hero of the story was a real character, and an extraordinary man. Lucian says for his shameful crimes in his youth, he was near losing his life in Armenia and Asia. But he will not dwell on that, but says:—"There is none of you but know that being chagrined that his father was still alive after being turned sixty, he strangled him. For this he was obliged to flee, and wandered about in divers countries, to conceal the place of his retreat, till, upon coming into Judea, he learnt the admirable doctrine of the christians, by conversing with their priests and teachers. In a little time he shewed them that they were but children compared to him, for he became not only a prophet, but the head of the congregation; in a word he was everything to them; he explained their books and composed some himself; inasmuch that they spoke of him as a god, and considered him as their law-giver and ruler. However these people adore that Great Person, who was crucified in Palestine, as being the first who taught them that religion. While these things were going on Peregrinus was apprehended and put in prison on account of his being a christian. This disgrace loaded him with honor, the very thing he ardently desired,—made him more reputable among those of that persuasion, and furnished him with the power of performing

wonders. The christians grievously afflicted at his confinement used their utmost endeavors to procure his liberty, and as they saw they could not compass it, they provided abundantly for all his wants, and rendered him all imaginable services. There was seen by break of day, at the prison gate a company of old women, widows, and orphans, some of whom, after having corrupted the guards, with money, passed the night with him. There they partook together of elegant repasts, and entertained one another with religious discourse. They called that excellent man the new Socrates. Then came even christians deputed from many cities of Asia, to converse with him, to comfort him, and bring him supplies of money; for the love and diligence which the christians exert in these junctures is incredible; they spare nothing in these cases. They sent therefore large sums of money to Peregrinus, and his confinement was to him an accession of amassing great riches; for these poor creatures are firmly persuaded they shall one day enjoy immortal life; therefore they despise death with wonderful courage, and offer themselves voluntarily to punishment. The first lawgiver has put it into their heads that they are all brethren. Since they separated from us, they persevere in rejecting the gods of the Grecians, and worshiping that deceiver, who was crucified; they regulate their manners and conduct by his laws; they despise, therefore, all earthly possessions, and enjoy them in common. Therefore if any magician or juggler, any cunning fellow who knows how to make his advantage, happens to get into their society, he immediately grows rich; because it is easy for a man of this sort to abuse the simplicity of these silly people. However Peregrinus was set at liberty by the president of Syria, who was a lover of philosophy and its professors and who having perceived that this man courted death, out of vanity and fondness for renown, released him, despising him too much to have a desire of inflicting capital punishment on him. Peregrinus returned to his own country, and as some were inclined to prosecute him on account of his paricide, he gave all his wealth to his fellow citizens, who being gained by his liberality, imposed silence on his accusers. He left his country a second time to travel, reckoning he should find everything he wanted in the purses of the christians, who were punctual in accompanying him wherever he went, and supplying him with all things in abundance. He subsisted in this manner for some time, but having done something which the christians abhor—they saw him I think, make use of some meats forbidden among them—he was abandoned by them.

"The native place of this extraordinary man, was Parium, in Mysia. After his renunciation of christianity he assumed the character of a philosopher. In that light he is mentioned by several heathen authors; and this part he acted till the time of his death, when in his old age he threw himself into the flames, probably because suicide was honorable in the eyes of the Gentiles, and because Empedocles, a philosopher, had thrown himself into the volcano at Mount *Ætna*."

The point of the satire is solely directed against the the weakness of this confiding people, that they should be imposed upon by this artful accomplished villain, of extraordinary attainments in duplicity. Such characters have not been unfrequent in our world. The characters that Lucian would hold up to ridicule, were a company of benevolent, warm-hearted people, believing Peregrinus to be what he pretended to be—a brother suffering for righteousness' sake, and they flew to his relief, and comforted

him in his affliction and were not weary in well doing. These are the persons worthy to hold be up as objects of ridicule, and why? Because an artful, wicked man had been successful in imposing on a company of such generous, warm-hearted, confiding people, as he represents the christians to be.

Doubtless christians of our day, are too knowing and prudent, look too well to their own things, to be drawn in to make such sacrifices. But after all the mortification of being imposed upon, which course would a christian look back upon with most approbation, his having through fear of imposition, left a brother or fellow being to real suffering, or having relieved one, who, in the end, proved an impostor?

But the direct testimony of Lucian to the excellent character of christians.—If the followers of Jesus were more solicitous in guarding against that species of delusion which is the most fatal—the delusion of man's own heart—if they had learned to spare their neighbors' motes, and feel their own beams, and from such a spirit were exposed to the snares of designing men, the thing is surely to their honor, rather than disgrace. As for the rest, their liberality, their zeal, their compassion, their brotherly love, their fortitude, their heavenly mindedness, are confessed in all this narrative, to have been exceedingly great. Who but rejoices to hear from the mouth of an enemy such testimony to the character of christians? Tertulian's account is not more flattering. He might be suspected of partiality to his brethren and party; but Lucian is clear from this. Milner says of Lucian's account of christians, that taken in all its circumstances, it is the best he had met with in the second century. Christians, then, must at least have been, in morals, much superior to the rest of mankind. And while we may glory over their credulity, let us see to it that we bear the fruit, so conspicuous in these honest hearted christians.

This Lucian was an epicurean, as full of wit as of profaneness. His dialogues, says Milner, abound in sarcastic insinuations against the fashionable idolatry. He did not know that he was co-operating with christians in subverting the abominations which had subsisted for ages. His writings were doubtless of use in this respect, yet nothing was further from his thoughts.

There is a diaiogue called Philopatris ascribed to Lucian, but some who possess means of examining the subject, judge it of later date, it ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity, “*One in three, three in one—the most high God, Son of the Father, the Spirit proceeding from the Father.*” Such are the expressions in the dialogue. He speaks of a beggarly, sorrowful company of people:—some of them pass ten whole days without eating, and they spend whole nights in singing hymns. We see in all this, the language of an enemy, describing men of holy lives and mortified affections, worshipping the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and elevated in their desires and spirit above the world—real christians.

We will now turn back to Pliny's letter to Trajan, A. D. 106, or 107, the earliest testimony of an enemy in favour in favor of christians—what they were in his day. Pliny was appointed governor of Bithynia, where Peter's labors were abundantly blessed to the circumcision. Bithynia is one of the places named in his epistles. The moral character of Pliny, is one of the best in all Pagan antiquity: among his duties as governor, one was to carry out the persecuting edicts of Trajan against the christians. In the prosecution of this branch of his duty, he was perplexed—which occasioned this letter to Trajan, and Trajan's answer. Both are important documents, and

worth transcribing at length: but as we have seen them in print more frequently than any other article of church history, we shall only give extracts with remarks.

1st. Pliny acknowledges his ignorance of the subject of christianity—"he had never been present at any examination of christians.

2d. He was ignorant "of the object either of the inquiry or punishment, and to what length either of them was to be carried—whether any distinction should be made between the young and the old, the tender and the robust; whether any room should be given for repentance; or could not the guilt of christianity once incurred be expiated by the most unequivocal retraction: whether the name itself, abstracted from any flagitiousness of conduct, or the crime connected with the name, be the object of punishment." He then informed the emperor how he had proceeded, with respect to those who had been brought before him as christians. "I asked them whether they were christians; if they plead guilty, I interrogated them afresh, with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed. For of this I had no doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that sullen and obstinate inflexibility, called for the vengeance of the magistrate. Some there were infected with this madness, whom on account of their privilege of Roman citizens, I reserved to be sent to Rome to be referred to your tribuual."

Then he informs the emperor of the multitudes that were complained of and reported to his tribunal, some of whom denied that they were or ever had been christians; others confessed that they had been, but had now left them, some for a longer, and others a shorter time: these were required to repeat an invocation to the gods, and to the emperor's image—perform sacred rites to the image with wine and frankincense and execrate Christ; none of which things, I am told, (says he) a real christian can ever be compelled to do. On this account I dismissed them. And this business was continually increasing on his hands. He made enquiries of those who owned they had been christians, but from their account he could not determine whether it deserved the name of crime or error. Those who had renounced christianity, affirmed that they were accustomed to meet on a stated day (the Lord's day, no doubt) before daylight, and to repeat among themselves, a hymn to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by an oath not to commit any wickedness; to abstain from theft, robberies and adulteries; not to violate any promise or deny any pledge. After which, it was their custom to separate, and meet again at a promiscuous, harmless meal, from which last they yet desisted, after the publication of my edict, (says Pliny,) in which, agreeably to your orders, I forbade any societies."

This was the meagre account Pliny obtained from those recreants, who said that they had been christians, but had left them from some five to twenty years before. It seems strange, when their own reputation required some justifiable reason for leaving the christians, as well to ingratiate themselves with their new master, who was troubled to find a good cause for putting christians to death, it is strange that they could not find something in them which might have been tortured to their disadvantage. The lives of christians at that time, must have been singularly holy and harmless. From this account there can be but little doubt that the christians met on this stated day, (the Lord's day) for prayer and praise. They say they worshipped Christ as God. After this morning service, they separated and

met again for more public worship, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which was the practice in the primitive church every Lord's day. And the christians were under solemn covenant to God and one another, not to do any iniquity. And Pliny testifies to their submission to authority, by desisting from public worship when commanded by the emperor's edict.

Pliny was not satisfied with the account of these recreants. Something, he imagined, deep and dark was left hidden. "On which account," he says, "I judged it more necessary to enquire by torture from two females, who were said to be deaconesses, *what is the real truth?*" But nothing could I collect, except a depraved and excessive superstition. Deferring, therefore, any further investigation, I determined to consult you. For the number of culprits is so great, as to call for serious consultation. For many are informed against of every age and of both sexes, and more still will be in the same situation. For the contagion of the superstition hath spread not only through cities, but even villages and the country. Not that I think it impossible to check and correct it. The success of my endeavors hitherto, forbids such desponding thoughts; for the temples, once almost desolate, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, which had been long intermitted, are now attended afresh; and the sacrificial victims are now sold everywhere, which once could scarce find a purchaser. Hence I conclude that many might be reclaimed, were the hope of impunity absolutely confirmed."

The following facts, then, are clearly established:—

- 1st. Christians worshiped Christ as God.
- 2d. Their lives were so singularly holy and harmless, that those who had walked with them in all the intimacy of brethren, and whose character would need something to justify their conduct in separating from them, could yet find nothing which could be tortured to their disadvantage.

Pliny earnestly sought, yet could find no reason why christians should suffer at all; but their fidelity to Christ, they would not deny, nor execrate him to save their lives. This he calls *sullen, obstinate inflexibility*. Under the excitement of these harsh epithets, he could strengthen his arm to the bloody deeds. Not a word of sedition, turbulence, or resisting authority; but all is passiveness—no rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing. If there had been a shade of such an appearance, Pliny would have hailed it with delight, and transmitted it to his master, and it would have been echoed by every infidel to this day. From the two poor women whom Pliny tortured, he could obtain nothing, except a '*depraved, excessive superstition.*' O Pliny! amiable Pliny! What is man in his best estate but vanity and a lie. To sustain himself with himself, and to Trajan, his master, poor Pliny has no refuge but in accusing epithets: of "depraved and excessive superstition." Why could he not have given his master some of the items? Must not christians be men of another spirit than the rest of the world, even the most amiable?

3d. We learn the success and prevalence of the gospel at this period. We see, also, in the numbers, purity and steadfastness of the great body of the Christians in Bithynia and the region around them, the fruit or effect of that *divine power*, which wrought effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the circumcision; the same that was mighty in Paul towards the Gentiles.

4th. We learn the necessity and benefits of persecution, to expose and cast out stony-ground hearers, and hollow-hearted professors.

An inquiry may urge itself upon us, how long the church, in its present state, can continue without persecution; and who will stand when it shall break upon us?

We will introduce further testimony of enemies. In every age they have agreed, almost to a man, in using no other weapons than ridicule. Professed sophists and satirists exhibited and ridiculed things which the christians believed and practiced.

Epictetus, who lived in the 2d century, says, among other things: "These Galileans are indifferent to sufferings from madness or from habit."

A good witness of christian's fortitude and patience under suffering.

Celsus, who wrote the latter part of the 2d century, says: "The Saviour learned his miraculous arts in Egypt, and for these miracles declared himself God."

"The apostles were infamous men, publicans and abandoned mariners. You christians say that God was sent to sinners, but why not to those who are free from sin? What harm is it not to have sinned?"

"You encourage sinners, because you are not able to persuade any really good men; therefore you open the doors to the most wicked and abandoned."

"Some of them say, do not examine, but believe, and thy faith shall save thee." He reminds the christians "that the disciples who were the best acquainted with their Master, when he was apprehended as a criminal, had no notion of dying with him, but denied him, and fled—they did not despise suffering, but now you die with him."

"He persuaded only twelve abandoned sailors and publicans, and not all of these."

"He frequently upbraids christians for reckoning him who had a mortal body to be God; and looking on themselves as pious on that account."

In other mysteries of religion he says, "the crier says, 'whoever has clean hands, a good conscience, and a good life, let him come in.' But let us hear whom they call: Whosoever is a sinner, a fool, an infant, a lost wretch, the kingdom of God will receive him; but a just man, who has proceeded in a course of virtue, from the beginning, if he look up to Him he will not be received."

These are but a small specimen of the bitter, sarcastic remarks of Celsus against Christians. Yet in his caricature are clearly discernible some genuine features of the Gospel. And what he saw stirred up the venom of his heart against a persecuted, unoffending people.

1st. We see that there was at that time a singular sect of people, sufficiently numerous; and of consequence enough to provoke such men as Celsus; that they were defenceless, and might be hunted down at pleasure, by violence or calumny. All this they bore with patience; not a word of their turbulence or sedition in all his writings or in any of the writings of their enemies. Like Daniel, their enemies "could find occasion or fault in them, except concerning the law of their God." Had there been any fault in their walk, these vigilant enemies would not have failed to bring it out and expose it.

2d. It could not be the doctrine of common morality which the Christians taught. Celsus owns that they taught it, but says the philosophers taught it better.

3d. They taught the fallen, sinful state of man by nature—"there is none that doeth good, no not one."

4th. That salvation was of grace, through faith.

5th. They preached repentance and remission of sins to all men, for all men needed repentance and to have their sins remitted. And they invited the chief of sinners to come and accept the salvation of the Gospel through the name of Jesus.

6th. Christians worshipped *Him* as God, who was crucified.

7th. Christians patiently and cheerfully suffered and died for their religion when called to it.

These features of christianity we think are distinctly marked in Celsus' caricature.

Aristides, the sophist, speaks of those in his day, "not unlike the impious people of Palestine, for they acknowledge not the Gods; they differ from the Greeks and all good men; dexterous in subverting houses and disturbing families; contributing nothing to public festivals, but dwelling in corners—they are wonderful wise."

Here is testimony to the singular abstinence of christians from the reigning vices and follies of the times; and their steady adherence to the worship of the one living and true God, and their labors to persuade their fellow men to forsake their idols and turn to Him; and also that their labors were not in vain, and the effect was what the Saviour had declared it would be—it raised up opposition and caused divisions.

Galen, the famous physician, gives testimony to the firmness and perseverance of christians, that all other sorts and sects of men were more easily persuaded to renounce their opinions than they.

Porphyry is the last we shall notice of these unwilling *witnesses for the Gospel*. He lived in the last of the third century. He justly blames Origen for his fanciful mode of interpreting the scriptures. He accuses him that he learned his allegorical method of explaining the scriptures from the philosophers, in explaining the Greek mysteries, which he says, truly, is unsuitable to explaining the scriptures. He notices the censure St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, has left on Peter. This engaged his attention, and from this he framed an argument against the whole of their religion. Peter's 2d epistle might have satisfied him. It shows, however, the excellency of christian character and their consistency of conduct, when their adversaries must resort to such frivolous objections to find occasion against them or their religion.

On account of an epidemical disorder raging in a certain city, Porphyry observes: "Men wonder now that distempers have seized the city so many years, *Æsculapius* and the other gods no longer dwelling among them; for since Jesus was honored, no one has received any public benefit from the gods."

Good testimony to the progress of christianity in his day. Malevolence confesses, while she complains.

"Matrons and women," says Porphyry, "compose the Senate. They rule the churches, and the priestly order is disposed of according to their good pleasure." The falsity of this is notorious; but the testimony to the piety of women is perfectly agreeable to the accounts of the New Testament, and the history of all revivals of godliness in every age, in none of which women had the government, in all by their piety, a great personal concern. "There is neither male nor female, but *ye are one in Christ Jesus.*"

One passage more of Porphyry. He says: "A person asked Apollo how to make his wife renounce christianity? It is easier, perhaps, replied the oracle, to write on water, or to fly in the air, than to reclaim her. Leave her to her folly—to hymn in a faint, mournful voice, the dead God, who publicly suffered death from judges of singular wisdom."

"This story is a memorable testimony of the constancy of christians, and also that they were accustomed to worship Jesus as God, and that they were not ashamed of this, notwithstanding the ignominy of his cross. The testimony given here to the singular wisdom of Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate, will not be so readily admitted."

Here we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses—friends and enemies, both agreeing as to the general facts of the existence of christianity in the first three centuries, but widely differing as to its character and tendency.

Those who so believe the gospel as that it becomes a practical principle with them, believe that men are fallen, and dead in trespasses and sins, and are recovered and made spiritually alive only through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus. Christians believe, as their enemies affirm, that Jesus Christ is God, and they worship *Him* as God who was crucified; they believe, also, that he is man; that he assumed the nature of a man; was born of a woman; as a man grew in knowledge and stature; was very God and very man—the Son of God—the Son of Man—one person. He became man that he might be the brother and mediator of his people, when he made his soul an offering for sin—that through his sacrifice and mediation, repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. And also there is no forgiveness or salvation from sin and wrath to come but through faith in his blood. This was acknowledged on both sides to be what the christians believed and taught. And for this their enemies mocked, ridiculed, reviled, persecuted and put to death countless multitudes, by all conceivable tortures, for no other offence than for simply believing and affirming that they and all men were sinners, and that none could obtain forgiveness only through repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They also affirmed that the idols of the heathens were not Gods, but vanity and a lie. On the part of the professed christians were meekness, harmlessness, passiveness, patience and joyfulness under suffering. To their adversaries belonged the invention of torture, and exulting in the agonies they inflicted and witnessed. But this we shall see to better advantage when we treat of persecution. Now if there is any religious or moral truth in the universe of God, it is on one side or other of this question. One is from above; the other from beneath. Judge ye.

We should notice the remarkable sameness of thought, expression and manner of the opposers of the Gospel for the last sixteen hundred years. It is remarkable that in such a variety of talent and circumstances there should be found so little originality.

## C H A P T E R X.

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First persecution at Jerusalem—Martyrdom of James I.—Also of James II.—Hegissippus's and Josephus's account—Church at Jerusalem—Nero's Persecution—Tacitus's account—Milner and Gibbon agree—Destruction of Jerusalem—Church at Pella—Persecution of Domitian, only from Pagan writers—Account of Milner and Gibbon agree—Trajan's persecution—Pliny's letter—Gibbon's apology.

**PERSECUTIONS.**—Nothing so tests character, as trials, exposure to danger and suffering. Many who appear fair and promise much in the sunshine of prosperity, in times of adversity, when dangers threaten and sacrifices are called for, soon shew their hollow heartedness—that all their fair pretensions were deception, and that they have no root or soundness of principle in them. In nothing else is the gospel more clearly demonstrated to be divine, and a real and abiding principle in the heart of the true disciple, than his conduct under persecution. Millions in the furnace of persecution have witnessed that their love to Christ and his cause was not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth, and have well sustained the confident appeal of the Apostle.—Rom. VIII. 35, 39. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or peril, or nakedness, or sword?” “Nay,” he says, “in all things we are more than conquerors, through Him that hath loved us.” See to end of chapter. Martyrs have well sustained the appeal. And nothing like persecution shews the genuine character of true religion and its contrast with the spirit of the world, and the opposite spirit of the combatants in that war in heaven spoken of by John. Here we see the principles of the parties carried out to their legitimate results, and also to the weapons brought into the field. From the bible we learn that the church was early called to endure persecutions. At Jerusalem, and wherever the Gospel was successfully preached, christians were exposed to tumult and popular outbreaks. Yet persecution was not commanded or authorized by the Roman government, (the red dragon,) until the time of Nero, from A. D. 64 to 68, and he did not persecute christians as christians, but as incendiaries, accusing them of burning Rome, to turn off the public odium from himself, who was justly suspected of the deed. This we shall notice in its place.

We shall now enter directly on giving a regular succession of the prominent persecutions as they occur in order of time, giving sufficient details to shew the spirit and conduct of the two parties.

The first of the Apostles who suffered martyrdom was James, the son of Zebedee. It appears that Herod sacrificed him to ingratiate himself with the Jews. The following incident is related by Hegissippus, an historian of that time. He relates that the man who had drawn James before the tribunal, when he saw the readiness with which he submitted to martyrdom, was struck with remorse, and by one of those sudden conversions not

unfrequent amidst remarkable outpourings of the spirit, was himself turned from the power of Satan unto God, and confessed Christ with great cheerfulness. They were both led to execution. In the way the accuser desired the forgiveness of the Apostle, which was readily obtained. James turning to him, answered, Peace be to thee, and kissed him, and they were beheaded together. The efficacy of divine grace, and the blessed fruit of holy example, are both illustrated in this story.

Almost on the first preaching of the gospel, the spirit of persecution was stirred, but did not proceed to blood till Stephen, who was the first martyr, and his martyrology is given in the bible. In the beginning of the 8th chapter of Acts, we read, "And Saul was consenting to his death. At that time there was a great persecution of the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea, and Samaria, except the apostles. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church; entering into every house and halting men and women, committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."

We are not informed with what spirit the victims sustained their sufferings, but we can have no doubt but it was in a manner honorable to the gospel. The spirit shown by those who were not arrested, shews the excellent state the church was in. "They went every where preaching the word." And the adorable Providence should not be overlooked in overruling the malice of the enemies of the church to the wide-spreading of the gospel—in urging on the servants of Christ to go about, fulfilling their commission to "preach the gospel to every creature."

The other James was preserved in Judea to a much later period. His martyrdom took place about the year 62. His epistle was published a little before his death. As he always resided in Jerusalem, and was providentially preserved through various persecutions, he had an opportunity of overcoming enmity itself, and abating prejudice in some measure. The name of Just was generally given him, on account of his singular innocence and integrity; and as he conformed to Jewish customs with more than occasional regularity, he was by no means so odious in the eyes of his countrymen as the apostle to the Gentiles. But could he have fully overcome their enmity, he could not have been faithful to Christ. Many of the Jews respected the man, and admired the fruits of the gospel in him. The root and principle was still their abhorrence. Paul's escape from Jewish malice by appealing to Cæsar had sharpened the spirits of this people, and they were determined to wreak their vengeance on James; who was merely a Jew, and could plead no Roman exemption. Festus, pro-consul of Judea, dying before his successor Albinus arrived, Ananias, the high priest, a Sadducee, and a merciless persecutor, held the supreme power in the interim. He called a council, before which he brought James and some others, and accused them of breaking the law of Moses. But it was not easy to procure his condemnation. His holy life had long obtained the veneration of his countrymen.

The great men were uneasy on account of the vast increase of christian converts by his means, and endeavored to entangle him, by persuading him to mount the pinnacle of the temple, and to speak to the people assembled at the time of the passover, and declare his position. James being placed aloft, delivered a frank confession of Jesus, as then sitting at

the right hand of power, and who should come in the clouds of heaven. Upon this Ananias and the rulers were highly incensed. To disgrace his character was their first intention—this had failed. To murder his person was the next—and the attempt was of easy execution. Crying out that Justus himself was seduced, they threw him down and stoned him. The apostle had strength to fall on his knees and to pray, “I beseech the Lord God and Father for them; for they know not what they do.” One of the priests moved with the scene, cried out, “Cease! what do you mean, he is praying for us?” A person present with a fuller’s club beat out his brains, and completed his martyrdom.

The author before named gives this account, which well agrees with Josephus’s account of the worthy character of James. “These things,” says he (the miseries of the Jews), “happened to them by way of avenging the death of James the Just, the brother of Jesus whom they call Christ. For the Jews slew him though a very just man.” And from the same writer we learn that Albinus severely reprimanded Ananias, and soon after deprived him of the high-priesthood.

After the death of James, and the desolation of Jerusalem, the apostles and disciples of our Lord, of whom there were many yet alive, gathered themselves together with our Lord’s kinsman, to appoint a pastor of the church of Jerusalem in the room of James. The election fell on Simeon, the son of Cleophas, mentioned by St. Luke as one of the two who went to Emmaus, who was the brother of Joseph, our Lord’s reputed father. We shall leave Simeon, the chief pastor of the Jewish church at the end of the first century.

We know from the declaration of our Lord, that the last sign before Jerusalem was surrounded by armies, was a fearful apostacy of many, and a sore persecution; but we know of no martyrology of that insurrectionary, tumultuous time.

The next persecution was that of Nero. This was the first direct persecution by Roman authority—the first onset of the red dragon. This, as before noticed, was not directed against christians as such; but the tyrant would turn off the odium of burning Rome from himself and fix it on them. There is no martyrology of this persecution. We are indebted to the judicious and moral historian, Tacitus, for our information, which in substance is as follows:

It was about the year A. D. 64 that the city of Rome sustained a general conflagration. The emperor Nero, lost as he was to all sense of reputation, and hacknied in flagitiousness, was studious to avert the infamy of being reckoned the author of this calamity, which was generally imputed to him. There was, however, a particular sect of people, so singularly distinct from the rest of mankind, and so much hated on account of the condemnation which their doctrines and purity of life affixed to all but themselves, that they might be calumniated with impunity. These were then known at Rome by the name of “christians.” Unless we transplant ourselves into those times, we can scarcely conceive how odious and contemptible was the appellation. Tacitus calls their religion “a detestable superstition, which was at first suppressed, and afterward brake out afresh, and spread not only in Judea, the origin of the evil, but through the metropolis, also the common sewer in which every thing filthy and flagitious meets and spreads.” If such a grave, cautious writer as Tacitus

can thus asperse christians without proof and without moderation, what might not be expected from such an abandoned man as Nero! And why should he hesitate to charge them with the fact of burning Rome? But there is no new thing under the sun. It is a fact that philosophers and moralists, both ancient and modern, who glory in their goodness and attainments have not been behind the most abandoned in reviling christianity; and their weapons have been the same, scurrility, sharpened by wit and learning.

It was now that the *red dragon* persecuted the church for the first time. And those who know man's natural enmity, will rather wonder that it commenced not earlier, than that it raged at length with such dreadful fury. "Some persons were apprehended who confessed themselves christians, (says Tacitus) and by their evidence, a great multitude afterwards; and they were condemned, not so much for burning Rome, as for being the enemies of mankind!" A declaration worthy of a philosopher. True christians, though the friends of their species, cannot allow men who are not such to be in favor with God. This would offend such men as Tacitus. Their very earnestness in calling on all men to repent and believe the gospel, proves in what a dangerous state they are apprehended to be at present. All who are not moved by the admonitions of christian charity, to flee from the wrath to come, will naturally be disgusted; and thus the purest benevolence will be construed into the most merciless bigotry.

"Their execution was aggravated with insult. They were covered with the skins of wild beasts and torn by dogs, were crucified and set on fire that they might serve for lights in the night time. Nero offered his gardens for this spectacle, and exhibited the games of the circus. People, says Tacitus, could not avoid pitying them, base and undeserving as they were, because they suffered not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of a tyrant. It appears from a passage in Seneca, compared with Juvenal, that Nero ordered them to be covered with wax and other combustible materials, and that after a sharp stake had been put under their chins to make them continue upright, they were burned alive to give light to the spectators.

These are the facts, not from a christian martyrologist, anxious to blazon the sufferings of christians, but from an avowed enemy, yet one of the most judicious and creditable historians of antiquity. We have consulted Gibbon, who agrees with Milner, (whom we have followed) except in some additional circumstances. Gibbon says, in addition to the above: "The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race and honored with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress and attitude of a charioteer." And then asserts the correctness of the text as follows: "The most skeptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Lactantius, who mentions the punishments which Nero inflicted on christians—a set of men who had embraced a new and criminal superstition. The latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts; by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus; by his reputation, which guarded his text from interpolations or pious frauds, and by the purport of his narrative which accused the christians of the most atrocious crimes."

He must be a skeptic indeed, who will not believe the facts from the mouth of such witnesses. Here are two antagonists, and they were under some influence opposite to each other. And who, that believes there is in the universe such a thing as a good and evil influence—a diabolical and wicked influence—a good and heavenly influence—will doubt under whom the respective parties were marshaled—which were the angels of the Dragon or Satan, and which the angels of Michael or Christ. We know that Gibbon steps aside to bring in the words, “*criminal superstitions*,” “*the most atrocious crimes*,” as charged upon christians. Tacitus himself, uses no such language, but says, “*detestable superstition*, “*enemies of mankind*,” or he has been thus translated. “The guilt of christians deserved the most exemplary punishment.” But where in all the edicts against them, (except the burning of Rome, of which their most bitter enemies, even Gibbon himself acquits them,) are they charged with any offence against society or the state? They would not worship their gods, and everywhere insisted that men must repent and believe, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, or be lost.

Would the poor man and his numerous disciples say, that christians were accused of eating infants, and that their assemblies were scenes of debauch and incest? but where were these offences charged upon them in the edicts against them? and when, and where were they tried and convicted of such deeds? Will men of such refinement take up the old accusations of which pagans, since the days of Justin Martyr’s apology, have been ashamed?

That men under the christian name have committed *atrocious crimes*, none will dispute, and Gibbon glories over the discovery, as one that has found great spoil. After giving Tacitus’ account of the conduct of Nero toward the christians he consoles himself thus:—“Those who survey with a curious eye the revolutions of mankind, may observe, that the gardens and circus of Nero on the Vatican, which were polluted with the first blood of Christians, have been rendered still more famous, by the triumph and by the abuse of the persecuted religion. On the same spot, a temple which far surpasses the ancient glories of the capitol, has since been erected by the christian pontiffs, who, deriving their claims to universal dominion from an humble fisherman of Galilee, have succeeded to the throne of the Cæsars, giving laws and extending a spiritual jurisdiction far and wide.”

Men in the name of religion have committed *atrocious crimes*, but never anything but praiseworthiness when adhering to its principles. The charge against the christians by the pagans in the three first centuries, was atheism —forsaking the worship of the gods, and provoking them by their impiety to send calamities on the earth. The charge among the Jews, was their forsaking the laws of Moses.

But to return to the persecution. We have no account how the people of God behaved under their sufferings. What we know of them, in similar scenes, leaves us in no doubt, of their being supported by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nor is it credible, that the persecution would be confined to Rome, it would naturally spread through the empire. There are inscriptions found in Spain which show that the gospel had already penetrated into that country, and that the church there also had her martyrs.

This persecution did not last more than three or four years. In the year

68, the tyrant was himself, by a dreadful exit summoned before the divine tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea partook of it in an eminent degree. Paul and Peter fell in this persecution as we learn by Clement's letter, and Ireneus says, he heard the same from Polycarp the disciple of St. John.

The destruction of Jerusalem followed in a few years. From the confusion of the times and the warning of the Savior, the christian Jews departed from the city, and inhabited a village beyond Jordan called Pella. The church had peace until toward the end of the reign of Domitian. He was made emperor 81, and continued till 96.

Of the persecution under Domitian, we have no account written by any christian. But Milner and Gibbon substantially agree in what they have gathered from pagan writers of this period. The substance of what they relate is as follows: That some persons to wreak their malice on christians, by exciting the jealousy of Domitian, informed him of individuals who were related to the royal family of David; Domitian ordered them before him. They were related to our Lord, the grandsons of Jude, who was the brother of Jesus Christ. The emperor asked them if they were of the family of David; they frankly confessed their royal origin and their relation to the Messiah; but they disdained any temporal views, and professed that His kingdom was not of this world, but heavenly; that its glory should appear at the consummation of the world. When they were examined concerning their fortune, and occupation, they showed their hands hardened with labor, and declared they derived their whole subsistence from the cultivation of a farm near the village Coeaba, of the extent of about twenty-four English acres. Domitian was satisfied that his throne was in no danger from christian ambition, and the grandsons of Jude had the honor to be dismissed with the same sort of derision with which their Savior had been dismissed by Herod. Thus had the Son of God provided for his relations; they were poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom.

As Domitian improved in cruelty, toward the end of his reign, he renewed the horrors of Nero's persecution. He put to death many persons accused of Atheism, the common charge against christians, on account of their refusal to worship the Pagan gods. Among these was the consul Flavius Clemens, his cousin. As Milner and Gibbon essentially agree, we will give the account of the latter. He says, although the obscurity of the house of David, might protect them from the suspicions of the tyrant, the present greatness of his own family, alarmed the pusillanimous temper of Domitian, which could only be appeased by the death of these Romans whom he either feared, hated or esteemed. Of the two sons of his uncle Flavius Sabinus, the elder was soon convicted of treasonable intentions, and the younger, who bore the name of Flavius Clemens, was indebted for his safety to his want of courage and ability. The emperor for a long time distinguished so harmless a kinsman by his favor and protection—bestowed on him his own niece Domitilla, adopted the children of that marriage to the hope of the succession, and invested their father with the honors of the consulship. But he had hardly finished the term of his annual magistracy, when for a slight offence he was condemned and executed; Domitilla was banished to a desolate island on the coast of Campania; and sentence of death or of confiscation was pronounced against a *great number* of persons who were involved in the same accusation. The guilt imputed to them was

that of *Atheism and Jewish manners*; a singular association of ideas, which cannot with any propriety be applied except to the christians, as they were obscurely and imperfectly viewed by the magistrates and by the writers of that period. On the strength of so probable an interpretation, and too eagerly admitting the suspicions of a tyrant as an evidence of their honorable crime, the church has placed both Clemens and Domitilla among its first martyrs, and has branded the cruelty of Domitian with the name of the second persecution. This persecution (if it deserves that name) was not long, as the emperor was assassinated a few months after the death of Clemens and the banishment of Domitilla."—p. 301.

To the foregoing we shall add no remarks. But on the testimony of Irænæus, who says he heard from Polycarp, that Domitian threw St. John into a cauldron of boiling oil and he came out unharmed, and was afterwards banished to the Island of Patmos. As to the oil we have only the testimony of the fathers. But as to his being "on the Isle called Patmos for the word of God, for the testimony of Jesus Christ;" we have bible authority. And the authority of Gibbon, "that the memory of Domitian was condemned, his acts were rescinded, his exiles recalled;" and the fathers say St. John was among those recalled by Nero, Domitian's successor.

"To believe, to suffer, to love, and not write was the primitive taste," and is the highest commendation bestowed on the fathers of the first century. And wonderful is the wisdom and prudence of God seen in this appointment. Irænæus and others mention with what delight they listened to the incidents in the life of the Lord Jesus by Polycarp and others who knew him in the flesh, and probably they would rehearse these to a third generation. Yet none of the incidents were written, or if written were not preserved. And what an adorable providence this was! Had they been preserved they would have been considered as oracular as the Word of God, and would have added to what Infinite Wisdom had determined sufficient. Hence there is no christian writer of the first century whose works have come down to us but Clement's epistle to the Corinthians, and this not authoritative, but he reasons out of the scriptures as other good men and ministers. He introduces incidental history of what they knew as an illustration of his argument. Not like the idle stories ministers in our day invent or relate without authority, for effect.

Hegesippus, the historian of Palestine, we have noticed, lived in the second century. He either gathered his history from what he learned of others, or from documents now lost.

The next persecution in order is that of Trajan, which commenced about 106. We have already noticed the martyrdom of Ignatius, not, however, on the subject of martyrs, but to learn the faith, spirit and fruit of primitive christianity. We have also noticed Pliny's letter for the same end, to gather what we could from the testimony of a sensible enemy. From this letter, and Trajan's answer, we learn that to profess christianity was a capital offence, if confessed or proved against man, woman or child. Without retraction, burning incense to the gods and execrating Christ, the offender must suffer death. We also learn from Pliny's letter that the whole region of his jurisdiction was full of those ready to be offered a sacrifice for their faith. The multitude of both sexes thus ready to die startled Pliny, who had not been familiar with blood, and surprised his master, who was also alarmed, and not willing to lose so many subjects set

about to devise means to diminish the number of victims. Yet the edict must stand—the king can do no wrong. Death or retraction were the only alternatives.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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Gibbon's apology—Tertulian's story—Concluding remark on Trajan's persecution—The peaceable reign of the Antonines—Marcus' persecution—Christian documents—Gibbon's silence—Polycarp—Persecution at Smyrna, remarks on—Justin's apology and martyrdom.

Gibbon's apology may throw light on the subject. He says Trajan's answer to Pliny discovers as much regard to justice and humanity as could be reconciled with his mistaken notions of religious policy. Instead of displaying the implacable zeal of an inquisitor, anxious to discover the most minute particulars of heresy, and exulting in the number of his victims, the emperor expresses much more solicitude to protect the innocent, than to prevent the escape of the guilty. He acknowledges the difficulty of any general plan; but he lays down two salutary rules which often afforded relief to the distressed christian. Though he directs the magistrates to punish such as are legally convicted, he prohibits them, with a very humane inconsistency, from making any enquiries concerning the supposed criminals. Nor was the magistrate to receive every kind of information. Anonymous charges the emperor rejects as repugnant to the equity of his government.

Gibbon still goes on to shew that Trajan would have the christians have a fair trial. Their accusers must meet them face to face, prove their charges, or be exposed to disgrace and suffer punishment.

How blind and infatuated the dragon's angels are, when they would conceal their deformity, and talk of justice, equity or humanity! "*Afford relief and support to the distressed christians.*" In what this relief? Why when he is arraigned before the judge, and accused of being a christian, he may plead not guilty, and put it upon his accuser to sustain his charges, and bring his own witnesses to prove he is not a christian. What distressed christian would be relieved by such a mock of justice? The hypocrite and apostate might find relief. But what real christian will plead not guilty, when accused of being a christian, unless, overcome by the shock, to deny his Lord, as Peter did? Would Peter have been less distressed had he had liberty of a trial and been acquitted of the charge of being a disciple of his Lord?

After expatiating with a great flourish of eloquence on the alleviating circumstances to the christians, in this death edict of Trajan, in protecting them from the tumultuary outrages to which they were exposed on the great festivals of the pagans, among many other things, he says:—

"While the numerous spectators, crowned with garlands, perfumed with incense, purified with the blood of victims, surrounded with altars and statues of their tutelar deities, resigned themselves to the enjoyment of pleasure, which they considered as an essential part of their religious worship, they recollect that the christians alone opposed the gods of mankind, and they, by their absence and melancholy on these solemn festivals, seemed to insult or lament the public felicity. It was not among a licentious and exasperated populace, that the forms of legal proceedings could be observed. It was not in the amphitheatre, stained with the blood of wild beasts and gladiators, that the voice of compassion could be heard. The impatient clamors of the multitude denounced the christians as the enemies of the gods and men; doomed them to the severest tortures, and venturing to accuse, by name, some of the most distinguished of the new sectaries, required with irresistible vehemency that they should be instantly apprehended and cast to the lions. The provincial governors and magistrates who presided in the public spectacles, were usually inclined to gratify the inclination, and to appease the rage of the people, by the sacrifice of a few obnoxious victims."

And what then? what would be expected after such a flourish? "But the wisdom of the emperors protected the church from the dangers of these tumultuous clamors." But what emperors? Adrian and Antoninus Pius, who did not make simply professing christianity an offence against the state, and forbade christians being persecuted as such. But Trajan, from beginning to end made death the penalty of owning or being proved a christian. All the exposedness of the accuser was, that he might accuse a person who would not confess, and whom he could not prove to be a christian; then he might be disgraced or punished as a slanderer of his brother pagan. This, we know they did, not only through Trajan's reign, but after his death until Adrian's edict forbade christians being molested as christians.

But another alleviating circumstance, Gibbon notices for the "*relief and support of distressed Christians.*" The original edict fixed the death penalty on all who confessed or were proven to have been christians, without any provision of escape on retraction. So Pliny, understood the law, and he suggested with deference to his master, that could such a provision be inserted that repentance should restore the offender, who had been found guilty of christianity, he doubted not many might be saved. Trajan consented to receive the suggestion of his servant, and in his clemency granted forgiveness and restoration to the returning penitents, who had been overtaken with the fault of christianity. On which Gibbon remarks:—

"Punishment was not the inevitable consequence of conviction, and the christian whose guilt was clearly proven, by the testimony of witnesses, or even by confession, still retained in his own hands the alternative of life or death. It was not so much the past offence, as the actual resistance which excited the indignation of the magistrate. He was persuaded that he offered an easy pardon, since if they consented to cast a few grains of incense upon the altar, they were dismissed from the tribunal in safety and with applause. It was esteemed the duty of a humane judge, to endeavor to reclaim, rather than to punish those deluded enthusiasts. Varying his tone according to the age, the sex, or the situation of the prisoners, he frequently condescended to set before their eyes, every circumstance which could render life more pleasing, or death more terrible; and to solicit, nay, to entreat

them, that they would show some compassion to themselves,—to their families, and to their friends. If threats and persuasions proved ineffectual, he had often recourse to violence; the scourge and the rack were called in to supply the deficiency of argument, and every sort of cruelty was employed to subdue such inflexible, and, as it appeared to the pagans, such criminal obstinacy.

Here we see it literally fulfilled "*he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*" "The ancient apologists of christianity, (says Gibbon) have censured, with equal truth and severity, the irregular conduct of their persecutors, who, contrary to every principle of judicial proceeding, admitted the use of torture, in order to obtain, not a confession, but a denial of the crime which was the object of the inquiry."—*p. 302–303.*

In conclusion on this persecution we would say, that no christian account of this event, except the very brief notice in the martyrology of Ignatius, is extant. The following story is found in the writings of Tertulian. He says, "that Arrius Antoninus in Asia, persecuted vehemently, and the whole body of christians wearied with constant hardships, presented themselves before his tribunal. He ordered a few of them to execution and said to the rest, "miserable people, if you choose death, you may find precipices and halters enough." It would appear that the christians meant to disarm the persecutor by the sight of their numbers. All the difficulty in this account of Tertulian is, to what period he refers, as that is not noted. He introduces it as a piece of history well known in his day, yet it is well known that an Antoninus was very intimate with Pliny. And this account exactly agrees with his that the christians were very numerous in all parts of his jurisdiction, and ready to suffer death for their religion, and that the number of the victims startled him, and Trajan seems impressed with the same view, and labors hard to diminish the number of the martyrs. And another fact we have incidentally is, that a little time before Ignatius was thrown to the beasts, he heard the joyful news that the persecution had ceased at Antioch. The conclusion seems irresistible that Trajan thought that he was the man that could conquer the christians, as he had conquered in the field: and that he intended to exterminate and extinguish the hated sect, and to this end he commenced a simultaneous attack on them throughout the Roman world. 2d. He found the christians every where prepared to receive him —after the first shock had cleared the church of stony ground professors, and those who loved the world, its honors, and friendships, more than Christ, he found the remainder invulnerable. Trajan and his angels, were willing to retire from the unequal contest, the best way they could, and save their reputation—without repealing their powerless edict, or confessing themselves beaten.

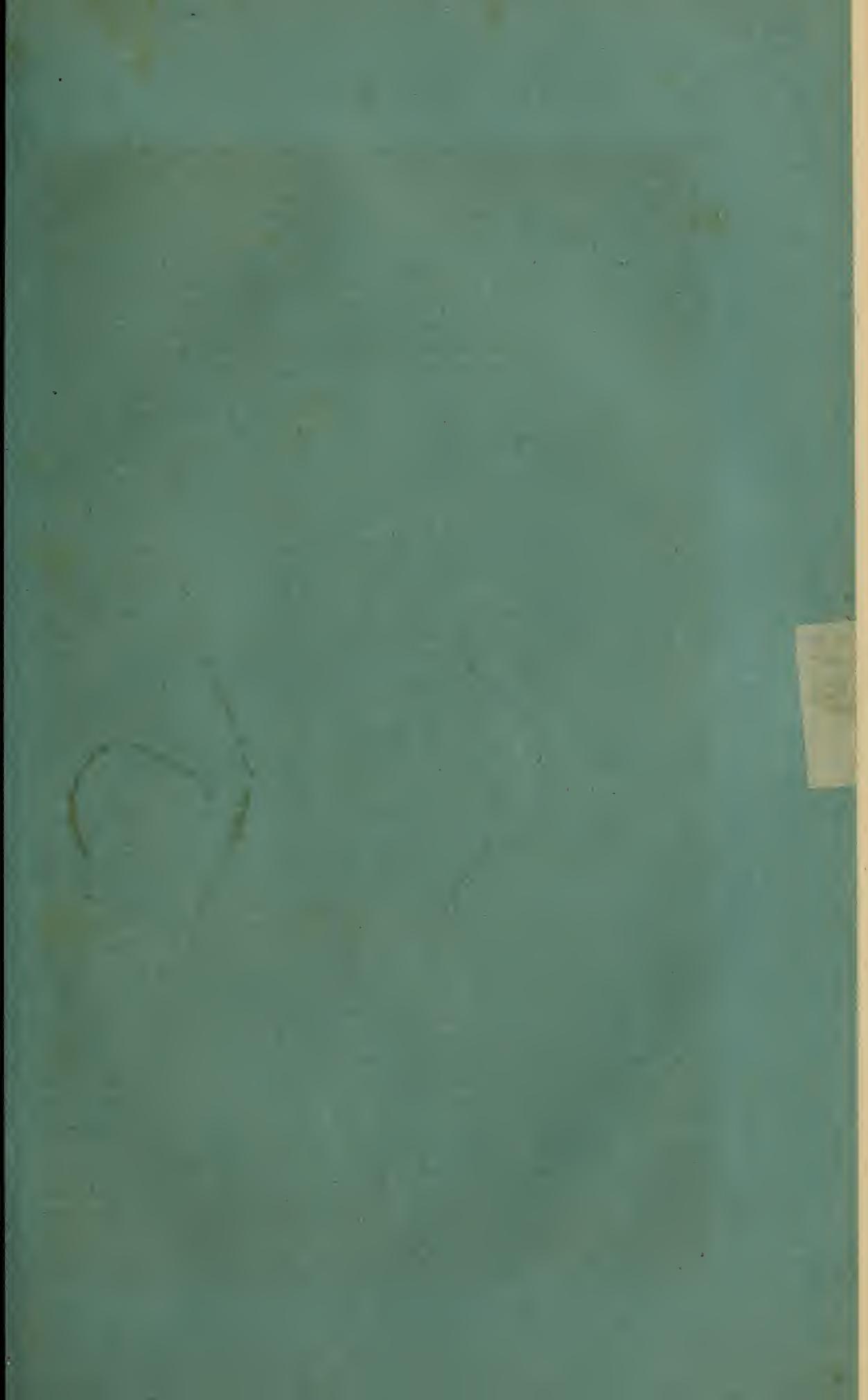
Perhaps in no period of the existence of the church, has she been more pure in doctrine, more holy in practice, or more signally exercising that faith, which overcomes the world, than at this time, without doubt the beginning of the period of the first seal.

The next forty-four years, the reign of the Antonines, was a time of remarkable peace and prosperity to the world (except the Jews)—the church had peace. In the first years of Adrian, the pagans attempted to revive the persecuting edict of Trajan; but on a representation to that emperor, he published a rescript forbidding christians being molested on account of their faith, abstracted from any other offence. Another attempt

was made after his death to revive Trajan's edict in its true spirit, but Antoninus Pius put this down with more decision than even Adrian. Both of these documents have been given. By them we understand that christians were not to be molested as such, but if they were convicted of any crime against society, or the state, their christian profession would expose them to severer penalties than were inflicted on others for the same offence—even to capital punishment. A salutary restraint, leading them to be watchful over one another and strict in their discipline, that offences should be rebuked; and the incorrigible cast out, that the whole body should not be reproached and exposed, and also to keep up a marked distinction between true christians and heretics whose lives were often scandalous. But Marcus Antoninus who succeeded Pius in the year 161, was during all his reign of 19 years an implacable persecutor of the christians. How, under the advantages enjoyed by Marcus to become acquainted with the innocent and harmless lives of christians; with the examples of his predecessors, whom he must have revered, and with whom he had intimate acquaintance, as he was not a young man when he ascended the throne; how it happened that he was a bitter persecutor, is a question we shall not now attempt to solve, but may consider it hereafter. For the present we will state the fact of his being a persecutor, and some of its effects in different parts of the empire. And here we are not in want of documents, christian and authentic. Our difficulty will be to condense them within the compass of our design, and retain a faithful synopsis of the spirit and works of the combatants. The dragon and his angels contending with Michael and his angels. And here Gibbon leaves the field. In his chapter on the conduct of the Roman government toward the christians from Nero to Constantine, he throws Marcus Antoninus into the shade. He only notices incidentally his miraculous deliverance in the Marcomann war, when a storm of thunder and rain relieved his famishing army from perishing with thirst, and frightened away the besieging barbarians, which he attributes to the providence of Jupiter and the interposition of Mercury. During the whole course of his reign, Gibbon says, "Marcus despised the christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign."

With his usual eloquence, Gibbon descants on the singular fatality that christians should endure so much suffering under a virtuous prince, from whom they alone had experienced injustice: so they alone were protected by the lenity of Commodus, and that through the influence of the celebrated Marcia, the most favored of his concubines, who, at length, contrived the murder of her imperial lover. Gibbon himself thinks she could not reconcile her conduct with the precepts of the gospel, yet hoped her being the patroness of christians, would atone for the frailty of her sex. At any rate under the protection of Marcia the christians passed in safety the thirteen years of a cruel tyrant."—*p. 311.*

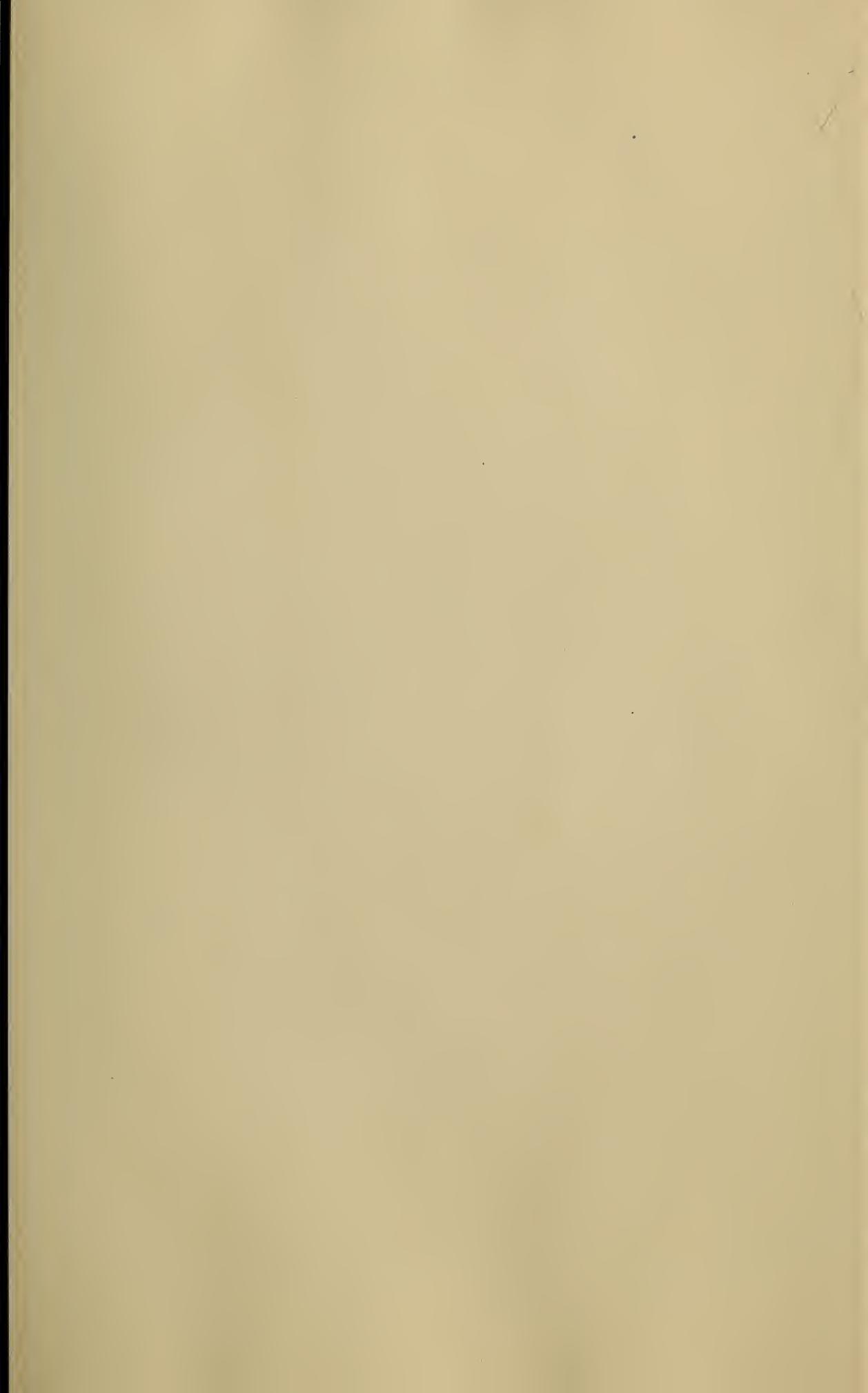
This is the substance of all the help we can obtain from Gibbon of the nineteen years of the persecution of Marcus, and this from one who is disposed to believe that the persecutions related to have taken place in the first three centuries, are mostly fictions of the monks and fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries. We confess our disappointment for we value him as a real helper.



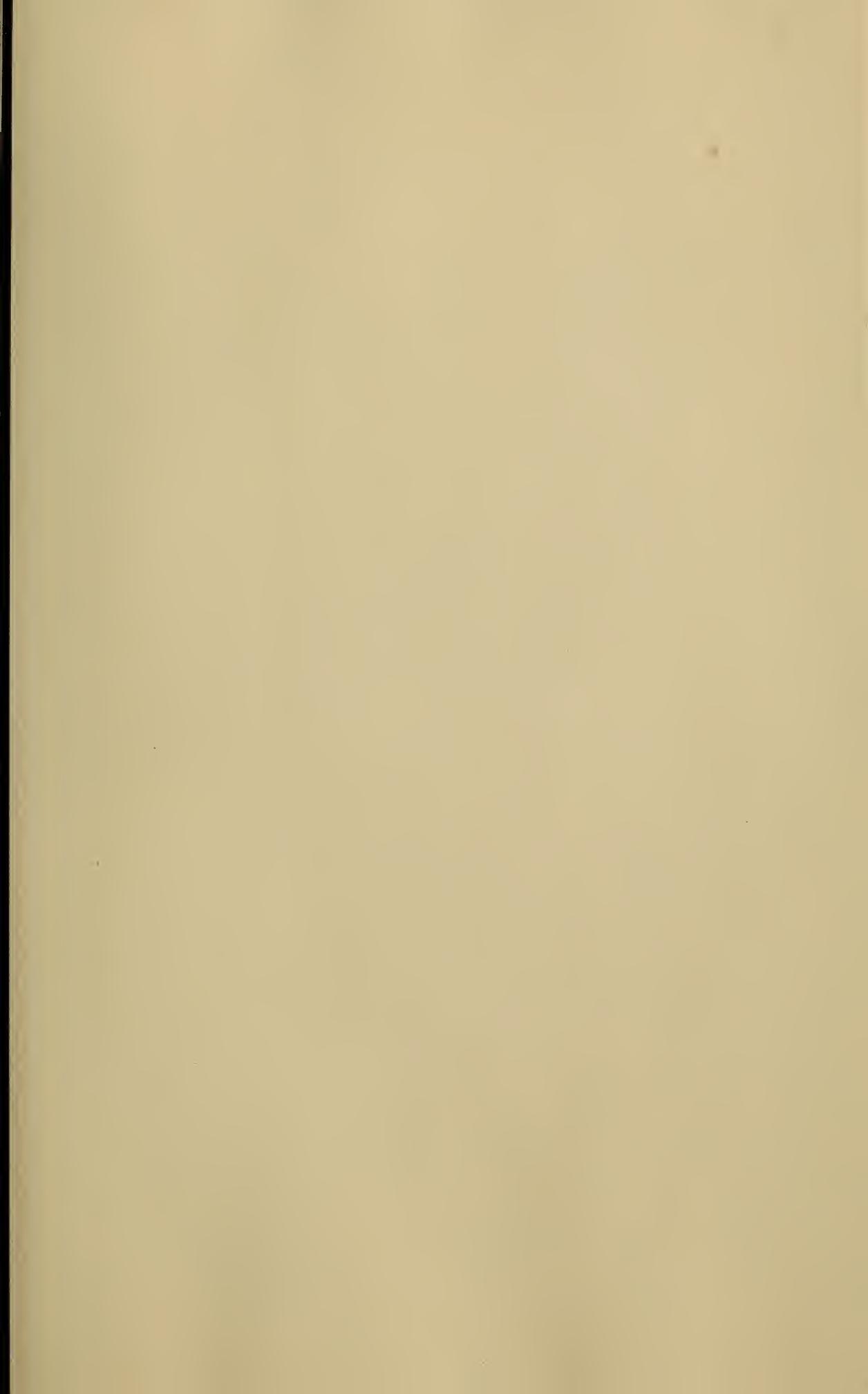
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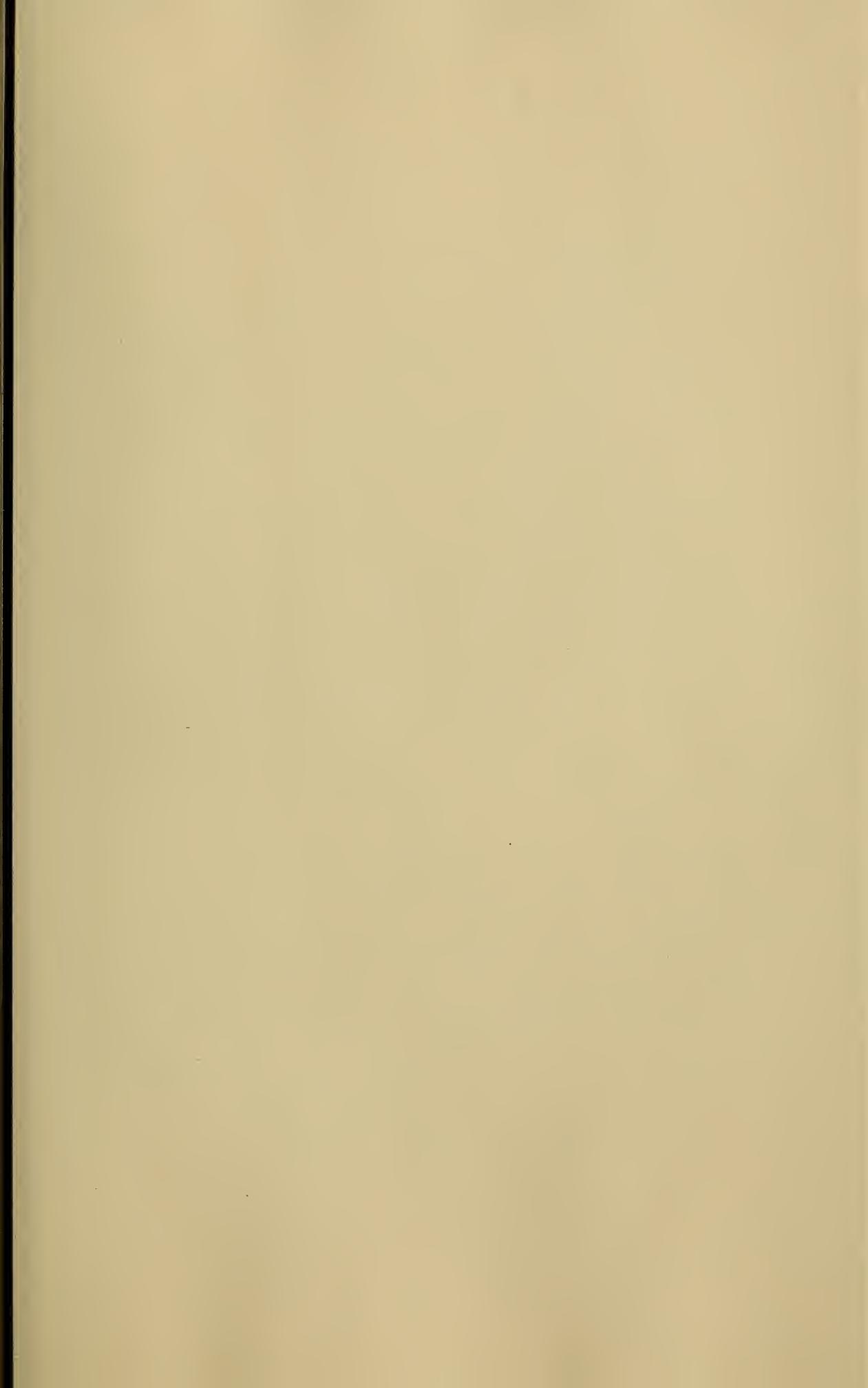
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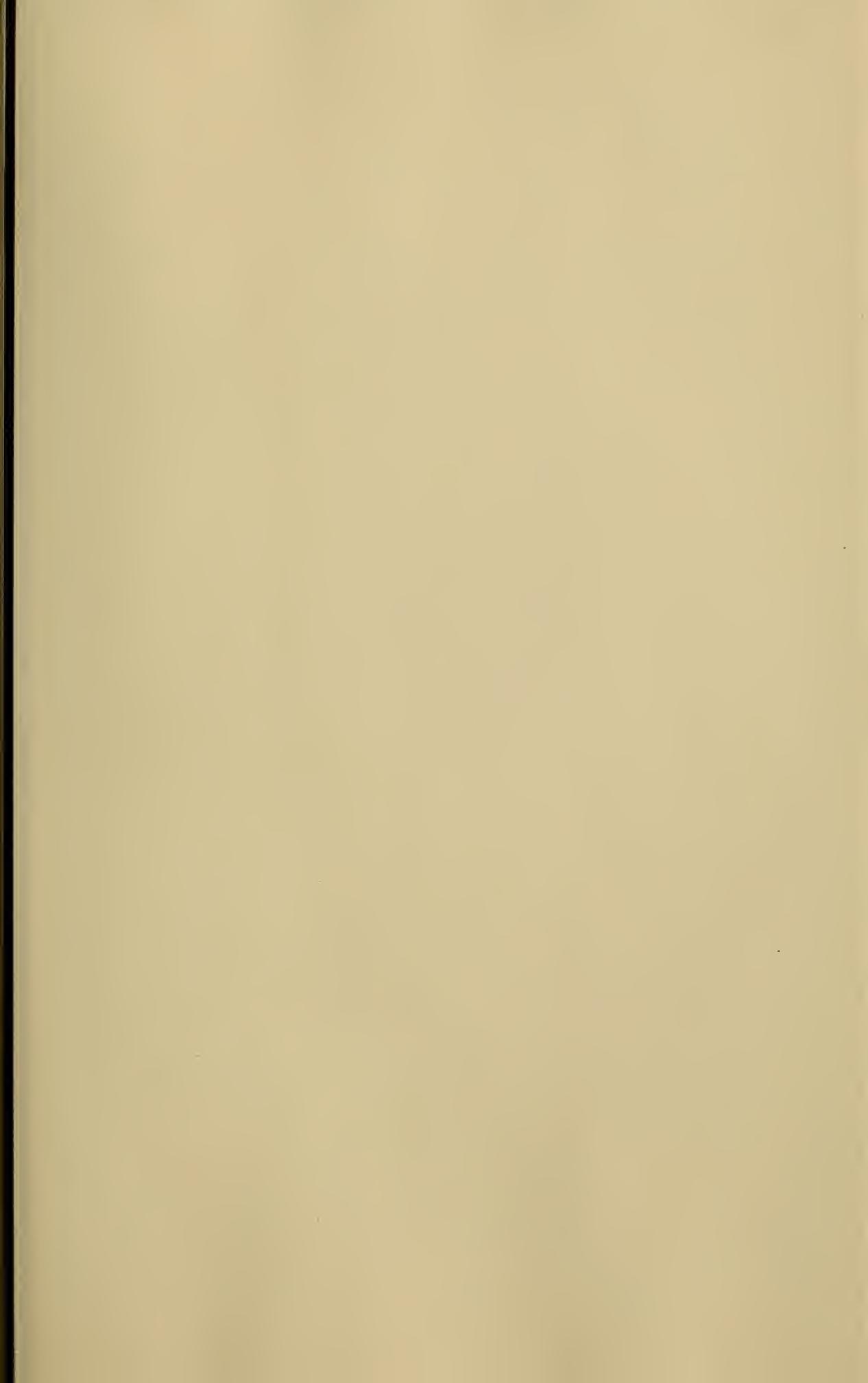




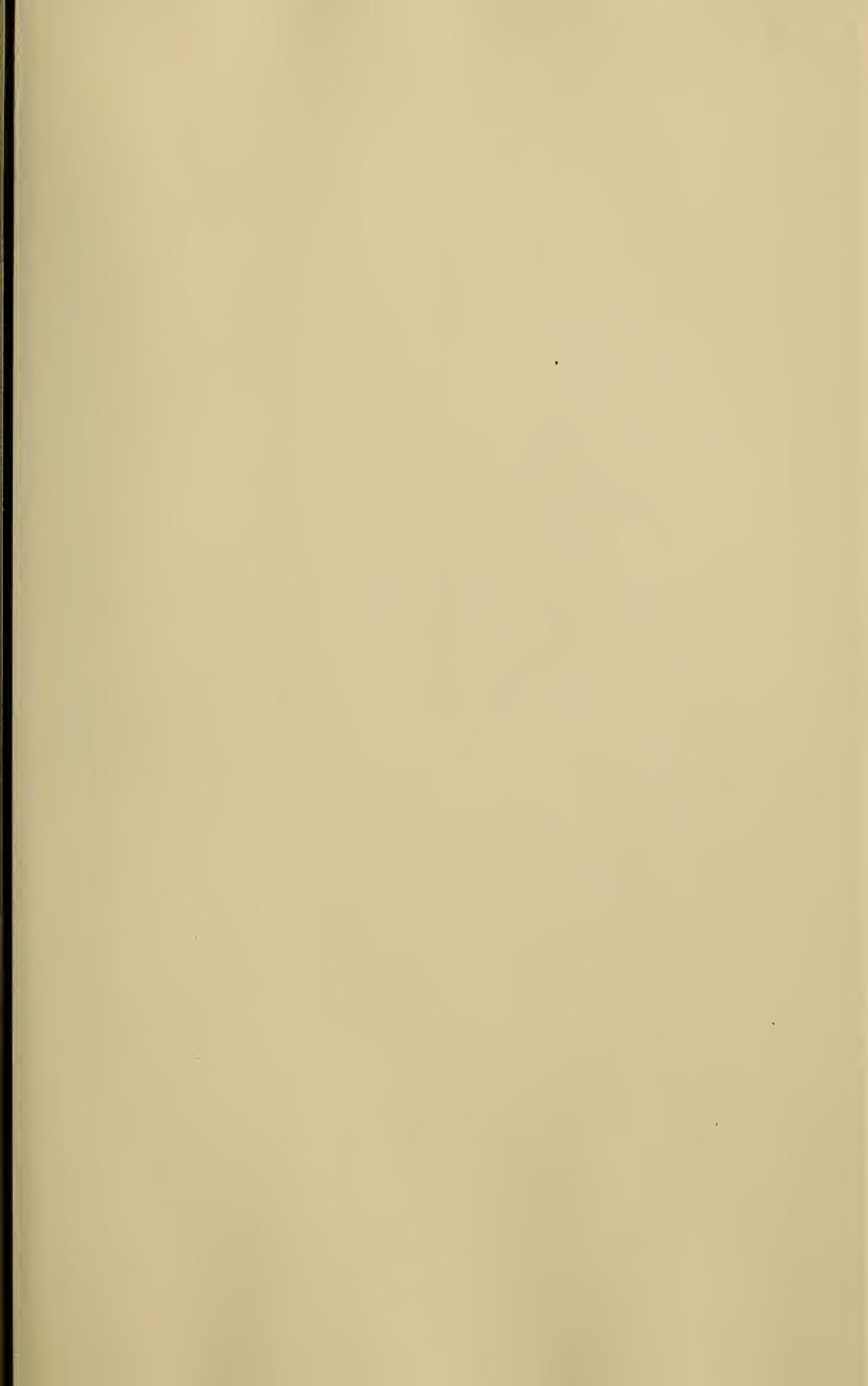




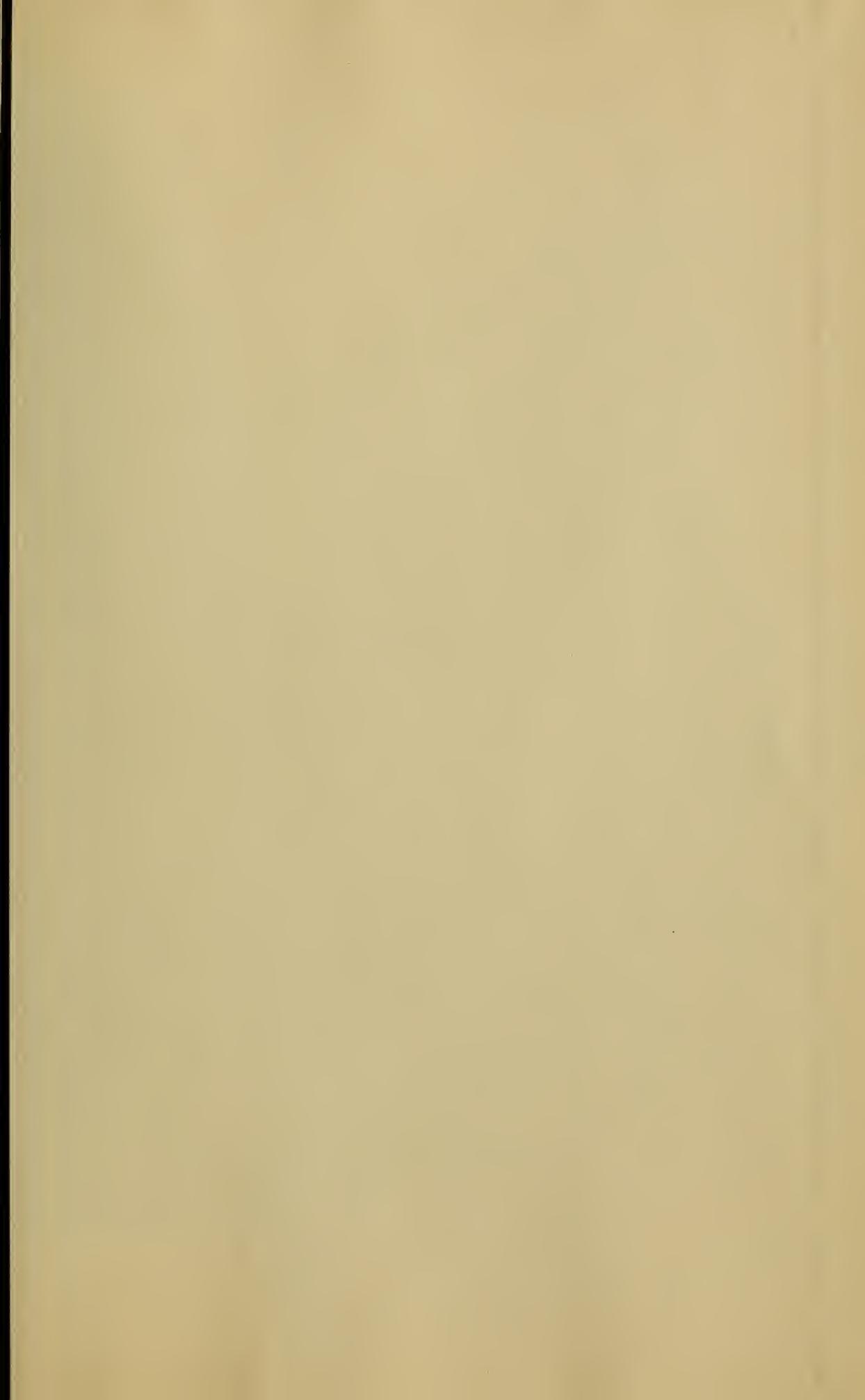








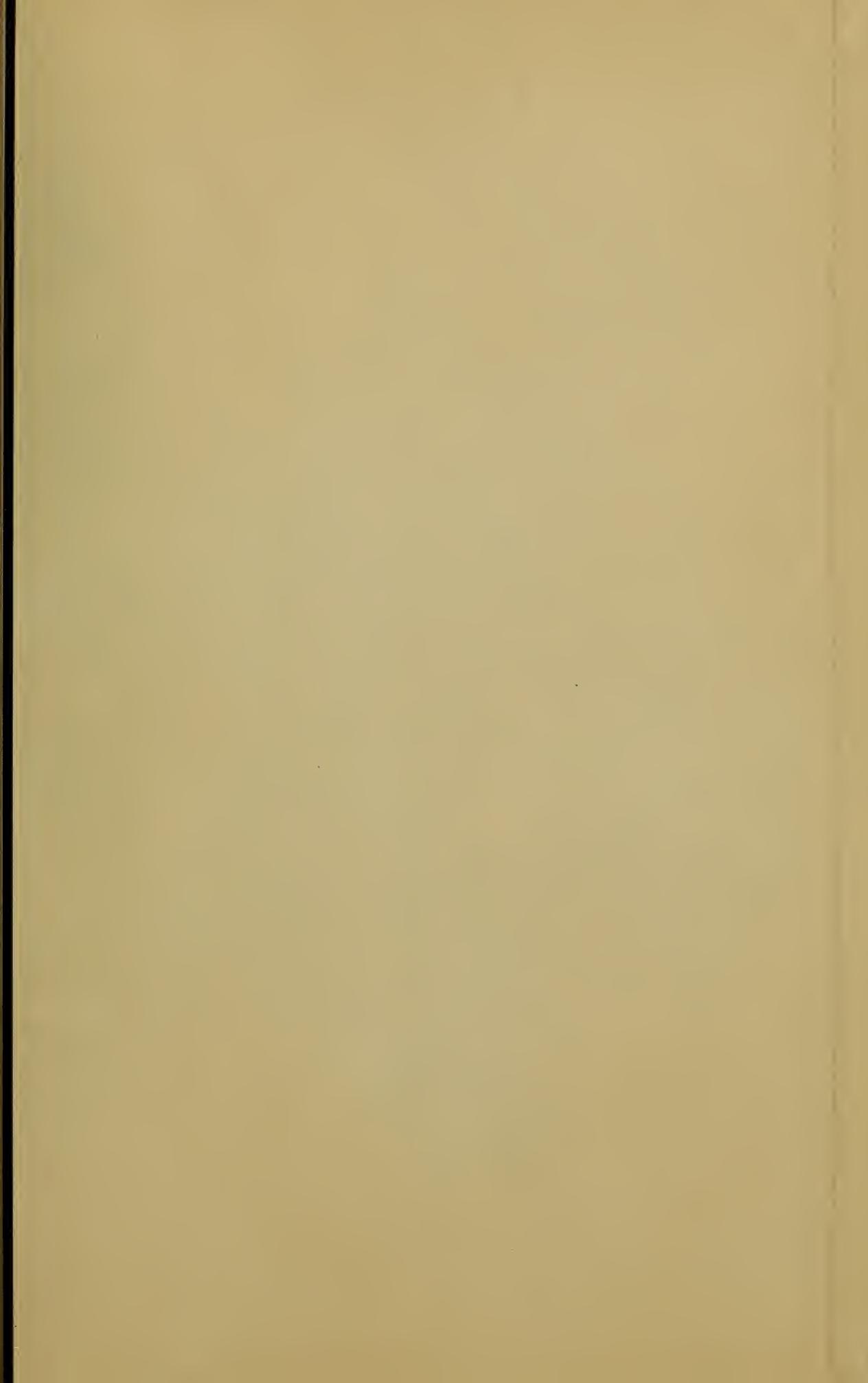




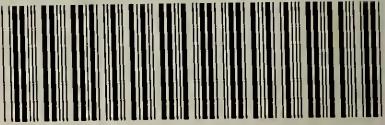
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