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ON THE BOOKS OF THE

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EDITED BY ✓

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## NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

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As in the preceding Volumes, the text, when given in italics, is that of the English Authorized Version. The version in inverted commas is that given by the German commentator, or, when it simply follows the English version without the words "should be" or "read," it is that of Luther accepted by the commentator without remark. When the rendering of the English translators is given without correction, it is either identical with that of the German commentator, or else is already a little closer to the original Greek without differing in sense from his rendering. I have, as before, added a few notes, in square brackets, chiefly such as seemed to be required to adapt a German Commentary to the English Version. It is scarcely necessary to add that where German weights, measures or coins are mentioned, they are reduced in all three volumes to the corresponding English standards.

F. H. J.





## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians, by Prof. Holtzmann	1
Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians	7
Introduction to the Epistle to the Philippians, by Prof. Bruch	20
Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians	24
Introduction to the Epistle to the Colossians, by Prof. Holtzmann	35
Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians	40
Introduction to the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, by Prof. Paul Wilhelm Schmidt	48
Commentary on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians	54
Introduction to the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians	66
Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians	72
Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, by Prof. Pfeiderer	77
Commentary on the First Epistle to Timothy	87
Commentary on the Second Epistle to Timothy	100
Commentary on the Epistle to Titus	107
Introduction to the Epistle to Philemon, by Prof. Holtzmann	111
Commentary on the Epistle to Philemon	113
Introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews, by Prof. Hilgenfeld	115
Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews	129
Introduction to the Epistle of James, by Prof. Bruch	150
Commentary on the Epistle of James	159

	PAGE
Introduction to the First Epistle of Peter, by Prof. Hilgenfeld	. 166
Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter	„ . 170
Introduction to the Second Epistle of Peter	„ . 178
Commentary on the Second Epistle of Peter	„ . 180
Introduction to the First Epistle of John, by Dr. Späth	. . 185
Commentary on the First Epistle of John	„ . . 190
Introduction to the Second Epistle of John	„ . . 210
Commentary on the Second Epistle of John	„ . . 212
Introduction to the Third Epistle of John	„ . . 215
Commentary on the Third Epistle of John	„ . . 217
Introduction to the Epistle of Jude, by Prof. Hilgenfeld	. . 219
Commentary on the Epistle of Jude	„ . . 221
Introduction to the Revelation of John, by Dr. Krenkel	. . 225
Commentary on the Revelation of John	„ . . 237

## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

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THERE is a marked contrast between the undoubtedly genuine Epistles of Paul which have preceded, and the Epistle, in which very general views predominate, which now follows under the name of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is now half a century since its authenticity was first doubted, and the opinion that it is not the work of Paul has been gaining ground ever since. We are forced to this conclusion by reasons which affect the whole Epistle; they concern its form, contents and purpose, and may be conveniently arranged under seven heads.

(1.) *The address of the Epistle to Ephesus* (i. 1). Paul had long laboured in Ephesus, first among the Jews and afterwards among the Gentiles (Acts xviii. 19—21, xix. 1—xx. 1, 31), and we have special evidence of a considerable Jewish-Christian element in the community (Acts xviii. 19, 20, xix. 8, 13—16, 34; Rev. ii. 1, 2, 6). Our Epistle, on the other hand, assumes a purely Gentile-Christian public (ii. 1, 2, 11—13, 19, iii. 1, 6, iv. 17, 22, v. 8); and not only is there no trace whatever of any personal acquaintance of the writer with the readers of the Epistle, but, on the contrary, he has only heard of them (i. 15, vi. 21) and they of him (iii. 2, 4). There are no greetings either from or to individuals. The writer and his readers are known to each other only by report. How different is the picture of the relation between Paul and the Ephesians which we form from Acts xx. 17—38! On these grounds Marcion regarded this as the Epistle to the Laodiceans referred to in Col. iv. 16; and two learned writers of the early Church (Origen and Basilius) inform us that the words

“at Ephesus” (i. 1) were not found in the old Bibles, and this may in fact still be seen in the two oldest and best MSS. now extant (the Vatican and Sinaitic). The Epistle then, as is now almost universally allowed, was originally intended as a circular addressed probably to the group of communities in Asia Minor which are mentioned in Rev. i. 11. Of these, Ephesus was the first and Laodicea the last. To the latter city our Epistle is intended to come (Col. iv. 16), and thence to be brought at last to the knowledge of another community for which it was not originally intended. This general purpose, however, removes the Epistle from the series of the Epistles of Paul, all of which have some definite local destination.

(2.) *The general contents of the Epistle.* The Epistle is entirely devoted to the promotion of the unity of the Christian Church, on the ground of the unity of God’s plan of salvation, which embraces the whole human world, and which is contrasted with the previous division of humanity into Jews and Gentiles (ii. 13—22, iii. 6, iv. 3—6). This is not the language of one who is himself engaged in the strife and turmoil of the labours which attended the introduction of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. It is natural, however, for a later writer, himself also a Jew by birth (see notes on i. 12, 13, ii. 3), at a time when the harvest of Paul’s vast labours is beginning to ripen, when the mission to the Gentiles has produced its fruits, and a united church of Jews and Gentiles is to take the place of the former division of the nations, thus to look back to Paul’s completed work. To this later position is due also the writer’s comprehensive, general and purely objective treatment of his subject (ii. 20, iii. 5, iv. 11).

(3.) In the passages just referred to, the writer speaks of “*the apostles*” as a third party to which neither his hearers nor himself belong, and in language which is inconceivable in the mouth of Paul in reference to a class of which he himself is actually a member. Especially do we detect the writer (iii. 5) when he puts himself in the position of the “apostles,” who have now had their ideas extended and enlightened by a divine revelation concerning

the calling of the Gentiles, and who are spoken of as the "holy apostles," an epithet never applied to them elsewhere in the New Testament, and here used altogether in the later ecclesiastical sense of the word "saints." This explains the stress laid upon his official position, recurring again in what are called the Pastoral Epistles, and here so often repeated without any sufficient motive (iii. 1—3, 7, iv. 1, vi. 20). It also explains the remarkable allusion to his own history as a thing of the past (iii. 8), and the somewhat forced appeal to his own "understanding," which his readers should be able to perceive (iii. 4). In all this it is not Paul who speaks; but a later disciple, who has indeed the spirit of Paul, overpowered by the historical fact of the gigantic results of his labours a generation after his death, makes him, so to speak, a witness of his own triumph, putting into his mouth this utterance of victory and peace addressed to his communities. Such literary influence after his death was in harmony with the literary labours of Paul during his life. He was the first apostle who possessed it. James, Peter and John, followed.

(4.) Intimate as is the writer's acquaintance with the genuine Pauline Epistles, as we shall show in our notes by continual references to them, he is nevertheless very far from having followed the Pauline model accurately in *language* and *style*. Even those commentators who attempt to rescue the authenticity of the Epistle allow that its style perplexes them by its very manifest divergence from that of the four preceding Epistles. There is a freedom and flow of words, at times almost a bombastic tone, a curious abundance, and indeed cumulation, of rhetorical phrases, a style which proceeds in involved sentences, each being interlinked with the preceding, while the connection is yet frequently interrupted by parentheses. Over and above all this, we find a number of peculiar expressions and terms, words and figures, which Paul does not employ elsewhere. For example, God is called "the Father of glory" (i. 17), "who hath made all things" (iii. 9), "of whom everything that hath a father bears its name" (iii. 15).

(5.) Such terms as those just mentioned are plainly connected with the peculiar *world of ideas and conceptions* of the Epistle generally. Among these peculiar ideas must be reckoned not merely details such as the doctrine of the residence of evil spirits in the air (ii. 2, vi. 12), or a triumph over them in the lower world (iv. 8—10), but the fundamental idea of the Epistle itself, in which Christianity appears as a mystery concealed in God from eternity, raised infinitely above everything else, and first made known to humanity at a definite point in its development by means of a supernatural revelation (see notes on i. 9, iii. 5, 9, v. 32). And the chief subject of this mystery, taking even the angels by surprise (iii. 10), is made to be the union of the human race, hitherto divided, in the one salvation which is the same for all (see notes on i. 10, iii. 6). Hence, while the Pauline doctrine of reconciliation is softened down in favour of good works (see note on ii. 10), and undergoes a curious development in the interests of our author's main principle (see note on ii. 15), a way is prepared for a system in harmony with the average current ideas of the Gentile church (see note on iv. 14), and so Christianity becomes itself a subject of study and knowledge.

(6.) What has been said under the last head explains the frequent mention of "all wisdom and prudence," of "making known" and "revealing," of "hearing" and "learning," "knowledge" and "mystery." And all this points to the spiritual requirements and interests of an age that had gone beyond primitive Christianity, requirements and interests plainly connected with the great movements to which the so-called *Gnosis* gave rise (see Vol. I. pp. 18, 197). In fact, the Epistles with which we are now concerned distinctly mark the point at which the Pauline school was placed in a position to come to a clear understanding as to its points of agreement and disagreement with the rising gnosis (see note on iii. 19). Hence the Christology of this Epistle also goes beyond the Pauline limits. In the place of the "second Adam" who exists for the sake of the human world, it puts a being existing before the world, who is at the same time the

central point and the end of the whole created world, and in whom therefore the earthly and the heavenly spheres alike first reach an articulate yet harmonious unity (see note on i. 10). With this idea of Christ as the central point of the universe is especially connected the expression "fulness," which comes to be so curiously applied in this Epistle (see notes on i. 23, iii. 19, iv. 10, 13). This word plays an important part among the Gnostics, by whom it is used to denote the ascending series of divine beings which taken together forms the complete conception of God. There are other expressions which are likewise Gnostic, such as "æons" (see notes on ii. 7, iii. 11), "generations" (see notes on iii. 5, 21), "lords of the world" (see note on vi. 12), &c.

(7.) It is only when we look at the Epistle from this point of view that a *definite purpose* appears in it. It is difficult to show what object Paul could have had in sending a missive of this kind to the community at Ephesus or anywhere else; but it is very easy to understand how the Epistle might spring from the necessities of a later age, and a longing to hear the great herald and advocate of the cause of Christ speak in this later age upon the new problems which in some cases had presented themselves in so startling a form. This, then, is the source of our Epistle, which is addressed in the first instance to the Gentile Christians in a circle of Christian communities in Asia Minor, and then to the great multitude of Gentiles which was gradually filling the church generally. Its object was partly to instruct them in the principles of their new position in the kingdom of God, and partly to give them, in clear, strong outline, a decree which should meet the requirements of their vacillating conduct. To the first part of this double task the first three chapters are devoted, and to the second part the last three. The division is marked by the Epistle itself, by means of the doxology (iii. 20, 21) which stands between the didactic and the hortatory portions.

Thus, then, we see that the writing now before us presents to us in several respects a new phenomenon when compared with the Pauline Epistles which we have previously considered. But

it is not only these latter the existence of which is assumed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, but also a whole series of *other New-Testament writings* with which it is related in a most striking manner, especially the Revelation (comp. iii. 5 with Rev. x. 7), the Gospel according to Matthew (comp. iv. 29 with Matt. xii. 36, xv. 11, 18), the Gospel according to Luke (comp. vi. 18 with Luke xxi. 36), the Book of Acts (comp. i. 7, 14, iv. 11, v. 25, with Acts xx. 28), and the Epistle to the Hebrews (comp. i. 7, v. 26, with Heb. ix. 12 sqq., xiii. 12).

Practical points of contact between the Epistle to the Ephesians and various other books, as, for example, the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and the Johannine and Petrine writings, are probably to be explained by the fact that they are nearly contemporaneous with one another (see Vol. I. p. 19).

But, again, we must take an entirely independent explanation of the altogether unique relation which exists between this Epistle and the *Epistle to the Colossians*. It is impossible to suppose that Paul can have copied himself to such an extent, and often even to the very smallest details of expression. Reserving, then, the fuller discussion of this relation between the two for the Introduction to the Epistle to the Colossians, we must be content at present to point out the parallel and the related passages in our notes. Whoever takes the trouble to compare these passages with one another, will see at once that here we are not concerned simply with a general connection between the two Epistles, but with a mutual interaction of arguments and ideas which are at the same time closely connected with one another and essentially distinct from the Pauline domain, in spite of their various points of contact with the latter.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

### CHAPTER i.

[1. *At Ephesus* should be omitted. See pp. 1 sq.]

#### i. 3—14.

A diffuse doxology, un-Pauline in form, impressing upon the readers that their position as Christians is not a matter of their own choice and decision, but the realization of a decree of God which was made before the ages (ver. 4) and has its goal in the end of all history (ver. 10). Each of the three divisions of this section ends with the phrase, "to the praise of his glory." We pass in these three stages from the predestination by God the Father (3—6), through the historical redemption in the Son (6—12), to the sealing by the Spirit (13, 14).

3. After 1 Cor. i. 5; comp. Col. i. 5.

4. Comp. Col. i. 22.—*In love*: These words should probably be taken with the next verse, "And having predestinated us in love."

5. After Rom. viii. 29; Gal. iv. 5.

6. Comp. Col. i. 13.—*Wherein, &c.*, should be "wherewith he hath favoured us in the beloved one."

7 = Col. i. 14, 20. After Rom. iii. 24, 25, xi. 26, 27.

8. After 2 Cor. ix. 8; comp. Col. i. 9.—*All wisdom and prudence*: which he has imparted to us as necessary for the furtherance of our salvation.

9, 10. *Which he, &c.*, should be "which he determined in himself for the disposition of the fulness of the times, that he might gather together," &c.

9. After Rom. viii. 28, ix. 11; comp. Col. i. 26, 27.—The will of God was gracious from all eternity; but to the world, in accordance with a definite plan determined by God, it did not appear until the "fulness of the times" described in ver. 10. This is the conception of the "revelation" in our Epistle.

10. Literally, both here and in iii. 9 [see note on iii. 9], it is not exactly a "dispensation" that the writer speaks of, but an "economy," i.e. an administration or disposition of affairs. This is the name that he gives to the divine plan of salvation which was to be realized in the course of successive "times," so that it is only with the "fulness of times" (after Gal. iv. 4) that the appointed moment arrives, for which all creation was ordained, which finds its point of union and its goal in Christ. Comp. Col. i. 16, 17, 19, 20.

11. Comp. Col. i. 9, 12.

12, 13. After Gal. iii. 14; 2 Cor. i. 22; comp. Col. i. 5. In these verses the contrast between the Jewish Christians ("we") and the Gentile Christians ("ye") is very distinct.—*Who first trusted*: "who hoped before."

14. After 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5; Rom. viii. 16, 17, 23.

i. 15—23.

Thanksgiving which passes into a petition that God may cause the Gentile Christians here addressed to understand how great a thing their Christian position is, and on whom they may rely in view of the manifestation of the power of God, which is the same in them as in the Christ who has been raised from the dead and exalted by God. Another long-winded sentence, especially as it properly includes the first part of the following chapter also, as far as the end of ver. 10.

15—17 = Col. i. 3, 4, 9.

18. After 2 Cor. iv. 6; comp. Col. i. 9, 12, 27.—It is well to have some sense of the blessing of the future and of the present.

19. Comp. Col. i. 11, ii. 12.—Appeal to their own experience as a test of the greatness of the divine energy.

20—23. After 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23—28; comp. Col. i. 16—19, ii. 9, 10.

20. Comp. Col. ii. 12.

21. Comp. note on Rom. viii. 38.

22. His relation to the whole creation is, the foundation of his special relation to the church, which corresponds to the relation of the head to the members of the body.

23. Here, as in ver. 10, we obtain a glimpse of the writer's world of ideas. The community is "*his body*," according to the comparison further carried out afterwards (v. 23—28), in which

especially the women appear as the bodies of the men (v. 28), and the marriage-bond as a mysterious image of the relation of Christ to the church (see note on v. 32). As the man is made complete by woman, so the church, being filled by Christ, makes him complete in its turn, and hence is *the fulness of him that filleth all in all*, inasmuch as the church represents that sphere of creation which is now filled with Christ, and from which his filling influence spreads in ever-widening circles, until, in due correspondence with his own position as the centre of the universe, it embraces the universe itself.

ii. 1—10.

This passage is closely connected with i. 15—23, inasmuch as what God has done to us (1—6) is now compared with what He has done to Christ (i. 20—23). Christianity is explained from the moral point of view to be a resurrection from the death of sin, similar to the resurrection of Christ and founded in it, brought about by a grand act of divine power and grace (1—6). The writer then turns back (ver. 7) to his starting-point (i. 19); while in the verses that follow (8—10) we have only an appendix occasioned by his parenthetical exclamation in ver. 5.

1 = Col. i. 21, ii. 13.—“And you also, when ye were dead in your trespasses and sins, wherein,” &c.

2. That the atmosphere was full of evil spirits and was the peculiar domain of Satan, was an idea common to Jewish and Greek teachers of the time, as may be proved by many passages in their writings. Comp. Col. iii. 6.

3. Comp. Col. i. 13, 21, iii. 7.—*Conversation*: “conduct.”—*The mind* should be “our thoughts,” i.e. ideas and designs which have their source in the flesh.—“Children [not *the children*] of wrath:” subject to the Divine wrath. After Rom. i. 18.—*By nature*: after Gal. ii. 15. Here, however, the writer goes beyond the passage in Galatians, and maintains that even “we” (who are Jews by birth) are sinners by nature, i.e. apart from the covenant, of which circumcision, which was something added to the natural state, was a pledge, and so are in the same position as “you” (who are Gentiles by birth).

4. Here the thought of ver. 1, which has been almost lost, is taken up again.

5 = Col. ii. 13. It is not until we reach this verse that we see the real meaning of ver. 1.

6. After Rom. vi. 6—11; Phil. iii. 20; comp. Col. ii. 12.—*Together*: “together with him.”

7. *In the ages to come*: i.e. in all future time. The future is divided, according to the writer’s ideas, into a series of “times” or “ages” (æons).

8. After Rom. iii. 24, 28.

9. After 1 Cor. i. 29.

10. After 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; comp. Col. i. 10, 21.—It should be noticed how the Pauline doctrine of faith, in accordance with the ideas of post-Pauline Gentile Christianity, has here been displaced by the idea of “good works,” which are expressly regarded as being incorporated in the predestination and purpose of creation in order that in the course of time they might be made manifest in individual Christians.

#### ii. 11—22.

The Gentile Christians are reminded that they were formerly alien to the commonwealth of historical salvation, and that they owe their admission entirely to the death of Christ upon the cross, which broke down the partition-wall between Israel and the nations of the world.

11. After Rom. ii. 26—29; 1 Cor. xii. 2; comp. Col. ii. 11, 13.—*Are called*: “were called” [the Greek may mean either].

12 = Col. i. 21. After Rom. ix. 4; Gal. iv. 24.—*Promise*: “the promise.”

13 = Col. i. 21, 22.

14. Comp. Col. i. 20.—The Law is called a *wall*, inasmuch as it enclosed the Jewish nation and separated it from the rest of the world.

15 = Col. ii. 14, 20.—The separation led to a thorough and unyielding hatred of the remaining nations, which they again did not hesitate to return (see note on Matt. v. 43), and hence the Law is further called *enmity*, i.e. an occasion of enmity.—The most peculiar and most pregnant of all the ideas which our author deals with is that Christ, by his reconciling death, has done away with the scrupulous customs of the Jews which were so hateful to the Gentiles, and so, by removing the cause

of enmity, has put an end to the enmity itself. This idea is based upon the Pauline doctrine of the Law and of reconciliation, especially Gal. iii. 13.

16 = Col. i. 20—22.—*In one body*: comp. iv. 4, Col. iii. 15.—*Thereby*: “through [lit. in] himself” [others translate “thereon” (i.e. on the cross)].

17. Comp. Col. i. 20. From Is. lvii. 19.

18. After Rom. v. 2.

19. *Foreigners*: settlers residing in a state without possessing the rights of citizens.

20—22. After 1 Cor. iii. 9—11, 16, 17, vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; comp. Col. ii. 7.

20. *Prophets*: i.e. Christian prophets, as in 1 Cor. xii. 10; Acts xi. 17.—*Chief corner-stone*: from Matt. xxi. 42.

22. *Through the Spirit*: “in the Spirit” [so lit.].

### iii. 1—19.

The exhortations of chap. ii., upon which (according to iii. 3, 4) the whole Epistle turns, are confirmed by reference to Paul himself, now a prisoner, to whom the Gentiles are peculiarly indebted for their position as Christians, inasmuch as he is the bearer and herald of the mystery of the reception of the Gentiles into the divine historical plan of salvation, a mystery so important in its bearings on the human world and the higher realm of spirits alike. This section consists of two sentences (vv. 1—7 and vv. 8—12). The second, however, is only a repetition of an idea that has already been laid down four times in the first (vv. 2, 3, 5, 7), and ver. 14 recurs again directly to the incomplete sentence of ver. 1.

1 = Col. i. 23 sq.—*The prisoner of Jesus Christ*: the prisoner who belongs to Jesus; comp. iv. 1. The Epistle is supposed to be written from the same imprisonment that is spoken of in Philem. 1 and 9.

2 = Col. i. 25. After Gal. i. 13—16, ii. 7, 8.—[*Dispensation*: better, “stewardship;” same word as in i. 10, iii. 9 (see notes); here used of the administration of the grace of God entrusted to the apostle.]

3. After Gal. i. 12, ii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 1 sq.; comp. Rom. xvi. 25; Col. i. 26.—*Afore*: i.e. in chap. ii.

4. After 2 Cor. xi. 5, 6.—On this and the preceding verses

see pp. 2 sq. We have here a somewhat awkward attempt on the part of the writer to maintain Paul's consciousness of apostolic authority against his readers. In this attempt he entirely loses the connection with ver. 1.

5 = Col. i. 26.—*In other ages*: lit. "in other generations." In the original, these "other generations" appear partly as personal recipients of knowledge, but partly as simply a definition of the time, and hence the expression is supplemented by the words, *the sons of men*.—*As it is now revealed*: This is a favourite idea with the writer, and springs from 1 Cor. ii. 7, 9, 10; Rev. x. 7.

6. The substance of the "mystery;" after Gal. iii. 29; Rom. iv. 12—16.

7 = Col. i. 25, 29.

8. After 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10; Gal. i. 16; Rom. ix. 23, xi. 33.—*Less than the least*: "the very least." [*Is given* should be "was given."]

9 = Col. iii. 3. After 1 Cor. ii. 1, 7.—*Fellowship* should be "administration," or "disposition;" see note on i. 10.—*From the beginning of the world*: lit. "from the æons;" see note on ii. 7. According to our writer, as also according to 1 Pet. i. 12; 2 Pet. i. 20 sq., even the prophets of the Old Testament had themselves no objective consciousness of the subject of their own prophecies; comp. Col. i. 26—28, ii. 3.—The concluding words, "through Jesus Christ," are probably a later addition.

10. *By the church*: Even the celestial powers mentioned in i. 21 first learn the substance of the divine mystery "from the community" (lit. "through the community"); that is to say, they are instructed in it by the fact of the existence of a universal church formed of Jews and Gentiles; comp. Col. ii. 15. We find some similar ideas in 1 Pet. i. 12.

11. *The eternal purpose*: This is the meaning of the writer's words, which are literally, "The purpose of the æons." It was so ordained in God's eternal scheme of the universe.

12. After Rom. v. 2.—*Faith of him*: "faith in him."

13. *Wherefore*: Because that which has been described in vv. 8—12 was brought about through him. After 2 Cor. iv. 16, vii. 4; comp. Col. i. 24. It is the glory of the Gentile Christians before God and man, that such a man as Paul suffers for them.

14. After Rom. xi. 4, xiv. 11.—*For this cause*: repeated from

ver. 1 in order to catch up the thread again, which was dropped in that verse.—Here also (as in ver. 9) the words, *of our Lord Jesus Christ*, are not found in the oldest MSS.

15. After 1 Cor. viii. 5 sq.—This verse is difficult to translate on account of the play upon words in the Greek. “The Father [Greek, *pater*] from whom every tribe [Greek, *patria*] in heaven and earth is named.” [The word *patria* is itself a difficult one to render satisfactorily here by any one English word. It is used in the various senses of *family*, *tribe* and *nation*, and here refers probably to the various nations of the earth and tribes or races of celestial beings, each being called a *patria*, from the one *pater* of all.]

16. After Rom. ix. 23, vii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 16; comp. Col. i. 11.

17. Comp. Col. i. 23.

18. Comp. Col. ii. 2, 7.—*The breadth*, &c.: It is not said what breadth, &c., is meant, as what is intended is the loftiest breadth, &c., conceivable, inasmuch as the contents of the divine mystery which are thus described are infinite.

19. After 1 Cor. ii. 14, viii. 1, xiii. 2, 8; Phil. iv. 7; comp. Col. ii. 3, 10.—*The love of Christ which passeth knowledge*: i.e. that ye may know that Christ’s love surpasseth all knowledge. It is important to observe in regard to the purpose of the Epistle, which is the “knowledge” (of Christ), that one should also be required to “know” how the value of knowledge sinks before the love of Christ.—*With all the fulness of God* should be “unto the whole fulness of God.” As God (according to Col. i. 19, ii. 9) entirely fills Christ, so, Christ filling the believing community (i. 23), this same fulness of God indirectly dwells in it also.

iii. 20, 21.

The discourse having returned (ver. 19) to its starting-point (i. 17—19), a conclusion now follows to the same effect as the opening doxology (i. 3—14). Comp. Col. i. 29.

21. *By Christ Jesus*: “in Christ Jesus.”—*Throughout all ages, world without end*: lit. “to all generations of the æon of the æons.”

iv. 1—16.

The nature of the new communion into which the readers have passed requires loving conduct of individuals towards

each other, worthy of the grand unity of the body of Christ, and preserving it (1—6). And it further requires a striving after Christian perfection, which shall tend to the good of the whole by the mutual co-operation of all (7—16).

1 = Col. i. 10. After 1 Thess. ii. 12; Rom. xii. 1.—*Of the Lord*: “in the Lord” [so lit.].

2 = Col. iii. 12, 13.

3 = Col. iii. 14. After Rom. xiii. 10.

4 = Col. iii. 15. After 1 Cor. x. 17, xii. 4; Rom. xii. 5.

5. After 1 Cor. i. 13, viii. 6, xii. 5.

6. After 1 Cor. viii. 6, xii. 6; Rom. iii. 30.—[*You*: not found in the best MSS.]

7. After Rom. xii. 3—6; 1 Cor. xii. 7—11.

8. Psalm lxxviii. 19, from the Greek version. The writer, however, departs from his authority, inasmuch as both Greek and Hebrew speak of the receipt of gifts, while here we have, “*gave gifts*.” It was only by means of such an alteration that a passage in the Old Testament describing the victorious return of the God of the covenant to Zion, could be applied to the ascension of Christ and the distribution of the various divine gifts.

9. Interpretation of the passage just quoted from the Psalms. Ascent presupposes descent. A descent *into the lower parts of the earth* corresponds with the ascent *above all heavens* (ver. 10). Probably what is meant is the so-called “descent into hell,” which appears again in 1 Pet. iii. 19.

10. *That he might fill all things*: see note on i. 23.—The writer is thinking of “those in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Phil. ii. 10), a fantastic development of his favourite idea of Christ as the central point of the universe.

11. After 1 Cor. xii. 28; Rom. xii. 6—8.—[*Gave some, apostles, &c.*: i.e. appointed some to be apostles, &c.]—*Prophets*: see note on ii. 20.—*Evangalists*: see Acts xxi. 8.—*Pastors*: as in Acts xx. 28 [where the writer speaks of the *flock*, though he uses the word “overseer,” not “shepherd” as here].

12. After 1 Cor. xiv. 26; 2 Cor. xii. 19.—*Ministry*: i.e. “service.”

13. [*In the unity* should be “into the unity.”]—*Stature* should be “age.”—The growth of the individual Christians to the measure of the age *of the fulness of Christ*, i.e. of the church (i. 23),

and so the gradual approach of the actual perfecting of the individual members to the ideal perfection of the whole, is only another aspect of the being "filled unto the whole fulness of God" described in iii. 19.

14. Comp. Col. ii. 8. The church is here on the very point of delivering itself and its doctrine, which was then in accordance with average current ideas, from the seething turmoil of factions and parties.

15. *The head*: see note on i. 22.

16 = Col. ii. 19; comp. Col. ii. 2. After Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12. Literally translated, this verse would read, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and knit together through every contact of the assistance, according to the working in the measure of each several part, completes the growth of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." The illustration is of a connected whole consisting of various members. The parts, which are calculated and adapted for one another, mutually hold out a helping hand to one another as it were; while the whole draws from the head a life which passes from one point of contact to another, so that each several member is proportionately nourished and developed, and at the same time the whole flourishes and progresses towards a more and more complete maturity.

#### iv. 17—24.

The present conduct of the Gentile Christians must be the very opposite to their former heathen conduct. This new series of exhortations is introduced (17—19) by a sketch of the moral state of the Gentile world, after Rom. i. 21, 22, 24.

17. Comp. Col. ii. 4, 6.

18. Comp. Col. i. 21.

19 = Col. iii. 5.

20. Comp. Col. ii. 6.

21. Comp. Col. ii. 7.—*By him*: "in him."

22—24 = Col. iii. 9—11. After Rom. vi. 4, 6, xii. 2, xiii. 12, 14; 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54; 2 Cor. iv. 16, v. 17, xi. 3; Gal. iii. 27, vi. 15; 1 Thess. v. 8.

22. *Conversation*: i.e. "conduct."

#### iv. 25—v. 20.

After the general exhortation, the writer descends to individual virtues and vices, especially forbidding from first to last all cou-

tact with heathen abominations and requiring a strict watch upon self. We have here a kind of Christian table of ten commandments. The first table (vv. 25—31) contains about five.

iv. 25—32. *The first table.*

25. *Members one of another*: after Rom. xii. 5. Falsehood makes the existence of any real communion impossible. Comp. Col. iii. 9.

26. From Ps. iv. 4, which our author takes to mean, "If ye be angry, sin not about it." Comp. Col. iii. 8.

27. After Rom. xii. 19. This verse is connected with the preceding one. He who surrenders himself to anger is in danger (according to Gen. iv. 7) of throwing open the door to the power of the evil one.

28. After 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. iv. 11; Rom. ii. 10; Gal. vi. 10.

29 = Col. iv. 6.—*That which is good to the use of edifying*, should be "That which is good for edifying as required," i.e. as required by moral and religious necessities.

30. *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God*: As the Spirit dwells in the community, this would be done by any conversation that served to corrupt the community.—*Sealed*: after 2 Cor. i. 22.

31. After Rom. ii. 8; Gal. v. 20; comp. Col. iii. 8.

32 = Col. iii. 12, 13.—*For Christ's sake*: "in Christ" [so lit.].

v. 1—20. *The second table.*

About five more commandments follow here as a second table.

1. After 1 Cor. iv. 14, 16; comp. Col. iii. 12.

2. After Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iv. 18; comp. Col. iii. 13.—*Us*: many good MSS. read "you."—*For a sweet smelling savour*: ancient sacred phraseology; see Lev. i. 9.

3 = Col. iii. 5. After Rom. i. 24, 29; 1 Cor. vi. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 21; Gal. v. 19; 1 Thess. ii. 3, iv. 3, 6, 7.

4 = Col. iii. 8. After Rom. i. 28.

5. After Gal. v. 21; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

6 = Col. iii. 6; comp. Col. ii. 4, 8. After Rom. i. 18.

7. After 2 Cor. vi. 14.

8. After 1 Thess. v. 5; Rom. xiii. 12; comp. Col. iii. 7.—*Sometimes*, should be "formerly."

9. After Gal. v. 22.—Read, “For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness,” &c.

10. After Rom. xii. 2.

11. After 2 Cor. vi. 14; Rom. xiii. 12.

12. After Rom. xiii. 13.

13. A development of the thought found in John iii. 20, 21.—*Whatsoever doth make manifest*: “everything that is made manifest.”

14. After Rom. xiii. 11. This passage as quoted is not to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. Probably it is a poetical working up of Ps. xlv. 23; Is. xxvi. 19, 21, li. 17, lii. 1, lx. 1, 2.

15, 16 = Col. iv. 5. After Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 9.—*Redeeming the time*: i.e. buying up the time. The same thing that is spoken of in Dan. ii. 8 as “gaining the time,” i.e. making the most of the present moment.

17. After Rom. xii. 2; 2 Cor. xii. 11.

18. After Rom. xiii. 13.—*Excess*: “debauchery.”

19 = Col. iii. 16. Religious enthusiasm.—*Yourselves*: “one another.”

20 = Col. iii. 17; comp. note on 1 Thess. v. 17, 18.

#### v. 21—vi. 9. *The table of domestic law.*

Over and above the general Christian virtues just enumerated, the natural social relations must also find their due value in Christianity, and be consecrated by it.

#### 21. *General superscription.*

[If we take this verse as the heading to what follows, instead of the conclusion of what has preceded, we must place a full stop after ver. 20. In addition to other reasons for taking it so, may be noted the fact that the verb “submit” is not in the best MSS. in ver. 22, the sense being apparently carried on from ver. 21.]—*God*: All the good MSS. read “Christ.”

#### v. 22—31. *The relation between man and wife.*

22—31 = Col. iii. 18, 19.—We find a very different view of this relation in 1 Cor. vii. 2.

23. After 1 Cor. xi. 3; comp. note on i. 23.—*Of the body*: i.e. of the community which he redeems and sanctifies.

26. After Heb. xiii. 12.—Read, “That he might sanctify it

by the word after he had cleansed it by the washing of water.”—A distinction is drawn between the cleansing from ancient guilt (the effect of baptism) and the rendering capable of new holy conduct (the effect of the Word, as in John xv. 3).

27. After 2 Cor. xi. 2.—*Without blemish*: “blameless.”

28. See note on i. 23.

29. After 1 Thess. ii. 7.

30. After Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 15.—*Of his flesh and of his bones*: Not found in the best and oldest MSS.

31. Quotation of Gen. ii. 24; after 1 Cor. vi. 16.

v. 32, 33.

32. The whole view of the relation of Christ to the world and the church as set forth in the Epistle is summed up in this illustration. Hence this is spoken of as the “great mystery” [lit. “This mystery is great”]. See note on i. 23.

33. Return to the main idea, and summing up.

vi. 1—4. *Relation between parents and children.*

1—4 = Col. iii. 20, 21.

2, 3. From Exod. xx. 12 and Deut. v. 16. The writer seems to have regarded Exod. xx. 6 = Deut. v. 10 as not exactly a promise, but only a general statement of God’s justice. Hence he calls this *the first commandment with promise*.

4. *Nurture*: “discipline.”

vi. 5—9. *Relation between masters and servants.*

5—9 = Col. iii. 22—iv. 1. After 1 Cor. vii. 22.

9. *Your master also* should be “both their and your master.”

vi. 10—20. *Final exhortation.*

The Christian must not only live in Christian fashion, but he must also pray continually, and wage incessant war with the hostile powers of an impious world of spirits.

10. After 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

vi. 11—17. *The spiritual armoury.*

After 1 Thess. v. 8; 2 Cor. x. 4; based upon Is. lix. 17.

12. Comp. note on ii. 2.—[*Rulers*: lit. “world rulers.—*The darkness of this world*: The best MSS. read “this darkness.”—*Spiritual wickedness in high places*: lit. “the spiritual things of wickedness in the heavenly (places).”]

13. *In the evil day*: The writer, living at the beginning of the times of systematic persecution of Christianity by the Roman civil power, looks for a crisis when all the collective powers of evil will turn with fiendish defiance and spite against the church. It is to this final crisis that his "call to arms" applies.

16. *The wicked*: "the wicked one" [so the Greek].

vi. 18—20.

18 = Col. iv. 2. The way to obtain such weapons is here described; after Rom. xii. 12; Phil. iv. 6.—*Always*: see note on 1 Thess. v. 17.

19 = Col. iv. 3. After 2 Cor. vi. 11.

20 = Col. iv. 3, 4. After 2 Cor. v. 20.

vi. 21—24.

21, 22 = Col. iv. 7, 8.

23, 24. Peculiar conclusion; after 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

24. *In sincerity* should be "in incorruption" or "imperishably."

## THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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THIS is the swan-song of the apostle. It is addressed to the community at Philippi, which had been founded about ten years previously, when his hopeful missionary spirit first led him into Europe.

Philippi, an important and flourishing city of Macedonia, was the first place in Europe where Paul preached the gospel (Acts xvi. 9 sqq.), and this was on his second missionary journey (A.D. 53). Though his labours there were of short duration, and were broken off by the cruel ill-treatment to which he was subjected, yet his teachings had taken root among the Jews and still more among the Gentiles, and from the root that remained there soon sprang a vigorous Christian community. Like its founder, the community was subject to severe trials, but it met them all with unshaken firmness, distinguished itself by the good spirit which it manifested, and retained a deep affection for the apostle, which was shown by the fact that they several times sent assistance to him (Phil. iv. 14 sq.). On his third missionary journey, as he returned from Greece, he paid another visit to the community which was so dear to him (Acts xx. 6), a visit which, we cannot doubt, exerted a happy influence upon the community in confirming their faith and giving new life to the friendly relation that existed between them and the apostle. In fact, the community at Philippi maintained throughout a deep, heartfelt devotion to Paul. Hearing of his imprisonment in Rome, and rightly supposing that he might find himself in somewhat straitened circumstances there, they again sent to him a gift as a

token of their love for him, which was conveyed by one of the members of the community, Epaphroditus, and which the apostle received with grateful joy (iv. 16). Epaphroditus while in Rome was overtaken by a serious illness, and on his recovery felt a yearning desire to return home, a desire which Paul was the less inclined to resist because he had reason for suspecting that the Philippians were themselves very anxious about him (ii. 25 sqq.).

The Epistle which Paul gave to Epaphroditus to take back with him relates partly to the accounts which he had received from him of the state of the community, and partly to the circumstances in which the apostle himself was at that time placed.

In regard to the affairs of the Philippians, Paul expresses his satisfaction and joy that they have been steadfast in their faith (i. 3 sq.). If there had been some disturbances of the harmony of the community, this had not been caused by the introduction of erroneous doctrines. It is evident from the whole Epistle that the conception of the gospel which Paul had set before them had retained its supremacy. At the same time the apostle considered it necessary to exhort his readers to harmony and humility (ii. 1 sqq., iv. 2 sqq.), and to warn them against the proceedings of teachers disposed to Judaism in other places, in order to induce them to keep out their intrigues (iii. 2 sqq.).

Of his own state he speaks, now with gloomy forebodings, now with the expectation of speedy deliverance (i. 19 sqq., ii. 23), and even in the hope of soon seeing the Philippians again (i. 26, ii. 24). He further informs them that his imprisonment has not prevented him from labouring with success for the gospel, and that, roused by his example, some of the brethren are preaching Christ with renewed zeal, though not always from the purest motives (i. 12 sqq.). He promises to send his beloved Timothy to them as soon as he can see what course his own trial will take (ii. 19 sqq.). He acknowledges the receipt of the assistance which they have sent him by Epaphroditus, expressing his joy that they have been so unceasingly careful for him with such tender affection (iv. 10 sqq.).

The whole Epistle bears the stamp of the intimate relation which existed between Paul and the Philippians, and the deep love which he felt for them. Moreover, it is strictly an "occasional" Epistle. Though not without order in its arrangement (see Commentary), it does not follow strictly any definite line of argument or statement, and it shows us an entirely new side of the apostle's literary activity. We see in it unrestricted converse with his readers, in which he allows himself free play, and, putting aside his apostolic authority, talks of his despondency and his inner happiness, his weariness and his hopes, as a friend with his most intimate friends.

This style of composition, which might naturally be expected considering the persons concerned and the circumstances in which the Epistle is written, also affords a sufficient explanation of the objections which have been raised to the *Pauline authorship* of the Epistle to the Philippians. The want of a strict connection between the parts of the Epistle is fully explained by the very fact that it is written in this epistolary form in the strict sense of the word. If it be urged that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, while also written in this form, has still so much more serious, severe and imposing a tone and style, it may justly be maintained, on the other hand, that an Epistle of reproof and admonition addressed to a Christian community which was then in a most critical position, and in which personal attacks of all kinds had been made upon the apostle himself, must of course make a very different impression from that made by a letter of thanks addressed to a community that had never swerved in its fidelity.—The epistolary character of the composition also explains Paul's change of tone in regard to his Jewish-Christian opponents. This change cannot of course be denied when we compare i. 15—18 with iii. 2 sq. The apostle, annoyed at the continual repetition of the same thing on the part of his Jewish opponents, makes use of expressions of violent displeasure (iii. 2 sq.), and yet in another passage (i. 15—18) shows that he no longer fears anything to speak of even from these Jewish

Christians, and judges even their by no means immaculate preaching of Christ less passionately than he has elsewhere done. But after all, when we consider first the long and wearisome struggles which he had had with these opponents, some of whom at least were so very inferior to him, and then the present actual establishment of his gospel in security against *all* opponents, both passages are equally intelligible. And, moreover, in both passages it is ultimately the very same charge that he brings against his opponents, the charge of personal untruthfulness and of selfishness—in a word, the charge of insincerity.

The remaining doubts which have been raised as to the authenticity of the Epistle are of comparatively little weight. That the passage, ii. 6 sq., concerning Christ, has reference to Gnostic errors, and must therefore be of later origin, is a conjecture which may almost be said to have been finally disposed of. Closer acquaintance with the Gnostic systems shows that the words have no very certain position there; probably they are only a peculiar expression of the later Pauline Christology which we find, for example, 2 Cor. viii. 9, &c. Phil. iii. 11 is not the expression of a doubt as to the resurrection of the dead, but whether the apostle himself will live to see the return of Christ. Is the apostle growing old and feeble? men asked one another doubtfully. And the answer is given by the apostle himself (i. 21—26) in a description of his own feelings which bears no marks of internal improbability.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

i. 1—ii. 18.

The prisoner Paul testifies to the Philippians that in joyful remembrance of them he thanks God, and beseeches Him further to perfect them. He gives them news of his imprisonment which will calm their anxiety on his account, and exhorts them to steadfastness and harmony.

i. 1, 2. *Address and greeting.*

Timothy was known to the Philippians. He had assisted in their conversion (Acts xvi. 1 sq., 10 sq., xix. 22 sq.). As he was at this time staying with Paul in Rome, and the apostle intended shortly to send him to Philippi (ii. 19), Paul feels it right to send his Epistle not only in his own name but also in that of his fellow-labourer.—*Saints*: well known as an appellation of the Christians in the apostolic age, as being dedicated to God.—*Bishops*: the overseers of the community, also called “elders.”—*Deacons*: see Acts. vi. 1 sq.

i. 3—11. *Thanksgiving.*

4, 5. *Making request, &c.*, should be “making my prayer with joy, because of your fellowship in regard to the gospel,” &c., i.e. because of the harmony and unity which prevailed among the Philippians in their faith in the gospel and their confession of it.

6. What the apostle here calls a *good work* is the same that he has just spoken of as fellowship in regard to the gospel.

7. *Because I have you, &c.*, should be “because I have you in my heart in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, as being all partakers with me of the grace.”—*My grace*, of which Paul speaks here, is the grace which God has shown him in holding him worthy to be in bonds for the gospel, and to defend it and confirm it. The Philippians had been

made companions in this by their unanimity and fidelity in the confession of the gospel, which has just been held up by him to admiration.

8. *In the bowels* (or, as we should say, "in the heart") of *Jesus Christ*: i.e. in the love of Christ. In virtue of the deep spiritual communion in which the apostle lived with Christ, he could say that his love was Christ's love, and conversely that Christ's love was his.

9. Springing from the belief in Christian truth, Christian love becomes the more sincere and effectual in proportion to the illumination and the depth of the knowledge of this truth.

10. *Approve things that are excellent*: "prove what is the best" [lit. "prove (or approve) the things that differ," or perhaps "the things that make a difference"].

11. *Righteousness*: here, as often in the New Testament, the whole moral disposition of the Christian.

i. 12—26. *Some account of himself, of the results of his labours, and of his own feelings.*

12. *Rather*: lit. "more," i.e. more than one would have expected.

13. Read, "So that my bonds have become manifest in Christ in the whole prætorium and to all the rest."—"Manifest in Christ:" i.e. it has become manifest that I am in bonds, not on account of any crime, but for Christ's sake.—"Prætorium:" the quarters of the imperial body-guard, to whose chief officer Paul had been handed over on his arrival in Rome (Acts xxviii. 16).—"All the rest:" i.e. many who did not live in these barracks. The apostle was allowed to converse freely with those who visited him (Acts xxviii. 30).

15. In Rome, as elsewhere, there were Jewish Christians who would not acknowledge the apostolic rank of Paul, who did not approve of his manner of teaching the gospel, and who therefore sought to depreciate him among the Roman Christians, and, on the other hand, to establish themselves in all the higher reputation.

16. Read, "They that are led by factiousness preach Christ not from pure motives," &c.

17. *Love*: i.e. love to the apostle.

[16, 17. The reading of the best MSS. is, "Some of love knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; but others of contention preach Christ not sincerely (i.e. not from pure motives), thinking to raise up affliction to my bonds."]

18. Here we see the noble view which the apostle takes. He rejoices over the preaching of the gospel, even when it is caused by motives of hostility to himself, and is carried on in a very different spirit from his own.

19, 20. Paul was convinced that his circumstances in Rome, as they had turned out, and would further turn out, would tend to his salvation, inasmuch as he, whether preserved alive or delivered up to a martyr's death, will fearlessly and with his old boldness preach and glorify Christ. Still his friends must assist by their prayers and by imploring the descent of the Holy Spirit.

19. *Supply* should be "support."

21. To the apostle Christ appeared as the end and aim of his whole life. Hence he is convinced that his prolonged continuance in life will serve to the glorification of Christ. But while he surrenders himself to this thought, the feeling rises within him that death would be a gain to him. By it he would be exalted to the complete and blessed union with Christ. Hence he was, as he says in the next verse, uncertain whether it would be better for him to die or to continue to live.

22. "But if to live in the flesh serve to make more fruit [lit. "But if to live in the flesh, this is to me fruit of labour"], then I know not which I shall choose."—"To make more fruit," i.e. by the prolongation of his apostolic activity.

23. Read, "But I am oppressed by both, having a desire," &c.

24. *For you*: "on your account."

25. *And having this confidence I know*: "And I know with confidence."—For your furtherance (i.e. in Christian perfection) and the heightening of your joy which springs from faith (your inner bliss).

26. Read, "So that your ground of boasting in Christ Jesus may be made great through me, by means of my dwelling among you again." The increase of the boasting of the Philippians in Christ Jesus was to be brought about by means of the furtherance of their faith and of their inner blessedness which was to be brought about by Paul on his return.

## i. 27—ii. 18.

A fatherly exhortation to united action in the rejection of adversaries, and at the same time to union among themselves based upon humility, of which Christ is the type—now the glorified type—and also upon the common labour for their own sanctification and salvation.

## i. 27—ii. 4.

27. [Conversation, i.e. “conduct;” lit. “Only live as citizens worthily of the gospel of Christ.”]—*With one mind, &c.*, should be “with one soul contending together with us for the faith in the gospel.”

28. The *adversaries* which the apostle here has in his mind are not false teachers with Jewish tendencies, but opponents of Christianity, both Jews and Gentiles. In the invincible steadfastness with which the Christians resist them, they ought to see a divine sign of the judgment which is in store for them. The Christians, on the other hand, ought to see in it a sign of the salvation prepared for them.

29. Read, “For upon you has the grace (or favour) been bestowed, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him.”—The Philippians should regard the sufferings for Christ’s sake, to which they are exposed, as a gift of God’s grace, inasmuch as the steadfast endurance of them was bringing them to eternal salvation.

## ii. 1—4.

The apostle endeavours to excite in the Philippians everything that could cause them to give him joy by the preservation of peace and unity among themselves. He appeals to the union with Christ which should arouse them to this, to the love which is always ready to give comfort, to the fellowship of the spirit in which they stand, or at any rate should stand, with him and one another, and to the sympathy and mercy which he assumes to be in their hearts.

1. *Consolation*: “exhortation.”—[*Bowels*: i.e. “kind feeling,” as we say, “heart.”]

2. Read, “Make my joy complete,” &c.

3. *Strife* should be “contentiousness.”—Disunion and a contentious disposition often arise from vanity, especially when, as seems to have been the case in Philippi, they proceed not so

much from difference of religious opinion as from pride and the self-exaltation of one over another. This is the reason why the apostle adds to his exhortation to unity, a further exhortation to humility and self-denial, enforcing it by an appeal to the example of Christ.

ii. 5—11.

For the proper understanding of this passage we must remember that, while in the first three Gospels and the Book of Acts Christ appears as a man, only distinguished from other men by the possession of the Holy Spirit in all its fulness and permanently, Paul, with the Fourth Gospel, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Revelation of John, regarded Christ as the highest of all heavenly beings, endowed with divine perfections, and hence an image of God, who during his pre-mundane existence became, by commission of God, the creator of the visible and invisible world, who at the time appointed by God appeared upon earth in the nature of a man for the purpose of the redemption and reconciliation of men, and who after the completion of his work was exalted by God to the highest degree of power, honour and glory (1 Cor. xv. 45; 2 Cor. iv. 4, viii. 9; comp. also Col. i. 15 sq., ii. 3, 9, 10; Eph. iv. 8 sq.)

6—8. Read, "Who being in divine form [lit. in the shape (or image) of God], esteemed it not a robbery to be equal with God, but divested himself [lit. emptied himself], taking the form of a servant, after he had become as a man, and being found in outward appearance as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even unto death upon the cross."

6. This refers to the pre-mundane existence of Christ. He was originally "in divine shape," inasmuch as, bearing within him the fulness of divine perfection (Col. ii. 9), he was an image of God (Col. i. 15), a reflection of His glory (Heb. i. 3). As the image of God, he was *equal with God*, an equality, however, which was not absolute, and did not exclude dependence upon God and subjection to Him (Phil. ii. 8, 9).—The words, "He esteemed it not a robbery to be equal with God," have been explained in various ways. They appear to mean that Christ did not violently retain his equality with God, because it naturally belonged to him, but voluntarily, in order that he might be able to fulfil the destiny which God had appointed for him, "divested" himself

of it (vv. 7, 8)—a renunciation which consisted in his refraining from revealing the divine perfection which dwelt within him, taking upon himself human nature, appearing in servile form among men, and proving obedient to the will of God, even unto death upon the cross.—Others explain as follows: Christ did not (like the first men) think of securing equality with God by robbery, but he obtained it by the voluntary renunciation of his divine form, i.e. of his “*heavenly* humanity,” even by so far renouncing it as to resemble “*ordinary* humanity,” by obedience even unto death upon the cross. There is, however, no indication in the phraseology of the passage of any contrast between Christ (as the second Adam) and the first man, nor of the distinction between heavenly and ordinary humanity.

9. Even the exaltation and glorification of Christ was the effect of divine grace. By the distinguishing name which is given to him, we must understand (as appears from ver. 11) the name of *Lord*.

10. *At the name*: “in the name” [so lit.], i.e. in remembrance of him and the exalted honour bestowed upon him by God.—*Things* should be “those.” Those “under the earth” are the dead, who, according to the ancient Christian view, were regarded as living in some place under the earth until the resurrection.

11. Christ the *Lord*, the glorious head of the church, and indeed of the whole realm of reasonable spirits. If beings endowed with reason, wherever they dwell, bow the knee in the name of Jesus, still the confession in their prayers of his exalted rank as Lord will be *to the glory of God the Father*, because this honour is bestowed upon Jesus by Him.

ii. 12—18.

12, 13. *But now much more*: out of consideration for the bonds which the apostle bore for Christ’s sake.—*With fear and trembling*: i.e. with a zeal which ever fears lest it should not do enough. [*To do*: or “to work;” same word as *worketh*, and similar to the word rendered “work out” in ver. 12.]—*Of his good pleasure* should be “in virtue of his good-will.”—The moral and religious development of man, which is necessary for eternal salvation, is brought about by the co-operation of human will and exertion (“*work out*,” ver. 12) and the divine helper, appearing in the depths of the spirit, who because of the infinite good-

ness of God never fails him who is able and willing to receive him. It is therefore the work of man and God alike.

14. *Disputings*: “doubts.”

15. *Harmless*: “pure.”

17. *If I be offered*: lit. “though I be poured out” (as a drink-offering), i.e. though my blood should have to be poured forth as that of a beast for sacrifice.—“Upon the sacrifice and worship,” &c.: Paul regards the labours which he has undertaken for the sake of the faith of the Philippians as an offering of sacrifice, a religious ceremony which he has performed with a view to them.

18. However painful it would be to the Philippians if the apostle should have to suffer a martyr’s death, he still desires that in another respect they should rejoice with him even at this, viz. inasmuch as he would die for the sake of the gospel and for the furtherance of their faith.

ii. 19—30.

*Announcement of Timothy’s intended visit, and of the return of Epaphroditus, with commendation of them both.*

21. The severe sentence here pronounced by the apostle leads us to suppose that the brethren and fellow-workers who were about him when he wrote the Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to Philemon (Col. iv. 10, 12; Philem. 23, 24) were now no longer with him. This also explains why he sends no greeting from them (iv. 21, 22).

22. “But ye know his uprightness [lit. as in A.V., i.e. perhaps “his proved character”]; for as a child [so lit.] (serves) his father, so has he served the gospel [lit. unto the gospel] with me.”

23. *Presently, as soon as I shall see*: “as soon as ever I see.”

25. *I supposed it necessary*: “I considered it necessary.”—Epaphroditus “ministered to the wants” of the apostle, inasmuch as he was the bearer of the assistance which the Philippians had sent to alleviate his pressing necessities.

28. *Carefully*: “quickly.”—*That when, &c.*: “that when ye see him ye may rejoice again.”

30. *For the work of Christ*: To bring necessary assistance to an apostle of the Lord might truly be regarded as a service done to Christ.—*Not regarding his life* should be “when he staked his life.”—*To supply, &c.*: “that he might serve me in

your stead" [lit. "that he might supply the want of your service toward me"].

iii. 1—16. *Warning against false teachers.*

It seems as if the apostle intended to bring his Epistle to a close in the words which have immediately preceded, but found himself compelled to repeat the solemn warning which follows against false teachers of the Jewish school which he had previously given, probably in an Epistle that has been lost.

1. *For you it is safe*: i.e. it serves to confirm you.

2. That the apostle here has false teachers who are disposed to Judaism in view is very certain from what follows. If they had not found any admission among the Philippians, they were nevertheless a threatening danger.—*Dogs*: strictly "the dogs;" the impure or insincere. Dogs were regarded by the Jews as unclean animals.—*Concision*: "mutilation," a name given contemptuously to those who set an immoderate value upon their circumcision in the flesh.

3. To the *fleshly* circumcision Paul opposes the *spiritual* circumcision which should take place in every Christian.—Those serve God in the spirit who offer to the Infinite Spirit a worship which springs from the spirit that is enlightened and cleansed by the Holy Spirit.—By the *flesh*, Paul here means external qualities such as circumcision.

8. *For whom, &c.*, should be "for whose sake I have lost all these things."—All the characteristics here adduced, which the apostle had formerly regarded as advantages, afterwards appeared to him as disadvantages, because they had long kept him away from Christ; and so they still continued to appear to him.

9. *The faith of Christ*: "faith in Christ."—[*By faith*: lit. "upon faith," i.e., probably, reckoned to the believer upon the ground of his faith.]

10. Only the Christian who is in a state of righteousness by faith attains the full knowledge of Christ, and consciousness of all the peace and strength that is to be found in his resurrection. If he suffers, he feels that he is united with his Redeemer in the fellowship of his sufferings. This was the position in which Paul himself was. In the serious circumstances in which he was then placed, he regarded himself in anticipation as called to suffer a martyr's death like the death of Christ.

11. The apostle here means the resurrection of the Christians, which in his view was to be the first (1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 16).

12. Here the apostle has the contests in the Greek games in his mind. He is conscious that he has not yet attained the prize (the prize of his heavenly calling, ver. 14), i.e. he has not yet attained the Christian perfection which should make him altogether worthy of it, but he "pursues" it [A.V. *press toward*], fired by the thought that it is precisely in order that he may lay hold of it that he himself has been laid hold of by God in his marvellous conversion.

14. *High calling*: "heavenly calling" [lit. upward calling].

15. Of course Paul is not speaking here of a moral perfection that has attained its final goal, for such he has never ascribed to himself, but rather of a moral culture which makes for and approaches this goal.

16. Read, "Only, what we have attained, in that let us continue to walk and be of one mind."—The meaning of this verse is: Until those higher perceptions, which still fail us, shall have been imparted to us by revelation, let us walk in accordance with what we have so far attained in spiritual things.

iii. 17—iv. 1. *Exhortation to steadfastness.*

18. The unworthiness of which Paul here speaks is not the same which he dealt with in ver. 2 of this chapter. There he spoke of the tendencies of Jewish-Christian *doctrine*. Here it is selfishness in *practical life* that brings dishonour upon the cross of Christ.

20. *Conversation* should be "commonwealth." The word means properly the state or commonwealth, that which Paul calls the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. iv. 26), of which the true Christians are already citizens in spirit, and shall one day be citizens in eternal reality.

iv. 2—23.

*Final exhortations to harmony, gentleness, trust in God and Christian virtue generally. Thanks for the assistance that has been sent to him.*

2. [*Euodias* should be "Euodia," a woman's name.]—The two women mentioned here and the reason of their disagreement are unknown to us.—*Beseech*: "exhort."

3. *And*: “yea” [so the best MSS.].—*Yoke-fellow*: The word thus translated is most probably a proper name, Syzygus. As the Epistle was addressed to the whole community at Philippi, Paul could not address any individual member separately without naming him.

5. *Moderation*: “gentleness.” The thought of the return of Christ, which was then supposed to be near at hand, should make the Philippians gentle in disposition and conduct.

7. *Passeth*: better “surpasseth.”—*Through*: “in” [so lit.].—By the *peace of God*, Paul understands the calmness of mind which excludes care, and is confirmed by continual prayer, which—not being produced by the understanding, but by faith and the assistance of the Holy Spirit—surpasseth understanding (John xiv. 27; Rom. xiv. 17, xv. 33; Col. iii. 15).

8. [*Just*: i.e. “righteous.”]—*Think on these things*: more strictly, “pay attention to these things.”

9. *Both*: “also.”

10. *That now at the last your care for me hath flourished again*, should be “that your circumstances have turned out so favourably that you should provide for me, though ye always cared (for me) but ye lacked opportunity.”

11. *In respect of*: “because of.”

12. *Everywhere and in all things I am instructed, &c.*, should be “in each and every circumstance I understand [lit. “I have been initiated”] both how to be full and how to be hungry, both how to abound and how to suffer want.”

[13. *Through*: lit. “in.”—Some of the best MSS. read simply, “I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.”]

14. *That ye did, &c.*, should be “that ye took upon yourselves my distress.”

15. *No Church, &c.*, should be “no community entered into fellowship with me in an account of giving and taking except you.”—The fellowship which the apostle here speaks of consists in this, that Christian communities repay him with the means of bodily sustenance for the spiritual benefits they have received from him (1 Cor. ix. 11). He had received such support from the Philippians when he left Macedonia again in consequence of the persecution which broke out against him in Philippi, as in Thessalonica and Berea (Acts xvii. 14). But

even before this time, during his residence in Thessalonica, the Philippians had sent assistance to him. There can be no doubt that they also had a share in the support which he afterwards received from Macedonia, at the time when he was in Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 9).

17. Read, "Not that I seek after the gift, but I seek after the fruit that serves to increase your account."—The gift which they send to the apostle will bring the givers themselves fruit or profit, a balance in favour of their own account (for the day of judgment); comp. 2 Cor. ix. 6—9.

18. *I am full*: i.e. I have plenty.—*An odour of a sweet smell*: The same phrase is used in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. v. 2), where it also denotes, though in a different connection, a *voluntary* sacrifice.

19. *According to, &c.*, should be "by means of his wealth, gloriously, in Christ Jesus."

21, 22. [*Salute, greet*: the same word in the Greek.]—*The brethren*: the more intimate friends of Paul who were then staying with him. The other members of the Christian community in Rome are embraced under the word *saints*.—*They that are of Caesar's household*: probably upper or under servants of the emperor (Nero).

[23. *With you all*: The best MSS. read, "with your spirit;" comp. Gal. vi. 18.]

## THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

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COLOSSÆ, or Colassæ, was a city upon the upper part of the river Lycus, in Phrygia. In the year 61 it had been destroyed, together with the neighbouring city of Laodicea, by an earthquake (see note on Matt. xxiv. 7), but, like this latter city, it had speedily recovered from this disaster. Paul had been twice in Phrygia (Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23), but without coming into the neighbourhood of Colossæ and Laodicea, on which account he treats both these communities as personally unknown to him (ii. 1, comp. also i. 4, 9, 23). The merit of founding the community at Colossæ belonged to a Colossian of the name of Epaphras, who must have been upon terms of special intimacy with Paul (i. 7, 8, iv. 12, 13), and is acknowledged by him without reserve as a fellow-labourer (i. 4, ii. 6). The community, which had only recently been founded (i. 3—5, 9, ii. 6, 7), consisted mainly of Gentile Christians (i. 21, 27, ii. 11, 13), and was from the beginning Pauline in character. Hence the great interest which Paul takes in it (i. 9, ii. 1). Epaphras had come to Paul from Colossæ, and he probably shared for a time his imprisonment, whence in the Epistle to Philemon he is spoken of as a fellow-prisoner (Philem. 23), as is Aristarchus in our Epistle (Col. iv. 10). This imprisonment may possibly have been the imprisonment in Cæsarea, since Aristarchus and Luke (iv. 10, 14) were with the apostle there, as well as in Rome. On the other hand, the mention of Demas (iv. 14, comp. 2 Tim. iv. 10), Timothy (i. 1, comp. Phil. i. 1, ii. 19) and Mark (iv. 10, comp. 2 Tim. iv. 11), would rather lead us to look to Rome. And this latter view is espe-

cially confirmed by the distinction drawn between Gentile and Jewish teachers, from which it appears (iv. 11, which agrees with Phil. i. 15—17, iii. 2) that the number of the latter who acted in a friendly and helpful manner towards the apostle was only small. In addition to this, the comparative freedom of action assumed here (iv. 3, 11) agrees with the account of his Roman imprisonment (Acts xxviii. 30, 31).

There can be no doubt that the Epistle to the Colossians was written by the hand of Timothy (i. 1) and taken to Colossæ by Tychicus (iv. 7, 8). The occasion of it was the news brought by Epaphras, referring chiefly to the intrusion into the community of a dangerous opposition to the Pauline gospel (i. 8, 9). These opponents, however, bear only a very general resemblance to those who are dealt with in the Epistle to the Galatians (see notes on ii. 16—23). They are much more like the "weak" who are mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xiv. 5, 6, 21), who, starting from principles of Essenic origin, i.e. from purely human assumptions (see note on ii. 8), prohibited the use of wine and flesh (see Vol. II. pp. 39 sq., 171 sq.). But while these latter simply had scruples about themselves eating and drinking all things without distinction, the opponents of Paul's teachings who had made their way into the communities in Colossæ and Laodicea—for the circumstances were the same in both places (ii. 1, iv. 13—16)—aimed at making this abstinence a condition of salvation for all alike (see note on ii. 21).

If our Epistle went no further than this in its description of the false teachers, then, in connection with this matter at any rate, there would be no difficulty in the way of our believing that it was written by Paul. But serious suspicions are aroused by the fact, that not only are the opponents ascetics in practice (see note on ii. 21), but, further, their doctrine is a system of angel-worship (see notes on i. 18, ii. 18). This seems to bring us down to the time of a clearly-defined gnosis, and is manifestly connected with similar ideas in the Epistle to the Ephesians (see note on ii. 15). And, moreover, the Christology of our Epistle,

which is opposed to this false Angelology (see notes on i. 14—21, ii. 9, 10), is worked out by means of the very same conceptions which we have already recognized as peculiarly characteristic of the Epistle to the Ephesians. We find again the “æons and generations” (see note on i. 26), the “head of the body” and the “fulness” (see note on ii. 9, 10, iii. 11), the “mystery” (see note on i. 27), the idea of the union of the things that have previously been divided and opposed to one another in the world (see notes on i. 20, iii. 15); and here, as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we find a preponderance of those ideas which are connected with the intellectual aspects of Christianity, “knowledge,” “wisdom,” “understanding,” &c. Some of these ideas are applied in such a way as to come into actual contradiction of the outlines of the Pauline system as known to us from other sources (see notes on i. 16, 24). Here again, as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we are puzzled by finding the assurance that Paul has been made a servant of the gospel and the church (i. 23), which is repeated again immediately afterwards (i. 25). Again, the disappearance of the characteristic Pauline ideas and the appearance of new watchwords proceed step by step together. The language of the Epistle, especially in the first two chapters, is pretty nearly as cumbrous and reiterative as that of the Epistle to the Ephesians. We find a similar choice of words and expressions to that which on the face of it removes the Epistle to the Ephesians from the category of the genuine remains of the apostle. The only difference between the two Epistles is, that the peculiarities of the Epistle to the Ephesians pervade the whole of it, whereas in the Epistle to the Colossians they are combined and interwoven with undoubtedly Pauline material, to which special attention will be called in the notes. In regard to the signs of unauthenticity, the Epistle to the Colossians is in part what the Epistle to the Ephesians is entirely.

To what has been already said must be added the fact that these two Epistles stand in a very peculiar literary relation to one another. Not only do they appear to have been written in

similar circumstances (see Col. iv. 7, 8 = Eph. vi. 21, 22), but they proceed *pari passu* in regard to form and contents, and are related to one another in a manner of which we have no other example in the writings of Paul, but which finds an exact parallel in the mutual relation of the first three Gospels (see Vol. I. pp. 39 sqq.). Hence we not only find serious difficulties regarding the genuineness of each Epistle separately, but, in addition to this, we are met by the great objection that it is difficult to understand how so powerful and original a mind as that of Paul could repeat itself in so poverty-stricken a fashion, as, for example, to compress all the expressions of Eph. i. 9, 18, iii. 8, 9, 16, 17, into the difficult sentence of Col. i. 27, or altogether to destroy the connection between vv. 12 and 13 in Col. iii. by placing them at the beginning and end of the chapter in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. iv. 2, 3, 32). In the notes on each Epistle we have given throughout the references to the corresponding passages in the other, and thus provided a safe clue whereby to follow out this puzzle. Naturally enough, there has been no want of various solutions of it. From the fact that in the Epistle to the Ephesians (vi. 21) the writer says that "ye also" may know (what the Colossians already know), it has been inferred that the Epistle to the Colossians was written first. Then, again, from his saying in the Epistle to the Colossians (iii. 8), "ye also" should put away (what the Ephesians have already put away), it has been argued that the Epistle to the Ephesians was written first. Thus for a long time those who maintained that the Epistle to the Ephesians was the original Epistle, and those who maintained that it was based upon the Epistle to the Colossians, stood in uncompromising opposition to one another. Latterly, however, there has been an increasing number of scholars who have maintained that there is a mutual interdependence of the two Epistles, and have assumed the existence of a short original Epistle of Paul to Colossæ, which the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians worked up into its present form, enlarging it by the introduction of ideas and expressions of his own. Such a

proceeding is by no means strange to those who are acquainted with the methods of the writers of that period and the origin of its literary productions. In the ancient church we find that this is a phenomenon of universal occurrence. In order to adapt them to the special purposes and ecclesiastical requirements of altered times and different circles of readers, writings are shortened or lengthened, or in parts completely re-written; they are, so to speak, in a continual state of transformation. As the first three Gospels resemble a leaf of clover, the three parts of which divide from a common point, which must be clearly ascertained by systematic study before it is possible to comprehend them aright, so these two Epistles form a pair similarly united; and the final interpretation of the one decides at the same time our opinion regarding the other.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

i. 1, 2 = Eph. i. 1, 2.

i. 3—8.

Paul gives thanks to God for the Christian character and disposition which have developed among the Colossians as the result of the preaching of the gospel among them.

3, 4 = Eph. i. 15—17.

5. *For the hope*: The *love* mentioned in ver. 4 (i.e. the interest in the welfare of other communities, the support given to others, and the hospitality of the Colossians) has its foundation in this hope (comp. Eph. i. 3, 12, 13, 18).—*Heard before*: i.e. before “we heard,” ver. 4.

6, 7. This calling up to memory the manner in which the gospel was brought to the readers of the Epistle and became effectual in them, gives occasion to mention also the personal relation in which the readers stood to those who brought the gospel and delivered it to them.

[7. *Fellowservant . . . minister*: more accurately, “fellow-slave . . . servant.”]

i. 9—12.

The mission of Epaphras affords a reason for Paul also to exert himself on behalf of his readers, and this, first of all, by unceasing prayer for their spiritual increase.

9. Comp. Eph. i. 8, 11, 15—17.—*Desire*: “entreat.”

10, 11 = Eph. iv. 1 (comp. also Eph. ii. 10), i. 17, 19, iii. 16.

12. Comp. Eph. i. 11, 18.

i. 13—23.

As Paul rejoices in the progress which, under the blessing of God, the gospel has made among his readers, so it is for them to understand in all its bearings the benefit of the redemption and reconciliation obtained for them through Christ.

13. Comp. Eph. i. 6, ii. 2, 3.

14—21. Here we have the first discourse concerning the person and office of Christ, in implied though unexpressed opposition to the system of the false teachers.

14 = Eph. i. 7.—*Through his blood*: These words are not found in the best MSS.

15. According to this verse, Christ is the visible representative of the eternally invisible God in the creation to which he himself, as being also a creature (comp. Heb. iii. 2, *note*), belongs. On the other hand, indeed, as ver. 16 shows, he is eternally superior to it.

16 = Eph. i. 21, 22; comp. Eph. i. 10, iii. 9, 10.—*By him*: “through him.” [Lit. it is “in him” the first time, and “through him” the second time].—*Thrones*: The same rank of angels as the “powers” spoken of in 1 Cor. xv. 24; Rom. viii. 38.—*By him, and for him*: “Through him and to him.” This goes beyond the teaching of Paul, inasmuch as Christ is here not only the intermediate cause (“through him”), as in 1 Cor. viii. 6, but also the goal of the creation of the world (“to him”).

17. Comp. Eph. i. 10, 22.—*By him*: “in him.”—In the “first-born” God created at the same time the whole world. This reminds us in every respect of the position of the Logos in the writings of Philo and in the Fourth Gospel (see Vol. I. pp. 204 sqq.).

18 = Eph. i. 22, 23; comp. Eph. i. 20, iv. 15, v. 23. The copiousness of these definitions of Christ suggests that the opponents of the writer held a different doctrine in regard to the cause and purpose of the world, assigning a more favourable position to the various classes of angels mentioned in ver. 16, and a less favourable to Christ.

19 = Eph. i. 23; comp. Eph. i. 10.—*The Father*: these words, or simply “God,” are rightly supplied to complete the sense of the verse.—*All fulness*: i.e. of the Deity, as in ii. 9.

20 = Eph. ii. 16, i. 10; comp. Eph. i. 7, ii. 13—15, except that in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is rather the opposites upon earth (Jews and Gentiles), here the opposites in the universe (heaven and earth, angels and men), which have been united into one by the reconciling death of Christ, and so have been reconciled at the same time to one another and in him.

21 = Eph. ii. 1, 12, 13, 15, 16; comp. Eph. ii. 2, 3, 10, iv. 18.—*Sometime* should be “at one time.”

22. Comp. Eph. ii. 16; and for the second part of the verse Eph. i. 4, v. 27.

23. Comp. Eph. iii. 17, and iii. 1.

i. 24—29.

The preceding demand is supported by reference to the apostle's own labours and sufferings for the good of his readers.

24 = Eph. iii. 1, 13. As the church is, as it were, the completion of Christ (see note on Eph. i. 23), so sufferings which have been borne in its service and for its good are a continuation, supplement and completion of the sufferings of Christ. This idea is irreconcilable with Paul's fundamental idea of the death of Christ.

25 = Eph. iii. 2; comp. Eph. iii. 7, 8.—[*Dispensation*: better, "stewardship;" see note on Eph. iii. 2.]

26 = Eph. iii. 3, 5, 9.—*From ages, &c.*: lit. "from the æons and from the generations," i.e. ages and generations long.—*Is*: "has been."

27 = Eph. i. 9, 18, iii. 9.—*Would make known*: "has willed to make known."—*In you* should be "among you."—According to this verse, also, the substance of the divine mystery is "Christ among you" (i.e. among the Gentile Christians), the bringing in of the Gentiles, and the abolition of the opposition between the different nations.

28. Comp. Eph. iii. 9, iv. 13.

29. Comp. Eph. iii. 7, 20.

ii. 1—5.

The apostle puts himself in a personal relation with his hearers by assuring them of the great exertions he makes to bring those who are personally unknown to him into perfect truth.

1. According to this, the communities at Colossæ and Laodicea were personally unknown to Paul.

2. Comp. Eph. iii. 17—iv. 16.—*Acknowledgment*: "knowledge."—*And of the Father and*: These words are not found in the best MSS., which therefore read, "the mystery of the God of Christ." [The readings here are very various; among others are, "the mystery of God, which is Christ;" "the mystery of God in Christ;" "the mystery of God, the Father of Christ;" "the mystery of the God and Father of Christ;" "the mystery of God the

Father and of Christ;” “the mystery of God;” and the reading given in A.V.]

3. Comp. Eph. iii. 9, 19.

4. *Enticing* should be “deceitful.”—This verse is directed against the false representation that the apostle cared little or nothing about the communities with which he was not personally acquainted (comp. Eph. iv. 17, v. 6).

ii. 6—15.

The apostle now passes on to the proper subject of his letter, for the sake of which it is written, viz. the warning against foreign influences, including the demand to submit to circumcision. In the first place, he establishes the fact that Christian baptism, which his readers have already accepted, represents on a higher stage of fulfilment the very same thing which circumcision was in the Old Testament, so that it would be unmeaning to wish to have both together.

6. Comp. Eph. iv. 17, 20.

7. Comp. Eph. ii. 20, iii. 17.

8. Comp. Eph. iv. 14, v. 6.—*Philosophy*: The false doctrine was based upon a definite philosophical system, according to which the whole material world was a thing opposed in its very nature to God. Hence the requirement of abstinence (vv. 16, 21).—*Tradition*: The same word that is used in Matt. xv. 2, 3 = Mark vii. 3, 5. The demands just mentioned went beyond the Law, which left men free at least to take meat and wine.—*Rudiments of the world* should be “elements of the (material and visible) universe” (see note on Gal. iv. 1—7).

9, 10. Here we have a second disquisition on the nature and office of Christ of the same character as that in i. 14—21.

9. Comp. Eph. i. 23.—The full and complete nature of God, which, according to the Gnostics, was divided among a whole kingdom of spirits (the “æons”), dwells in Christ; and, moreover, dwells in him *bodily*; that is to say, either that Christ, living in the body, embraces within himself all that makes God, who is the Spirit, to be God; or else that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him *bodily*, as distinguished from the *shadows* of the Old Testament mentioned in ver. 17.

10. *Complete* should be “filled;” i.e., as in Eph. iii. 19, “unto all the fulness of God.” As God completely fills Christ, so the

members of the community share in this fulness inasmuch as they are members of his body (comp. Eph. i. 23).—*Head*: of all angelic powers, as in Eph. i. 21. On the purpose of this statement, see note on i. 18.

11. *The body of the sins of the flesh* should be “the body of the flesh.”—The circumcision “made with hands” is the earthly type of the process “not made with hands” (comp. 2 Cor. v. 1) which takes place in baptism, and which is here called the “putting off the body of the flesh” (comp. Rom. vi. 4). This is the “circumcision of Christ” (comp. Eph. ii. 11).

12. Comp. Eph. ii. 6, i. 20.—*Faith of the operation* should be “faith in the operation.”

13 = Eph. ii. 5; comp. Eph. ii. 1, 4, 11.

14 = Eph. ii. 15, 16.—*Of ordinances*: This shows that *the handwriting* is “the Law.”—This verse is practically equivalent to Gal. iii. 13.

15. *Spoiled*: i.e. stripped of their armour and power.—*In it* should be “in him.”—The contents of this verse are connected with Eph. ii. 15, 16, iii. 10, iv. 8. “In him,” i.e. by the result of Christ’s cause upon earth, God has solemnized an open triumph before the world over the spiritual powers which bore sway among the Gentiles, and made a spectacle of them in all their emptiness and unreality before those who had hitherto been their servants and adherents.

ii. 16—23.

More detailed description and refutation of the false doctrines, the natural wisdom and human precepts of which, with their various additional mediations between man and God, have been left far behind by those believers who hold fast to the Head.

16. Just the same as Gal. iv. 10; Rom. xiv. 2 sq., 17.

17. The same as Heb. viii. 5, ix. 9—11, x. 1.

18. The text of this verse is somewhat obscure and doubtful. The idea of the false teachers is that man, whose origin is earthly and material, occupies too humble a position to have direct intercourse with God, and therefore requires the mediation of angelic powers.—*Beguile you of your reward* should be “decide against you in regard to your prize.”

19 = Eph. iv. 15, 16.

20. Exactly the same thing as in Rom. vi. 2, 6—11, vii. 4—6;

Gal. ii. 19, 20, iv. 3, 8—10; comp. Eph. ii. 15.—*Rudiments of the world* should be “elements of the (materially visible) universe.”

21. The precepts here adduced as those of the opponents show us that they were persons who sought to bring about the emancipation of the spirit from the fetters of the body by a consistent enfeebling and mortification of the latter (“ascetics”), and who, with a view to this, introduced distinctions in regard to different kinds of food just like those observed by the “weak” who are spoken of in Rom. xiv.—[*Touch not*, &c.: more exactly, “Handle not (lit. “grasp not”), taste not, touch not.”]

22, 23. The construction here is difficult. The general sense is that of the A.V.—*Will worship* should be “arbitrary service.” On this and “humility,” see note on ver. 18 and p. 36. The sense of these two verses is practically the same as that of 1 Cor. vi. 13.—*Neglecting of the body*: “not sparing the body” [so lit., i.e. treating it with harshness and severity].

### iii. 1—11.

Instead of expecting salvation from any arbitrary self-mortification, the readers of the Epistle are to seek after communion with the super-mundane Christ, and divest themselves of everything that militates against this.

1, 2. Comp. Eph. ii. 6, i. 20.

3 = Eph. iii. 9. Exactly the same as Rom. vi. 8—11, vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19, 20.

4. Comp. Eph. i. 18.—*Our*: “your” [the MSS. are divided].

5—7 = Eph. ii. 2, 3, iv. 19, v. 3, 5, 6, 8.

7. Read, “Among whom ye also formerly walked.”

8—10. After Eph. iv. 22—26, 29, 31, v. 4.

10. *Is renewed in knowledge*: “is being renewed unto the knowledge.” The fact that emphasis is laid upon this particular point, corresponds with what has been said (pp. 36 sq.) of the writer’s apprehension of Christianity from the intellectual side.

11. *Christ is all and in all*: so that he “filleth” all, as in Eph. i. 23.

### iii. 12—17.

Commands as to the things that are to be “put on,” corresponding with the prohibitions regarding things that are to be “put off” (vv. 5—9). The opposition between the old man and the

new man set forth in vv. 10, 11, forms a suitable transition from the negations to the affirmations.

12, 13 = Eph. iv. 2, 32, v. 1, 2.—*Bowels of mercies*: “heartfelt pity.”

14 = Eph. iv. 3.

15 = Eph. iv. 4; comp. Eph. ii. 16.—*Peace of God*: The best authorities read, “peace of Christ.”—*In one body*: Because the tendency of Christ’s calling was to establish unity in the world.

16 = Eph. v. 19. Read, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Teach and admonish yourselves [or “one another”] in all wisdom, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and sing of his grace [lit. “in grace”] unto the Lord [or “unto God,” according to the best MSS.] in your hearts.”

17 = Eph. v. 20. Contrast to the distinctions of kinds of food made by the false teachers (ii. 16, 21), just the same as in 1 Cor. x. 29—31.

iii. 18—iv. 1. *The domestic table of commandments.*

Instead of applying themselves to the pursuit of an extraordinary and romantic sanctity, the Colossians should rather have a due regard for the social relations of ordinary life.

18 = Eph. v. 22, 24.—[There is scarcely any MSS. authority for the word *own* in this verse.]

19 = Eph. v. 25, 28.

20 = Eph. vi. 1.

21 = Eph. vi. 4.—*Provoke not*: i.e. by excessive strictness that finds fault with everything, or by a passionate disposition on the part of the parent.

22—25 = Eph. vi. 5—8.—The apostle has reasons for specially developing this particular point (comp. Introduction to the Epistle to Philemon).

25. *Receive for the wrong*: “receive the wrong” [so lit.].

iv. 1 = Eph. vi. 9.

iv. 2—4 = Eph. vi. 18—20.

A request for this intercession strengthens the spiritual bond between the apostle and his readers.

3. *Door of utterance* (lit. “door of the word”): i.e. opportunity of preaching the gospel.

iv. 5, 6 = Eph. iv. 29, v. 15, 16, vi. 20.

Regulation of their conduct in relation to the Gentiles by whom they are surrounded.

5. *Redeeming the time*: lit. "buying up the time" [or "opportunity"]. See note on Eph. v. 16.

6. *With grace*: lit. "in grace," i.e. agreeable, gracious.—*Seasoned with salt*: i.e. not weakly sentimental, but sharp and to the point (comp. note on Mark ix. 50).

iv. 7—9.

7, 8 = Eph. vi. 21, 22.—[*That he might know your estate*: Some of the best MSS. read, "that ye might know our estate" (i.e. how we fare).]

9. Onesimus is the run-away slave on whose account the Epistle to Philemon was written (see Introd. to that Epistle).

iv. 10—18.

10. *My fellowprisoner*: Some of his friends shared the apostle's imprisonment in order that they might always be at hand. They took turns at this service, and hence in the Epistle to Philemon we find Epaphras spoken of as "fellowprisoner" (Philem. 23).—*Marcus*: see Vol. I. p. 45.—*Sister's son* should be "cousin."—*Commandments* should be "orders" or "a commission." Probably he was to make a collection, or something of that kind, in Asia Minor.

11. The majority of the Jewish teachers who were residing at the place of the apostle's imprisonment were hostile to him (see notes on Phil. i. 15—18).—[*These only* probably means only these among the Jews.]

12. *Labouring fervently*: "wrestling."

13. *A great zeal* should be "much labour."—*Hierapolis*: Going westwards from Colossæ, Laodicea lay to the left of the Lycus, and Hierapolis to the right. The circumstances of the three neighbouring cities must have been pretty much the same.

14. *Luke*: see Vol. I. p. 48.

15. *Church*: "community."

16. *The Epistle from Laodicea*: i.e. the Epistle which is to be sent to you from Laodicea. As it is not called an Epistle to Laodicea, this may mean the circular described on p. 2.

17. Archippus must have been one of the presidents of the community (comp. Philem. 2).

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

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THE First Epistle to the Thessalonians is pretty generally admitted to be the oldest written document of Christianity, and a genuine production of the Pauline spirit. Apart from the most recent attacks (see note on i. 3), the objections to the theory of its Pauline authorship are principally of three kinds :

(1) The vagueness of its contents, which, except in one passage (iv. 13—18), neither present us with any prominent doctrine, nor have any clear practical aim.

(2) Its dependence upon the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Book of Acts.

(3) The reflection, so to speak, in the Epistle, of the community to which it is addressed. Many passages would lead us to imagine that it was addressed to a community which had been founded for some time, whereas, if written by Paul, it must have been written only a few months after he was in Thessalonica.

1. In answer to the first of these objections, it may be urged, however, that although the doctrinal contents of the Epistle display neither the strict sequence nor the wealth of thought, least of all the carefully-weighed completeness, of the comprehensive Christian system which is found in the four great Epistles of Paul, yet the Epistle is not in the least wanting in a very definite occasion and purpose. These are found in the *external* and *internal* troubles which endangered the Christian life of the young community at Thessalonica. The external troubles were the attacks of the Jews of the city upon the gospel of the redemption, and upon the personal sincerity of him who had

brought it to them. To these attacks—perverse manifestations of synagogic zeal, which followed upon the track of the apostle, persecuting him in his labours even as far as Beræa (Acts xvii. 13)—the apostle could only reply in writing (i. 4—ii. 16); for in spite of his very warm desire to renew his personal relations with the young community, the accomplishment of this wish was for a time denied him, and he was compelled to content himself with sending his assistant Timothy, and hearing the vivid accounts which he brought back.

The *inner* occasion of the Epistle is still more plain. Paul's confident proclamation of the impending return of Christ, though it had had a deeply moving effect upon the hearts of those who had listened to his preaching in Thessalonica, had fallen somewhat strangely upon their ears. This was not a favourable soil for such preaching. Thessalonica was identical with the ancient Halia or Thernæ, described in legend as the proud daughter of a fugitive Trojan colony. In the time of Cassander, husband of Thessalonike and son-in-law to Philip of Macedonia, it had been made into an important commercial city by his removal of neighbouring town colonies to this city of his wife. After the battle of Pydna (B.C. 168), it became a Roman city, the most important and active in the province, and the capital of the second "region" or district. Inhabited by a motley population of Jews, Greeks and Romans, and exposed to all the dissipation of comparatively extensive intercourse with foreigners, the city was given up to the frivolities of the public games and iniquities of licentiousness, so that Lucian (in the second century A.D.) still speaks of it as an asylum for every kind of moral filthiness. During the civil war between Pompey and Cæsar, it was the seat of the Roman senate and the party of Pompey; and during the civil war that succeeded this, it was the stronghold of Octavian in Macedonia. It was frequently the residence of Roman exiles of rank and position, as, for example, at one time, of Cicero. From all these causes it was affected, not only by the powerful influences of a world-wide commerce and imperial political inte-

rests, but also by the more subtle influences of a decaying Roman culture and philosophy. This certainly was no favourable arena for a man of Paul's humble position and appearance to contend in with his proclamation of the approaching dominion of a crucified Jew.

Paul's preaching, however, had overcome these obstacles. The exemplary cheerfulness of his character, undestroyed by the grievous experiences of Philippi (ii. 2), his firm and confident faith in himself and his European mission, and the sacred power of his preaching which resulted from this (i. 5), had secured for him and for his words natural admiration and consequently a favourable reception even amidst the worldly, idolatrous and superficial bustle and excitement of the city (i. 9). The touching tenderness of his care for the little community he had succeeded in founding (ii. 7), the value of which was increased to them by the unselfishness of his labours (ii. 9)—an unselfishness rare enough in the busy city of buyers and sellers—had bound firmly to the apostle the hearts that he had taken by storm.

But while the fiery arrows of an unshaken religious conviction had aroused in some the burning glow of Christian expectation, and smoothed for others, who were slower of belief, the ways of Christian faith and joy, the involuntary brevity of his stay did not leave him sufficient time to reconcile the enthusiasm of the former with the regular duties of earthly life, nor to bring the growing faith of the latter in eternal things to a successful maturity. No long time elapsed, after he was compelled to leave them, before the disadvantages began to appear which naturally accompany incomplete and hasty arrangements. And not only was this the case in regard to the external arrangements of the community, especially the relation of its members to the elders, but also their Christian faith and love and hope betrayed the want of apostolic guidance. Here, a moral laxity in the midst of all the "prophetic" religious excitement, justifying itself by its expectation of the immediate approach of the end of the world (iv. 12)—there, Macedonian coldness, which, without the awaken-

ing for which only the apostle's personal presence was sufficient, is unable even to understand the powerful influence of the Christian spirit and "despises prophecy" (v. 20)—and finally, in addition to all this, doubts arising as to the truth of that which had formed the very centre of Paul's preaching to the Thessalonians, doubts in regard to the impending advent of Jesus Christ and his glorification in the community, which was to be brought to him in the joy of its victory. Since Paul's departure they have stood by open graves. Heaven has remained silent. Will it open ere death call away those that still remain? Is there no sign when the Lord shall appear?

Truly, here were questions and matter enough to move the apostle to write from Athens (A.D. 53 or 54) to the community which so sorely needed his fatherly care both with regard to its outward and its inward affairs, that he might bring the enthusiastic to soberness, the sober to the communion of the Holy Spirit, the fearful to hope, the uncertain to clearness of vision, and all—and in this aim all the other aims of the Epistle are comprehended in a higher unity—all to blameless readiness for the day of the coming of our Lord (iii. 13), when the apostle expects to bring his community unto Jesus Christ as "his joy and the crown of his glorying" (ii. 19).

2. The second objection that has been raised against the Pauline authorship of this Epistle is, that the historical framework is in agreement with the *Book of Acts*. This ceases to cause any surprise as soon as we call to mind the composition of that book and its purpose, as described in the introduction to it (Vol. I. pp. 257 sqq.). If the undoubted divergences of the Book of Acts from the trustworthy statements of the Pauline Epistles are invariably to be explained by the endeavours after conciliation which were necessitated solely by the disputes between the Gentile-Christian and the Jewish-Christian parties, and which had these disputes alone in view, then as a matter of course the two accounts will agree wherever these disputes do not exist, as, for example, in Thessalonica, where the opponents of the apostle

were *Jews* and not Jewish Christians (see note on ii. 14—16). The resemblance, again, both in ideas and language, between certain passages in this Epistle and corresponding passages in the other Epistles of Paul (comp. 1 Thess. i. 5 with 1 Cor. ii. 4; 1 Thess. i. 6 with 1 Cor. xi. 1; 1 Thess. i. 8 with Rom. i. 8; 1 Thess. ii. 4 sqq. with 1 Cor. ii. 4, iv. 3 sq., ix. 15 sq., 2 Cor. ii. 17, v. 11), are not more considerable or more striking than the parallels which are found in the four confessedly genuine Epistles of Paul. Especially are many points of contact with the Epistles to the Corinthians explained by the similar position and constitution of the communities at Thessalonica and at Corinth, which, in spite of the difference in regard to the apostle's opponents in the two places, present themselves at once to our view.

3. The third of the objections which we have already named is based mainly upon three passages, and will be dealt with in the commentary on the Epistle (see notes on ii. 18, iii. 10, iv. 9 sq.).

4. There is a fourth objection that has been urged against the authenticity of this Epistle, based upon the unique description of the return of Christ (iv. 14 sqq.), which Paul never repeats elsewhere. This, however, has, from the first, been urged with very little confidence. It is perfectly natural that, as time passed on and the Pauline expectation of the coming of Christ remained ever unfulfilled, this expectation should become more and more free from any material delineation of the end of the world and the beginning of the new world. It is natural that such a change should have taken place between the dates of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians and the Epistle to the Romans; and it is precisely in furnishing us with this powerful material description of the coming of Jesus Christ that the First Epistle to the Thessalonians proves itself to be an *early* primitive Christian document, forming by this very characteristic a connecting link between the full, fresh, primitive Christian life, and primitive Christian literature with its growing inclination to the formation of Christian

conceptions in the place of the various existing or expected realities. And, moreover, we can find no *contradictions* between the description of the completion of Christ's kingdom in this Epistle and the descriptions in the Epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians (comp. Rom. xi. 15, 26, 30, 31 (see Vol. I. p. 161), and 1 Cor. xv. 12—28, with 1 Thess. iv. 14 sqq.). And, what is most important, there is one thing at least even here which is genuinely Pauline, viz. the connection between the call to free life in the fellowship of the fiery and unquenchable Spirit of God, and the exhortations to sober work, both of the outer and the inner man. "The children of day must stand upon the watch-tower like warriors with clear and undimmed eyes; and only thus introduced and surrounded by powerful appeals to the bold and warlike spirit of his Macedonians, does he give the answer to the questions concerning the last things, questions which we may well understand had caused so many tears, so many dreams."

The line of thought pursued in the Epistle is indicated in detail in the notes. Of the two chief sections, the first (i. 4—ii. 16) is *defensive*, directed against the apostle's opponents; the second (iv. 1—v. 22) is *edifying*, didactic and hortatory, and is addressed to the community which the apostle has founded, which is to await, with religious fervour and moral discipline, as a truly receptive community, the return of Christ.

Between these two sections, confirming the first and preparing the way for the second, is a third part, which is *personal* (ii. 17—iii. 13). He speaks of the fellowship of the heart which unites the apostle with the community, and of the *compensation* for his disappointment in regard to that renewal of their personal intercourse which he so warmly desires, but which is impossible to him; viz. *the sending of Timothy*.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

### i. 1. OPENING SALUTATION.

*Paul*: The writer does not add here his apostolic title, as he does in his later writings (Gal. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Rom. i. 1). Emphasis laid upon this rank could have no force as against Jewish, but only against Jewish-Christian opponents.—*Silvanus and Timotheus*: personally known to the readers as Paul's fellow-labourers and companions (Acts xvii. 10, 15). [Here and throughout it is better to put the name Timotheus in the familiar English form "Timothy," as in 2 Cor. i. 1.]—*Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father, &c.*: It is in Him and the Lord Jesus Christ that the community has its life. They are the power that brought the community together and keep it together.—*From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*: These words are not found in the best MSS.

### i. 2, 3.

Assurance of a spiritual communion not broken by local separation, a common spiritual life carried on with a feeling of gratitude in the sight of God.

3. The ground of the thanksgiving to God.—*Your work of faith*: the ardent, sacred work (see ver. 6) of turning to the gospel.—*Labour of love*: such loving care as had been already called forth by the persecutions of the Jewish opponents (Acts xvii. 10, 14, 15).—*Patience of hope*: "Perseverance in hope," a special matter of thankfulness, considering the many hardships tending to destroy all hope (ver. 6).—With the triad of Faith, Love, Hope, comp. 1 Thess. v. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

The fact that the words "work," "labour," "perseverance" (patience), are found in Rev. ii. 2, does not show that the writer of the Epistle copied these current terms from the Revelation. Though the same words are used, the historical reference in the two cases is so different and indeed contrary, that it appears a

very artificial interpretation to explain this verse as a later attempt to combine the Jewish-Christian expression of Rev. ii. 2 with the words of Paul in 1 Cor. xiii. 13 in the interests of the subsequent reconciliation of Jewish and Pauline Christianity.

i. 4—ii. 16. FIRST PART.

i. 4—ii. 13. *Refutation of attacks made upon the apostle's work.*

The slanderous suspicions cast upon the apostle's work (ii. 3) are met by the direction of the attention of the readers (1) to the *power* of his first preaching and its fruitful influence upon the minds of the Thessalonian Christians (i. 4—10); (2) to the great *confidence* of his preaching, the secret of its fruitful effect (ii. 1, 2); (3) to the testimony of the *Holy Spirit* as the main-spring of his preaching (ii. 3—12). The whole section is an elaboration of ver. 5.

i. 4—10. *The power.*

The historical proof of the *power* of his preaching rests, on the one hand, on the powerful impression made by the gospel of Christ upon the susceptible nature of the Thessalonians (vv. 4, 5), and, on the other hand, upon the fruits of their own testimony and missionary zeal, which, in spite of all obstacles, this preaching had produced among them (vv. 6—10).

4. Read, "Knowing, brethren beloved by God, your election," i.e. Being firmly convinced of your election.

6. *Followers* should be "imitators." [*Having received, &c.*: i.e. ye were like us in receiving, &c. De Wette.]

7. *Ensamples*: "an ensample."

8. *Sounded out* should be "hath sounded out," i.e. hath resounded as in an oft-repeated echo.

[9. *Shew of us*: lit. "report concerning us."]

[10. *Which delivered, &c.*: lit. "who delivereth us from the wrath which is coming.]"

ii. 1, 2. *The confidence.*

But all that has now been mentioned was the fruit of the unwavering confidence and joy which filled and supported the first preaching of Paul himself among them in the face of all that he had to contend with.

[1. *Was not in vain* should be "hath not been in vain.]"

2. *But even after that* should be "but although."—*We had*

*suffered before*: see Acts xvi. 22—24.—*Bold*: The apostle believed in his work and his mission. And this boldness had good ground, as explained in vv. 3—12.—*With much contention*: “with much conflict.”

ii. 3—12. *The Holy Spirit.*

The ground of the apostle's boldness. His preaching to the Thessalonians had been *in the Holy Spirit*.

ii. 3, 4.

The motive power of his preaching was the commission from God, not the apostle's egotism, still less any desire to obtain popularity among men.

Read, “For our exhortation (sprang) not from sinful error, nor of an unclean disposition, nor (did it exercise itself) in deceitful thoughts; but as we have been found of God worthy to be entrusted with the gospel, so,” &c.

An incidental indication of the character of his opponents is here to be found (ver. 3) in their own accusations against the apostle. They brought against him the three-fold reproach of sinful departure from the worship of his fathers, of insincere purposes in this faithlessness, and, above all, of crafty self-seeking.

ii. 5—8.

But *God himself* knows the motives from which His servant's preaching arose, and bears witness to Paul in his *conscience*, that the spirit of his proclamation of the gospel to the Thessalonians was not a spirit of flattery nor of covetousness (ver. 5), not a spirit of ambition (vv. 6, 7), but a spirit of the tenderest love conceivable, a love that was willing to impart its best power, and even to sacrifice life itself.

5. Read, “For we never went about with flattering words [lit. were in a flattering word], as you know, nor under an excuse for covetousness.”

6. *When we might have been burdensome* should be “although we might have appeared with great authority.”—*The apostles of Christ*: “Christ's apostles.”

7. *Nurse* should be “foster-mother.”

8. *Souls*: “lives.”—*Were dear*: “became dear.”

ii. 9—12.

The community at Thessalonica itself also bears witness

that the spirit which the apostle manifested among them was a spirit of unselfishness, holiness, righteousness, and blamelessness, a spirit of exhortation, of consolation, and fatherly admonition, working with one aim only; namely, to make the community he had founded “worthy of God.”

9. *For labouring*: omit “for.”—*Because we would not be chargeable*: “that we might not be burdensome.”

10. *Among you that believe* should be “toward you as toward believers.”

[11. *How we exhorted*, &c.: lit. “exhorting and comforting (or, according to De Wette, “encouraging”) and conjuring you.”]

[12. *Who hath called you*: lit. “calling you;” i.e. either “who was calling you,” referring to the time about which he is writing, or possibly more generally “who calleth you.”]

#### ii. 13.

This verse sums up at once the whole section (i. 2—ii. 12) which states the grounds of gratitude to God in relation to the community at Thessalonica, and then carries us on to the description of the enemies against which the community itself must guard itself with special care, in order that it may remain worthy of God’s call to His kingdom and His glory (ver. 12.)—*Received the word of God which ye heard of us*: “received from us the word of the divine preaching.”—*As it is in truth the word of God*: as a word from the mouth of God, as in truth it is God himself who speaks to you through me. The peculiarity of the reception which Paul’s preaching met with was the immediate belief and self-surrendering enthusiasm. Towards the word of men the hearers assume an attitude of trial, doubt and judgment. (See further, Vol. I. p. 27.)

#### ii. 14—16. *The opponents.*

The apostle’s opponents were Jews, who, while their faithless fellow-countryman was still in Thessalonica, had already made him feel all the vigorous hatred of the innovations of Christianity which the Israelitish national religion cherished, and who now transferred this hatred to his fellow-believers in the city.—*Followers* should be “imitators.” [They became like the churches in Judea in suffering persecution. Comp. i. 6.]—*Countrymen*: the word means simply fellow-inhabitants of Thessalonica, members of the same state, without any distinction between those of

Jewish and those of Gentile descent; but the Jewish nationality of the opponents is distinctly indicated. Their contest with Paul and his community has nothing to do with the internal divisions of Christianity, but rather is directed against Christianity as such, especially against its proclamation of salvation to all nations, and its overthrow of the Jewish privileges of salvation. The picture which the apostle gives of them, like the speech of the dying Stephen (Acts vii.), contains at the same time the refutation of their attacks. With stern rebuke he points out to them, that it is the very perfection of the national Jewish religion that Christ has brought, and that their contention against him is but rage against their own flesh.

16. *For the wrath is come upon them* (comp. i. 10; Luke xxi. 23). Already in the signs of the approaching political end of the Jews, the apostle foresees their destruction.—*To the uttermost*: i.e. to its full extent, so that the divine wrath can discharge itself fully and completely against the rebellious people without restraint.

ii. 17—iii. 13. PERSONAL SECTION OF THE EPISTLE *between the first and second parts.*

With such opponents to contend against, when Satan had twice frustrated the apostle's wish and resolve to visit the Thessalonians in person, it was desirable to obtain information concerning the state of the community by means of a trustworthy messenger. He gives thanks for the good behaviour of the community.

ii. 17—20.

The apostle's longing for personal intercourse with the community that he had founded.

18. [*We would have come*: better, "we wished to come."—There is no valid reason why the fact of Paul's twice resolving to return to Thessalonica should be supposed to involve a longer intermediate period than the months which intervened between his departure thence and the composition of this Epistle.

19. [*Rejoicing*: strictly, "boasting."—*Even ye*: Some translate, "ye also," i.e. are not ye also, as well as others, our hope and joy? &c.—*Our Lord Jesus Christ*: the best MSS. omit the word "Christ."]

## iii. 1—5.

The substitute for Paul's personal visit, which was impossible; viz. the sending of Timothy.

1. *Wherefore, &c.*, should be "Wherefore we have not borne it any longer, and have resolved to remain at Athens alone."—*At Athens alone*: in such grievous circumstances, in a fruitful nursery of heathen culture and mis-culture, with nothing but his simple preaching to set against all the seductive brilliancy of antiquity, and *alone*. Stress is laid upon the sacrifice which he made in sending away for a time his tried helper, while engaged in a work for the kingdom of Christ, so peculiarly difficult, and requiring every possible assistance.

[2. *Minister of God and our fellowlabourer in the gospel, &c.*: One of the oldest MSS. has "Fellowlabourer of God in the gospel," &c.; some have "minister of God in the gospel," &c. The reading of the A. V. probably dates from the eighth or ninth century.]

2, 3. *And to comfort you, &c.*, should be, "And to exhort you for the sake of your faith, that no man be beguiled in these afflictions," i.e. that no one should weakly yield to such oppression (ii. 3, 14—16).

[4. *That we should suffer tribulation*: better, "that we should have to be afflicted" (the verb being of the same root as the word translated "afflictions" in ver. 3).]

5. [*Forbear* should be "bear it;" see note on ver. 1].—*Lest, &c.*, should be "Whether perhaps the tempter had tempted you, and our labour might be made vain."

## iii. 6—13.

The accounts which Timothy brings, favourable on the whole, move the apostle to give joyful thanks to God, but only increase his longing to visit them again in person, that they might strengthen and purify one another for a vigorous Christian preparation for the second coming of Christ. So long as the apostle's way does not bring him visibly into their midst, may the invisible power of holy love prepare their hearts for the day of the Lord.

6. *Charity*: "love."

7. Read, "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted on your

account, concerning all our necessity and affliction, through your faith.”

10. *Perfect that which is lacking in your faith* (lit. “the deficiencies of your faith”): i.e. complete that which is still wanting to your faith. These words indicate plainly a community *recently founded*, the Christian training of which is still incomplete.

11. “But may He, God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.” [On the phrase *God himself and our Father*, see note on Gal. i. 4.—The best MSS. read “our Lord Jesus,” omitting “Christ.”]

[13. *God even our Father*: see note on Gal. i. 4.—*Christ* omitted in the best MSS., as in ii. 19, iii. 11.—*Saints*: strictly, “holy ones,” understood by some commentators to mean angels.—Some of the oldest MSS. have “Amen” at the end of the verse.]

#### iv. 1—v. 22. SECOND PART.

Separate exhortations to the establishment of a genuine Christian church for the reception of the Lord at his second coming.

#### iv. 1, 2.

Read, “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you, in the Lord Jesus, as ye have received from us the right manner of conduct and well-pleasing unto God [lit. “how ye ought to walk and to please God,” after which some ancient MSS. add, “as indeed ye do walk”], that so ye abound more and more.”—*Abound more and more*: “increase,” viz. in thus conducting yourselves so as to please God.

#### iv. 3—8.

Admonition against *unchastity* and *covetousness*, the two vices which were regarded as the chief vices of heathenism. In Rom. i. 29 they are mentioned together as the guilt of the Gentiles, as also Eph. iv. 17, 19; Col. iii. 5; comp. 2 Pet. ii. 14.

3. *This*: i.e. sanctification, first in the relations of the sexes (3—5), and secondly in the business relations of every-day life (6). In both these it is right to keep oneself pure and holy by a high regard for honour and the property of one’s brethren (7, 8).

4, 5. Read, “That every one of you may know how to win his wife in sanctification and honour, not in passion of sensual desire, as the Gentiles which know not God.”—The Christian

must not be guided, in his choice of a wife, by blind sensual passion, but rather, as becomes a man striving after salvation, he must seek her in honour, i.e. with reverence for the woman, who is to be regarded, not in heathen fashion as an object of lust, but as a child of God who in Christ is by birth the equal of man.—There is no sign here of the apostle's ascetic renunciation of marriage altogether, which we find later in the Epistles to the Corinthians.

6. *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter:* i.e. "that no man disregard his brother, or injure him in business."—[*All such:* i.e. "all such things."]

7. [*Hath not called us:* strictly, did not call us.]—*Unto holiness* should be "in sanctification" [the same word as in ver. 3].

[8. Read, "who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you."]

iv. 9—12.

The genuine Christian contrast to the vices of the Gentiles, viz. *brotherly love*.

9, 10. *Increase more and more:* viz. in brotherly love. [The word here rendered "increase" is the same that the apostle uses in iii. 12, iv. 1, and is there rendered "abound."] The exhortation itself is preceded by the express recognition of the proofs which the Thessalonians have already given of their Christian brotherly love, that thus the hearts of the readers may be the more inclined to observe the exhortation which follows. On other occasions also Paul introduces solemn exhortations in a similar manner (comp. v. i.; 2 Cor. ix. 1).—The Greek word in ver. 9, which is rendered "taught of God," does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It refers to the divine teaching which they have borne within themselves since their heart received the gospel, the "word of God" (ii. 13).—The time between the departure of the apostle and the writing of this letter was certainly sufficient for them to win praise for Christian brotherly love within the still very narrow circle of the Christians of Macedonia (vv. 9, 10). At the same time it was likewise sufficient to render an exhortation to a peaceful, quiet and active conduct of life advisable. Moreover, the praise is limited by the wish which the apostle adds, that the brotherly love which they have manifested towards their fellow-christians of Macedonia may *increase*. And the necessity of such an exhortation as that of

vv. 11, 12, is fully explained by the fact that the apostle had not been able to complete in peace even the *foundation*, materially and spiritually, of the life of the Christian community at Thessalonica, but had been compelled unwillingly to withdraw from a work that was in every respect unfinished.

iv. 13—v. 11.

Exhortation to a believing confidence and active watchfulness in regard to the second coming of Christ.

iv. 13—18.

The first part of this exhortation to a right doctrine is intended to arouse hope and comfort in regard to the last things. The predominant sentiment of the true Christian is the very opposite of sorrow, which is the secret but prevailing sentiment of heathenism, and has its foundation in the despair of the heathen with regard to an eternal blessed life. Perhaps by those who are without hope the apostle understands also his own special opponents in Thessalonica, the Jews, who were likewise unable to draw from their sacred documents a full and joyous faith in the eternal existence of the soul.

iv. 13—15. *The hope for those that are fallen asleep.*

[13. *Others*: strictly, “the rest.”—14. *Which sleep in Jesus*: strictly, “which have fallen asleep through Jesus,” or, perhaps, with a different punctuation, “them also that are fallen asleep will God through Jesus bring with him.” Some of the best MSS. have “which fall asleep” (or perhaps “are sleeping”).—15. *By the word of the Lord*: strictly, “by word of the Lord.”—*Prevent*: here used in the old sense of “outstrip,” “go before.”]

13. *Concerning them which are asleep*: strictly, “have fallen asleep,” viz. in Christ. Here the apostle deals only with those Christians belonging to the community at Thessalonica who have already fallen asleep, or are still falling asleep before the day of the Lord. In vv. 14—16, on the other hand (“the dead in Christ”), he refers to the whole company of the brethren who have died before the second coming of Christ.—In the very expression “*asleep*,” the belief in the awakening is assumed. This beautiful metaphor has its Christian source in the view of

Jesus himself, of which we have good evidence. Matt. ix. 24; Mark v. 39; Luke viii. 52; John xi. 11.

14, 15. The firm foundation of our belief in the eternal future of the believing soul is laid in two facts, on which the salvation of Christians generally, and of humanity, hangs, viz. the death and resurrection of Jesus, and in the indestructible communion of the believers with their Saviour, which, as an article of faith, is here expressed from the warmth of the apostle's heart, and in his later Epistles, especially the Epistle to the Romans, is established and more fully developed in regard to its consequences in the interests of apostolic doctrine. Of the resurrection of Jesus, Paul has obtained a most vivid perception through the abundance of the personal revelations of the Master in the course of his conversion and his further preparation for the office of apostle to the Gentiles. Whatever the apostle has experienced in the visions of Christ which have been granted to him, he is absolutely certain of as the fullest spiritual truth. It is to him a *word of the Lord* (ver. 15); for we can scarcely understand by this expression a saying uttered by Jesus when on earth, and handed down by oral tradition. How could the Evangelists in their detailed accounts of the future of the kingdom of Christ (Matt. xxiv. xxv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xvii. xxi.) have passed over any such sayings of Jesus as these? For what is said in v. 2, we find a parallel in the words of Jesus in Luke xii. 39, but that is all.

iv. 16, 17. *The day of the Lord.*

Comp. the description in 1 Cor. xv. 23 sqq., 51 sqq., and also Rom. xi. 15, 26, 30 sqq.

16. *With a shout, &c.*, should be "with a given signal, at the voice of an archangel and at the sound of the trumpet of God."

v. 1—11.

The impossibility of ascertaining the exact time of the return of Jesus (comp. not only Luke xii. 39, but also Rev. xvi. 15), renders doubly necessary the intense watchfulness which has already found an inner foundation in the unbroken intercourse of the Christian with his Master (ver. 11).

2. *Perfectly* should be "exactly."

[3. *For*: Some good MSS. have "but;" others omit.]

[4. *That that day, &c.*: i.e. "that the day (not "that day"),

like a thief, should take you by surprise." Lachmann, with two of the oldest MSS., reads, "That the day should take you, like thieves, by surprise.]"

[5. The best MSS. have, "For ye are," &c., connecting this verse immediately with the preceding.]

[6. *Others*: strictly, "the rest."]

[8. *Putting on*: "having put on."]

9. *Hath not appointed us to*: i.e. "hath not intended us for."

11. *Comfort yourselves together*: "exhort one another."

#### v. 12—15.

Exhortation to an orderly Christian social life.

13. *Among yourselves*: "with them" [some of the best MSS. have one reading, and some the other].—14. *Warn them that are unruly* should be "admonish the disorderly."—[15. *Among yourselves*: strictly, "to one another."]

#### v. 16—22.

This Christian social life (vv. 12—15) must be founded upon a truly Christian inner life. The signs of this are: rejoicing both in unceasing prayer and in thanksgiving (16—18); a burning yet clearly-felt inspiration through the intercourse of the soul with Christ in faith, while awaiting his speedy return from heaven (19, 20); and at the same time the careful testing of the religious judgment within, and of the moral conduct without (21, 22).

[16. *Evermore*: "always."]

17. *Pray without ceasing*: No extravagant form of speech but the absolutely sincere wish of the apostle. What he means is the unceasing, uniform direction of the heart to God in Christ even in the midst of all the external distractions of that work-day labour which he will not put aside in favour of idleness, but on the contrary requires of others and recommends by his own example.

[20. *Prophecysings*: see notes on Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xiv.]

#### v. 23—28. CONCLUSION.

##### v. 23, 24.

Benediction exactly as in iii. 13, but with an indication of the ground of the hope of God's blessing.

[23. *And I pray God*, &c.: strictly, "and may," &c.—*Unto the coming*: strictly, "in the coming."]

## v. 25—27.

The confirmation of the hearty fellowship between the apostle and the community. On their side he begs for their intercessions with God; and on his side he sends them with his holy greeting a visible written sign of his intercessions and care for them; and expresses an earnest desire, that every member of the community may be made aware of it.

[27. *Charge*: strictly, “adjure.”—*Holy*: omitted in most of the old MSS.]

v. 28. *Parting salutation.*

[*Amen*: see note on iii. 13.]

*Subscription.*

[The subscription is found in one of the oldest MSS. as it stands here, but the others have simply “To the Thessalonians,” or “1 to the Thessalonians is completed, 2 to the Thessalonians begins.”]

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

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THE Second Epistle to the Thessalonians in its present form can scarcely be by the writer of the First Epistle. What is most characteristic of each of the two Epistles is its own peculiar doctrine of the "Day of the Lord," and it is in this very matter that they contradict one another. The First Epistle teaches most emphatically that that day will come as a thief in the night, suddenly, at a time that cannot be calculated, taking all by surprise. The Second Epistle, on the other hand, gives a very careful and comparatively circumstantial account of the sure signs by which its appearance may be known (ii. 3—12). And these tokens of the approaching return of Christ, the Paul of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is supposed to have described orally when he was present with them and first founded the community! (ii. 5). If they had been thus instructed, how can we explain the vacillating uncertainty of the Thessalonians, and how was it possible for Paul to give them afterwards the kind of instruction which we find in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, at the beginning of the fifth chapter? (v. 1, 2). The very opposite of that which the Paul of 2 Thess. is supposed to have told his readers, is in the First Epistle assumed as the Pauline doctrine concerning the last things, viz. the *absence* of all certain signs of the return of the Lord.

If, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the apostle Paul was the writer of our "First" Epistle to the Thessalonians, then at the outset the non-Pauline origin of the Second Epistle would

be very probable. In addition to this, there are, however, two other reasons for doubting that it was written by Paul.

(1.) The *thanksgiving* (i. 3—10) contains ideas of the righteousness of God and its relation to the sufferings of the Christians, to which we may vainly seek to find any parallel among the well-authenticated ideas of the apostle. That the Christians will one day be rewarded (i. 6) for the furtherance of the kingdom of God, to which they contribute by their sufferings (i. 5), is (in spite of 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18) scarcely a genuine thought of the man who elsewhere recognizes only one ground of salvation—viz. God's free grace—the man who gave to his doctrine of the redemption its peculiar point by vigorously rejecting each and every human merit in the sight of God (Rom. iii. 24, ix. 12 sq., xi. 6, &c.), and so laid the foundation for the conception on the part of his disciple which appears in connection with the words of the Lord in Luke xvii. 10. Here, on the other hand, we have rather the echo of Matthew (Matt. v. 12) and his idea, which approaches more nearly to that of the Jewish righteousness by works. Again, that the reward which God will give to His own on the day of the revelation of Christ, should be spoken of as the "calling" (i. 11) of which God will one day count them worthy, is difficult to understand from the Pauline point of view. In Paul's view, the calling, so far as it is regarded not as the original counsel of the divine grace before the beginning of time, but as an event in the life of the individual, is always the *beginning* of the Christian life, the calling into the community of Christ and those who believe in him (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2, 26, vii. 15; 1 Thess. ii. 12; comp. Eph. iv. 1, 4; Col. iii. 15), and not the *goal* to be pursued.

(2.) Quite decisive, however, is the completely un-Pauline character of the whole system of conceptions and ideas which pervades the chief division of the Epistle (ii. 1—12). The idea of the "*man of sin*," who must first be completely revealed before the day of the Lord can come, is as alien to the whole Pauline literature as the picture of that which "*withholdeth*" (ii. 6, 7),

which is represented now as a thing, and now as a person that hinders the end of this world, and must be removed before the kingdom of God can attain its realization. At the same time, these two ideas are marked by such clearness and originality, that if the apostle Paul had ever taught them, and, further than that, actually committed them to writing, he must necessarily have recurred to them in treating of the same subject afterwards, either for the sake of explaining or correcting them. A simple silence concerning such earlier apostolic teachings would have been quite impossible in such passages as 1 Cor. xv. 23 sqq.; Rom. xi. 15, 26, 31, 32 (see Vol. II. pp. 160 sq., 235 sq.). This very section, however (ii. 1—13), shows that our Epistle has a very definite connection with another and a very un-Pauline book, viz. the *Revelation of John*. In both alike (see Introd. to Rev.) we find the waiting for the speedy, if not immediately impending, appearance of the Lord (Rev. i. 3, the time is *at hand*; Rev. xxii. 20, I come *quickly*; comp. 2 Thess. i. 7, ii. 2); in both alike we find the expectation of grievous times *before* the return of Christ, when hostility to Christ (the “falling away,” 2 Thess. ii. 3) will gather up all its strength; Satan, in a visible bodily form (Rev. xii. 3 sq.), will venture upon a last attempt to deify himself and seduce the world and subject it to himself (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4; Rev. xiii. 14, xvi. 13); but the Lord will victoriously smite to the ground the whole power of sin gathered up in this human incarnation of Satan, and establish a new kingdom of glory for them that are his (2 Thess. ii. 8—11; Rev. xvii. 8, 11).

The intimate connection with the Revelation prevents us also from putting the origin of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians at a much later date—in the time of Trajan—as some have thought we should do. This would be more than a generation later, at a time when just the above-mentioned most characteristic ideas of the Revelation had undergone a complete transformation in the ordinary Christian mind—when especially the idea of a comprehension of evil in a *single* individual *person* who was to come (the Antichrist) had disappeared, and its place had been

taken by the idea of *many* deceivers and Antichrists, or the *spirit* of Antichrist that was already present (1 Tim. iv. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 John ii. 18, iv. 3; 2 John 7).

But no doubt a *change* in the figures of the Apocalypse had already occurred. The *name* of Antichrist no longer appears, and, what is most important, a *new figure* has appeared upon the scene, he who (or that which) "withholdeth;" and also, as it seems, a new circumstance, which is a sign of a new period that has been reached, viz. "the mystery of ungodliness" is already actually being realized (ii. 7).

If, then, the Revelation was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, the points of resemblance between it and 2 Thess. ii. 1—12 will lead us to fix the date of the Epistle *near* the great catastrophe of the year 70 A.D., while the additions which are here made to the apocalyptic picture and the corrections of it indicate some period *after* that year. The idea of the "adversary" is as clear and powerful as ever, but he no longer bears his classical name of Antichrist. For the very name which had hitherto been associated with that of Antichrist in the ideas of Christendom had convicted the expectation of Christendom of falsity. Nero did not re-appear. The mystery of ungodliness, though not fully revealed, is already fully realized and active (ii. 7). Jerusalem is destroyed, and Christendom, this "temple of God" (see note on ii. 4), is threatened with the desecration of its holy of holies by the abomination of the man of sin who lusts after divine honours (ii. 4). Nevertheless, there is still something that withholds this fulfilment, viz. the Roman empire; and one who embraces this withholding power in himself, viz. the Roman emperor, has now by his victory over Jerusalem established and confirmed once more (and in the belief of the writer for the last time) his infamous sway over the people of the Lord.

Thus the chief passage of the Epistle to the Thessalonians, literally and historically explained, secures for it an important place in New-Testament contemporary history. It would thus appear as a letter of consolation addressed to the whole of Chris-

tendom in one of its most serious crises, a call to confidence in times of such bitter disappointment as Christian hearts had never experienced since the death of the Master, a warning to be sober amid all lofty expectations (ii. 2), to be steadfast in Christian conviction and apostolic doctrine (ii. 15), to be strictly moral in word and deed (ii. 17), and to maintain a well-ordered life in the community (iii. 6—15), and all this at a period which was the reverse of favourable to these particular virtues, and rendered these very exhortations so desirable. Notwithstanding all that has been said, it is undeniable that the Epistle now before us contains scattered traces of the genuine Pauline spirit and style. The very idea of the divine "calling," which is employed in so un-Pauline a manner (i. 11)—with which we may also compare the corresponding un-Pauline use of the expression "kingdom of God" (i. 5) as of something yet to come—appears again in its true Pauline form (ii. 13, 14). And indeed the whole of the section where it thus appears (ii. 13—17), apart perhaps from the "holding by the traditions" (ver. 15), contains nothing inconsistent with the Pauline spirit. This is still more decidedly the case with the exhortations in the last chapter (iii. 1—15), and especially the prayer for deliverance from the "perverse and wicked men" (iii. 2) may be explained from the apostle's aversion to the same enemies whom he has spoken of in the First Epistle (1 Thess. ii. 14—16).

Moreover, it is historically by no means improbable that some consequences which may have followed from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians may have induced the apostle to write a Second Epistle, his careful and devoted heart longing to exert as deep a personal influence as possible upon his second European community. In that case, we should have to regard the relation between the two Epistles as similar to that between the two Epistles to the Corinthians, which also deal to some extent with the same subjects and originated in somewhat similar circumstances. It is possible, then, that our Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is only the later form of a Pauline Epistle which has been lost to

us in its first form (see Vol. I. pp. 16 sq.), and so the answer to the question of its authenticity is essentially the same as in the case of the Epistle to the Colossians.

The Epistle may be divided into four sections as follows :

- (1.) Thanksgiving and intercession, i. 3—12.
- (2.) Concerning the signs of the return of Christ, ii. 1—12.
- (3.) Exhortations to the whole community, ii. 13—iii. 5.
- (4.) Exhortation against the disturbing operations of individual members of the community, iii. 6—15.

The interpretation of this Epistle depends essentially upon the view taken of its historical position and application, and has practically been already given, to a very great extent, along with our exposition of these.

THE  
SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

i. 1, 2. *Address and salutation.*

These verses, even to the addition of the final words of ver. 2, are a simple transcription of the opening salutation of the First Epistle. [It would seem that these last words, "from God our Father," &c., belong properly to this Epistle, and have been inserted in the other from it, as they are found here in all the MSS. See note on 1 Thess. i. 1.]

i. 3—12.

*Renewed thanksgiving and intercession for the spread of the power of faith and the increasing sanctification of the community.*

i. 3—10. *The thanksgiving.*

It is remarkable here that we find no mention whatever of any personal relation between the apostle and the community, nor any definite allusion to the history of the recent past, both of which are found in the thanksgiving of the First Epistle, and give it such life and power.

5, 6, 7. *The righteous judgment of God*: The judgment of God as operative, inasmuch as it here distinguishes the spirits in preparation for the day of the last judgment. Already this divine righteousness has placed the Thessalonians who suffer for the kingdom of God in the category of those for whom the decree of God's grace has appointed eternal *rest*, or refreshing; properly, the "remission" or "cessation" of all sufferings in the kingdom of God which is to come.—*That ye may be counted worthy*: properly, "which (judgment of God) has determined to count you worthy (at some future time) of being received into the kingdom of God."—*Of the kingdom of God*: i. e. the future kingdom of God, which begins with the return of Christ.—"If (not "seeing") it is a righteous thing with God," i. e. "provided we are right in our

Christian faith that the justice of God duly recompenses eternal tribulation unto them that trouble you, but to you," &c.

8. *Them that, &c.*, should be "them that know not God (i.e. the Gentiles, see 1 Thess. iv. 5; Gal. iv. 8), and them that obey not," &c. (i.e. the Jews, see Rom. x. 3). The idea of the eternal punishment of the *Gentiles* is in accordance on the whole with the ideas of the apostle on the subject, as expressed elsewhere (Rom. ii. 5 sq.; comp. 2 Cor. v. 10; also Eph. vi. 8, and Col. iii. 5, 6), and only in the Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 27, 28) does a more comprehensive and magnanimous view lead to a (somewhat doubtful) mitigation. On the other hand it must be acknowledged that the Epistle to the Romans (xi. 25, 26) relieves the prospect, so excessively painful to the apostle himself, of the eternal perdition of a portion of his *Jewish* countrymen, which is also admitted here, by an expression of the hope of a final salvation of all Israel. Hence not only the ground of the salvation of the Christians (ver. 5), but also the prospect set before those who are not Christians (vv. 6—10), throw suspicion upon the Pauline origin of this passage. [On the question of Paul's views regarding the ultimate salvation of the whole human race, see notes on Rom. xi. 12, 25, 26; 1 Cor. xv. 23—28.]

9. *Presence*: "face" [so lit.].

10. *In his saints*: i.e. in those who believe in him. In the future salvation of his own, Christ himself will be contemplated with praise and wonder as the cause of this salvation.—*Our testimony*: comp. ii. 5.

#### 11, 12. *The intercession.*

11. *Wherefore*: It is in view of the impending decision that the intercession is especially required.—*Would count you, &c.*, should be, "Would count you worthy of the calling, and in his power perfect (in you) all willingness for goodness, and every work of faith."

12. *And ye in him*: Not only has Christ visible manifestations of his own glory in the glory of those who are his, but also conversely those who are his revere in him the source of light, the mere reflection of which in themselves compels praise and admiration. This has already been alluded to in ver. 10, and is here more fully developed.

ii. 1—12. *The certain premonitory signs of the return of Christ.*

1. *By the coming* should be “in regard to the second coming,” and the second *by* should be omitted.

2. Read, “That ye be not soon shaken from your self-possession nor terrified, neither by prophetic utterances of the spirit [lit. “neither by spirit,” as in A.V.], nor by word or letter as proceeding from us, as if the day of the Lord were immediately at hand.”—“Prophetic utterances of the spirit:” Discourses of those who were excited by the spirit in the meetings of the community. The writer does not deny the right of this prophetic utterance here, any more than in 1 Thess. v. 20. But, as proceeding from fallible men, it is not to be regarded in itself as necessarily a divine revelation, but it must be tried (1 Thess. v. 21); and so trustworthy tests are here supplied to the community at Thessalonica, in order that its members may not, amid the excitement of prophecy, lose their sobriety and self-possession.—“Nor by word or letter as proceeding from us.” The community must not be shaken from its self-possession by erroneous and ignorant appeals to Paul’s words, or his First Epistle and its apostolic authority (“as from us”). That the fulfilment was *immediately* at hand, Paul neither announced to them when he was with them nor in his First Epistle.—This verse bears special evidence of the existence of genuine fragments of a Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians in the Epistle now before us.

3, 4. Read, “Let no man deceive you in any way; for (he cometh not) except the falling away first come, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, the adversary who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he setteth himself in the temple of God, and desires to show that he is a god.”—The falling away and the revelation of the man of sin are premonitory signs of the second coming of Christ.—*The temple of God*: Christendom (comp. 1 Cor. iii. 16 sq.; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Heb. iii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5, iv. 17; 1 Tim. iii. 15).—This passage affords some ground for assigning a different date to the Epistle, and placing it, with the Revelation of John, shortly *before* the conquest of Jerusalem, which took place in the year 70 A.D. The “temple of God” must then be understood literally of the temple on Mount Moriah.

5—12. Read, “(5) Remember ye not that when I was yet

with you I told you these things? (6) And now ye know that which withholdeth (him) that he may not be revealed until his time. (7) And already the mystery of ungodliness is engaged in realizing itself only until he that withholdeth (it) is out of the way. (8) And then shall the ungodly one be revealed whom the Lord shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and shall do away with him by the manifestation of his coming: (9) him, whose appearance (will be brought about) in accordance with Satan's way of working, in every kind of lying power and signs and wonders, (10) and in every deception of unrighteousness among those that are perishing because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God will send [or according to the best MSS. "is sending"] to them the power of deception, so that they shall believe the lie; (12) so that all might be judged who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in a lie."

In this more detailed development of the two ideas of the "apostasy" (i.e. "falling away") and the "man of sin," the writer first completes the second of the two by his description of the "withholding" power and the "withholding" person (see Introd.) which must be removed out of the way (vv. 6, 7) before the ungodly one can complete, to his own destruction, his full revelation of himself (ver. 8). After this (vv. 9—11) the first figure, namely that of the apostasy, is further described in detail. This is the final picture of *humanity* before the judgment-seat. It corresponds to the final picture from the *demoniacal* world in which the evil one appears before the judgment-seat. What is especially characteristic of this last condition of humanity is, that in one portion of it, by means of the Satanic powers of deception possessed by the fully revealed man of sin, the *conscious* suppression of the sense of truth within (ver. 10) takes active shape as a rejection of the truth given in Christ, and now appearing complete and glorious in him (ver. 11). So plainly will it appear in these last days, that there is for humanity no other perfect truth at all (ver. 10) than that which has been revealed in Christ (ver. 11), that a rejection of this truth is equivalent to complete surrender to the lie—a surrender provoked by Satanic deception—and so is equivalent to eternal perdition.

ii. 13—iii. 5. *Exhortations addressed to the community as a whole.*

13. *Through*: in.—15. *Word or our epistle*: “our word or epistle” [lit. “word or epistle of ours”].—iii. 2. Read, “And that we may be delivered from the perverse and wicked men, for not all men have faithfulness.”—[3. *Evil*: or “the evil one,” the Greek is ambiguous.]—5. *The patient waiting for Christ*: not, as some take it, “the patience of Christ.”

The ground of this exhortation is the joyful fact of their divine calling to salvation (vv. 13, 14). Its aim is the increase of their fidelity to the apostolic doctrine that has been imparted to them (ver. 15), moral excellence and firmness in word and deed (vv. 16, 17), zeal for the diffusion of the word of the Lord and the overthrow of the apostle’s opponents with their malicious attacks upon his teachings (iii. 1—4), and finally a united expectation of the return of Christ, a hope which is full of divine love (iii. 5).

iii. 6—15. *Exhortations against certain individuals who disturb the moral excellence of the life of the community.*

6. *Tradition*: From vv. 7 sqq. it is plain that it is not any peculiar doctrinal ideas that are meant here, but moral precepts. We may compare with the whole of this passage (vv. 6—16), Matt. xviii. 16, 17.

8. *Chargeable*: “burdensome.”

11. *Are busybodies* should be “busy themselves with worthless matters.”

14. *Be ashamed*: lit. “turn to himself,” i.e. reflect upon his conduct and repent of it.

iii. 16—18. *Conclusion.*

16. *By all means*: “in every way.”

17. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, &c.*: The deliberate purpose which is evident in this express assurance casts suspicion upon its genuineness. Comp. the far better authenticated and much simpler postscript in Gal. vi. 11. And, moreover, how are we to reconcile this “token” with the fact that it is not found in the undoubtedly genuine Epistles of Paul?

. 18 = 1 Thess. v. 28.

## THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

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THE Epistles which have been preserved in our New-Testament collection of writings under the name of the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and to Titus, are usually spoken of together as the *Pastoral Epistles*, because their contents consist mainly of precepts for pastoral activity, i.e. for the guidance of the life of the Christian community.

The tradition of their Pauline origin may be traced back as far as the second century A.D., but may nevertheless be proved by adequate historical evidence to be erroneous. Not only do we find no trustworthy mention of these Epistles before the last third of the second century, but also in earlier literature there is no reference at all to their contents, not even where reference to them would have been very natural, nay, almost inevitable.

That these three Epistles are not authentic, and that they date from a period *no earlier than the second century*, appears—apart from the un-Pauline language which is common to them all—(1) from the impossibility of finding any places for them in the apostle's life as known to us; (2) from their (almost identical) doctrinal and ecclesiastical tendencies; (3) from the nature of the ecclesiastical circumstances assumed in them, especially as regards (4) the heretical teachers.

(1.) Not one of the three Epistles can be assigned to its place in the *historical life of the apostle Paul* as known to us.

The *First Epistle to Timothy* purports to have been written when Paul had travelled from Ephesus into Macedonia and left Timothy behind at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3). This could only refer

to the journey which is mentioned in Acts xx. 1. But at that time Timothy was so far from having been left behind in Ephesus, that he had actually gone on before the apostle (Acts xix. 22), and he met him again in Macedonia in order to make the return journey in his company (Acts xx. 4). Moreover, Paul did not intend to return to Ephesus from Macedonia, and yet this is what he has in view in 1 Tim. iii. 14, iv. 13. It is a strange thing altogether that the apostle, who was with Timothy for months together, both before and after this time, should, during a temporary absence, have sent such instructions in writing, as if they were intended for a prolonged exercise of office. Such an unnatural state of things can only be explained as invented by a later writer to enable him to clothe his own pastoral precepts in the form of an Epistle from the hand of the celebrated apostle.

The *Epistle to Titus* assumes the following position of affairs: The apostle Paul is supposed to have been labouring in Crete, then on his departure to have left Titus as his representative, and while on his journey to have sent him this Epistle with its instruction in the duties of his office. In it he further requires him to come to him quickly at Nicopolis, where he (Paul) intends to winter (Tit. i. 5, iii. 12). Now the Book of Acts mentions no stay of Paul's on the island of Crete except the short stay during his voyage as a prisoner to Rome. Of course this cannot be what is referred to here. Nor does the Book of Acts represent Paul on any occasion as spending the winter in Nicopolis. Nor, again, can we find room to insert this scene in Crete and Nicopolis anywhere in the narrative of the missionary journeys of Paul in the Book of Acts. We cannot insert it *before* the period of his residence in Ephesus (Acts xix.), for it was there that he made the acquaintance of Apollos who is mentioned in the Epistle (Tit. iii. 13). Nor can we insert it *after* that period; for after Acts xx. 1, the events that follow are so closely connected with one another that such an interval is incredible. Finally, we cannot insert it *during* the residence in Ephesus, for

an interruption of his stay there, which must have lasted more than six months, must surely have been worth mentioning. In addition to this, the following difficulties should be considered. In the community so recently founded there are already "heretics," schismatics (iii. 10), who must therefore have sprung up under Paul's very eyes when he founded the community. Concerning these, Paul, who is absent, gives information to Titus, who is present, and who must have known the state of affairs better himself. He gives him by letter detailed instruction in the duties of his office, whereas he might have inculcated all that, and much more, orally. Finally, while giving him instructions for a long term of office, he writes to him at the very same time that he is to come to him at Nicopolis as soon as possible, before he has had any time to carry out his instructions. All these inexplicable difficulties show us that the whole position of affairs is unhistorical and is an invention of the writer.

Finally, the *Second Epistle to Timothy* purports to have been written from Rome, from the imprisonment there (i. 8, 17). It is involved, however, in contradictions with the Epistle to the Philippians, written from the same imprisonment. In the Epistle to the Philippians we find that Timothy is with Paul, and Paul does not intend to send him to Philippi until he knows something definite as to the course of his trial (Phil. ii. 19, 23). Here we find Timothy is not only away from Paul, but he has never been with him since his imprisonment. He has to be informed not only in regard to the trial, but also in regard to other Roman affairs, and even occurrences which evidently preceded Paul's arrest (iv. 20); all which is entirely inconsistent with the historical facts of which we have the surest evidence. In addition to all this, the Epistle is involved in self-contradiction. According to iv. 6 sq., Paul's cause is hopeless. According to iv. 17 sq., the worst danger is passed. According to iv. 9, 21, the person to whom the Epistle is addressed is to come to Paul as soon as possible, and at any rate before the winter; and yet the Epistle itself contains instructions for a long period of office,

and exhortations to endure faithfully amid all difficulties and sufferings, and to execute fully the office of pastor (iv. 2, 5, &c.). Finally, it is most remarkable that the apostle, writing from Rome, should mention trifling occurrences (as in iv. 13, 20) which took place before his arrest in Jerusalem, that is to say, at least three years previously to the date of the Epistle. All this leaves not a doubt as to the unhistorical nature of the whole position of affairs represented in this Epistle. (On the two sections, iv. 9 sqq. and i. 15 sqq., we shall have some further remarks to make hereafter [see p. 85].)

(2.) *The ecclesiastical doctrine* of the Pastoral Epistles is very widely different from the ancient Pauline doctrine. Of the peculiar Pauline doctrines concerning the Law and the Gospel, works and faith, we find here only colourless fragments, which have an appearance of fixed traditional formulæ, while the actual conscious faith has changed. The statements of 1 Tim. i. 8 sq. in regard to the Law occupy only a general moral ground, and have nothing in common with Paul's doctrine of the Law and his fundamental opposition to the legal point of view. The *universality* of the divine grace is connected in these Epistles, not with the abolition of the Law through Christ (as in Paul's writings), but with the unity of God (ii. 5). Not only does the writer, from first to last, attach much greater weight than Paul does to *good works* (Tit. iii. 8, 14, ii. 14, 7; 2 Tim. iii. 14; 1 Tim. v. 10), but they even have a meritorious value (at least in the First Epistle to Timothy, see ii. 15, iii. 13, iv. 8, vi. 19), form steps to heaven (1 Tim. iii. 13), and gather a store of merits for the future (1 Tim. vi. 19), all of which is very little in harmony with the fundamental Pauline idea of justification by faith alone without any human ground for boasting.—*Faith*, indeed, is frequently spoken of, but the word is already applied in its ecclesiastical sense of agreement with the right doctrine handed down by the church; nay, to some extent, indeed, it is identified with the doctrine itself, so that faith is equivalent to doctrinal belief, which is never the case in Paul's writings (see 1 Tim. i. 4, ii. 7,

iii. 9, iv. 1, 6, vi. 10). Great importance is attached to *right doctrine*, to the confession of it and the maintenance of it as it has been received, without departing from it, without falsifying it, without entering into unsound disputes which destroy the peace of the church. "Soundness" of religious life here consists in the acceptance of "sound," i.e. orthodox, doctrine. Christianity itself is even called simply "the doctrine" (1 Tim. vi. 1). The common consciousness of the church has already become so strong as to form a law, a rule of faith, an obligatory standard for the faith of individuals (see 1 Tim. i. 5, vi. 14; for the "sound doctrine," see 1 Tim. i. 10, vi. 3, 2 Tim. i. 13, and many other passages; for the preservation of that which has been received, and continuance in it, 1 Tim. iv. 6, 16, vi. 3, 14, 20, 2 Tim. i. 13, &c.) In complete correspondence with this, the *church*, as the bearer of this sound doctrine, is called the foundation and pillar of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 15). As the true universal church, it is distinctly separated from the heretics (Tit. iii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 20), as apostates, castaways, diabolical deceivers (1 Tim. iv. 1 and frequently).

(3.) *The condition of the church* which is assumed in these three Epistles, points unmistakably to the second century. In its opposition to the heretics mentioned above and its contests with them, the church has consolidated itself. The ecclesiastical constitution is now so far developed that in 1 Tim. we find the office of bishop clearly distinguished from that of elder (the bishop appears from 1 Tim. v. 19 even to have had the power of passing sentence upon the elders), whereas not only in the apostolic age, but even at the beginning of the second century, "elder" and "bishop" were synonymous terms. The elders, however, have formed themselves into a "presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14). By this presbytery the bishop is ordained with laying on of hands and dedicatory prayer (*ib.*), and by this ecclesiastical act of dedication he receives the gift of his office. How foreign is all this to the Christian community of the Pauline age, where doctrine, ministry and the guidance of the community were all determined, not by

ecclesiastical appointment and consecration, but by the gift of the Holy Spirit according as it was given to each (comp. 1 Cor. xii.).—Again, the *discipline of the church* is already very definitely developed. Heretics, after being twice or thrice warned, are cast out (Tit. iii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 20). [Comp. Matt. xviii. 15—20.] Those who have lapsed are received again, after a period of repentance and reformation, with laying on of hands by the bishop (1 Tim. v. 22, 24 sq.). The public worship of the church takes the regular form of reading the Scriptures and exposition of them by the bishop or one of the elders (iv. 13, v. 17). And, moreover, the “*Scripture*” includes not only the Old Testament, but also the Gospels, one of which (Luke x. 7) is quoted as “*Scripture*” (1 Tim. v. 18). *Liturgical formulæ* have already taken shape, one such formula being undoubtedly found in 1 Tim. iii. 16.—Finally, we find a very peculiar institution here, which nowhere presents itself earlier than the second century (1 Tim. v. 9 sq.), viz. the *widows* in the church, a spiritual order of aged women to whom is assigned a position of honour in the community on account of the services they have done to the church, and who are provided for by the community. It is a condition of this order (as in the case of those who are, properly speaking, officials of the church) only to have been married once, a second marriage being regarded as a moral blot which excludes them from this honour; and in this we see a stepping-stone to the later sacerdotal vow of celibacy and a monastic life.

(4.) *The false teachers* with whom the writer of the Pastoral Epistles has to contend are all characterized alike by the following traits. They boast of a higher knowledge of God (Tit. i. 16), but it consists in mythical ideas of the procession of spirits from God (“genealogies” and “myths” [A. V. *fables*], Tit. iii. 9; 1 Tim. i. 4), ideas which were associated with the Law (the Old Testament), and were probably clothed in the form of a figurative interpretation of it (“teachers of the Law,” “fightings about the Law,” 1 Tim. i. 7; Tit. iii. 9, i. 14). With this imagery were united ascetic principles, the prohibition of certain kinds of food,

and of marriage (1 Tim. iv. 3, 8; Tit. i. 14 sqq.), a tendency which has its precedent in the Essenic scruples of the false teachers at Colossæ and the "weak brethren" in Rome, but which goes beyond them, inasmuch as asceticism here rests definitely upon a system in which matter, as such, is regarded as unclean and defiling. Hence our Epistles point out that everything created by God is, as such, good and clean, and nothing in and by itself is evil or defiling, as the false teachers supposed that which is material to be. With this view of theirs was further connected the rejection of the bodily resurrection, resurrection being taken by them to mean that spiritual resurrection of the higher knowledge which had already taken place (2 Tim. ii. 18). Finally, the stress which is laid upon the humanity of Christ and his appearance in the flesh (1 Tim. ii. 5, iii. 16) seems to indicate that there was on the other side a denial of the humanity of Christ. Still this cannot yet have become very prominent, otherwise it would doubtless have been more distinctly and emphatically disputed (as in the later polemical literature of the church, e.g. the Ignatian Epistles).—If we now proceed to inquire with what historical phenomenon all these characteristics agree, there can be no doubt that it is the *Gnostics of the second century* who are here assailed. And this is expressly confirmed by the phrase in 1 Tim. vi. 20, "the gnosis falsely so called." But among the different Gnostic systems which agitated the church during half a century, we are not here concerned with the latest and most fully developed (the Valentinians and Marcion), for these either rejected the Law entirely or used it only for polemical purposes, and so could not be called "teachers of the Law;" and, moreover, they carried the doctrine that the humanity of Christ was only apparent (docetism) much further than we can suppose it to have been carried by the false teachers mentioned in our Epistles. Accordingly, we must look for the false teachers in these Epistles among the *earlier Gnostics*, Cerinthus, the Ophites, Saturninus and the earlier Basilidians, who flourished *in the first three decades of the second century.*

We have thus been able to fix the period, generally, to which our three Epistles belong. But within this period, the *order of their succession* may further be ascertained with tolerable probability from minor details and shades of difference.

The *First Epistle to Timothy* is undoubtedly the *latest* of the three Epistles. It presupposes the most advanced development both in ecclesiastical affairs (especially the constitution of the church) and in the errors assailed. Next stands the *Epistle to Titus*, where the distinction between bishops and elders is not so fixed (see notes on i. 5, 7), the false teachers are more gently judged and more hopefully spoken of (see i. 13 and note on iii. 9), and as yet no fear of docetism calls for special care in regard to the deification of Christ (see note on Tit. ii. 13). Finally, the *Second Epistle to Timothy* is decidedly the *oldest* of the three. Here the false teachers are not particularly described (except in regard to the isolated characteristic in ii. 18). The principle of the church in relation to them is still—in marked contrast to the two other Epistles, especially 1 Tim.—gentleness and toleration (ii. 24 sqq.). There is as yet no ecclesiastical episcopacy, and the personal exhortations addressed to the recipient of the letter (the representative of the presiding authorities of the community) are in part so far from flattering, that they would be very little suited to the later ideas of the exalted episcopal rank. In regard to this latter point, the case is the same with the Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, which altogether displays striking points of contact with 2 Tim.

This order of the three Epistles has also external historical confirmation. In the First Epistle to Timothy, not only is there no mention of the sufferings and persecutions of the Christians, but the Christian community even expects protection and safety from the kings and rulers (1 Tim. ii. 2). This agrees with the reign of *Hadrian*, whose friendly disposition and moderation towards the Christians are expressly mentioned by Eusebius (Ecc. Hist. iv. 8 sq.). On the other hand, the Second Epistle to Timothy is full of lamentations over the sufferings which the

Christians cannot escape (2 Tim. iii. 12), and its main purpose is to exhort its readers to fidelity and endurance under these persecutions (i. 7 sq., ii. 1—13). This must have been in the reign of Trajan, who first organized a general official persecution of the Christians in Asia.

Another peculiarity of the Second Epistle to Timothy must be mentioned, which likewise makes it appear to be the oldest, and the others to have been based upon it. In the latter, there is little that is personal; and even this betrays itself as the invention of the writer's imagination (see above). In 2 Tim., however, there are at least two sections which have recently been taken—and probably not erroneously—to be fragments of genuine Pauline Epistles. These passages are 2 Tim. i. 15—18, and iv. 9—21. The first of these two is shown, by its peculiar disconnected position between i. 14 and ii. 1, to be an independent fragment which has been enclosed here. In that case, there is no reason why it should not have been written by the apostle to some friend during his imprisonment in Rome. The second section makes a special impression of genuineness by its many personal notices. That it did not, however, originally belong to the Epistle, and so proves nothing with regard to the authenticity of the whole, follows from the contradiction already noticed between iv. 6 sqq. and iv. 17 sq. On the contrary, it is probable that this section, iv. 9—21, is from the beginning of Paul's imprisonment in Cæsarea. This explains vv. 13 and 20, which refer to the journey which the apostle had recently made from Corinth, via Troas, to Jerusalem (Acts xx. xxi.). In that case the "first defence" [A.V. "answer"] (ver. 16) is the defence before Felix in Cæsarea (Acts xxiv.); and the "deliverance out of the mouth of the lion" (ver. 17) is the deliverance from the plot to murder him, and from the unlawful jurisdiction of the bloodthirsty Jews (xxiii., xxiv. 22); and the "completion of the proclamation" (ver. 17) refers to the possibility newly opened to him of continuing and completing his missionary activity. Of course the leaving of Trophimus behind in Miletus (ver. 20) does not agree

with the Book of Acts (see Acts xxi. 29), but it is possible that the narrative of the latter is not very accurate here.

Since, then, the writer of the Second Epistle to Timothy incorporated in his composition fragments of two genuine Pauline Epistles which had somehow or other come into his possession, it was the more natural that he should wish it to be respected and accepted as Pauline. His *purpose*, however, in writing the Epistle was partly practical—to exhort the Christians to fidelity and firmness under the sufferings of the persecution (under Trajan) (i., ii. 1—13, iii. 10—12), and partly polemic—to warn against the seductions of the false teachers who at that time were beginning to take a more decided ground (ii. 14—iii. 9, iii. 13—iv. 5).

As the threatening danger from these latter continued to increase, and a firmer coalition of the orthodox communities and a regular ecclesiastical organization became a more and more pressing necessity, the example of the first Pastoral Epistle was followed (either by the same or by another writer), first in the Epistle to Titus, and afterwards in the First Epistle to Timothy. As, however, the Epistle to Timothy which had already appeared was a farewell Epistle (iv. 6 sqq.), the second one had to be placed at an earlier period in the apostle's life, and hence it obtained the name of the *First* Epistle to Timothy. The contents of these two Pastoral Epistles consist partly of attacks upon false doctrines, partly of precepts for the arrangement of the affairs of the Christian communities, partly of ethical precepts for various ranks and degrees of Christians. Doctrinal discussions are only occasional, and are introduced here and there for the confutation of irregular doctrine or to confirm moral exhortations. There is no trace in either Epistle of any systematic division and arrangement of these materials (see Commentary).

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

### i. 1, 2. *Introduction.*

1. *By the commandment* (or "commission") *of God our Saviour* (deliverer): This appellation of God is not to be found in the Pauline Epistles, but it occurs repeatedly in the Pastoral Epistles. They may have had an interest in emphasizing the statement that God himself is the proper (original) author of salvation, in opposition to the false Gnostic doctrine which taught that between the creative God and the Redeemer there was a dualistic opposition, or supposed that there were intermediate semi-divine beings (*æons*) who were the authors of the redemption.—"Christ, our hope:" Either inasmuch as our hope rests on him, and he is the pledge of our hope and also of our final deliverance (comp. Rom. viii. 34 sq.); or inasmuch as he is the object of our hope, the one for whom we hope—hope, namely, that by his appearance for the establishment of the kingdom of his glory (vi. 14) he will also bring those who believe in him to blessed perfection. The latter is the more probable explanation. The Pastoral Epistles so far occupy an entirely Pauline position, in still regarding salvation as pre-eminently a future thing, a subject of hope. This is not so in John.

2. [*Own son* : properly "lawful son."]—*Grace, mercy, peace* : This formula, in expression of the writer's good wishes, is peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles. Paul always wishes simply, Grace and peace. The former, then, represents the cause of Christian salvation in God, and the latter the effect of reconciliation in the human mind. Mercy, as the motive power of grace, is included in it, and its separate mention is therefore pleonastic. This might be explained by the same interest as the phrase, "God our Saviour" (ver. 1), viz. by the contest with the false Gnostic doctrine, that the just God (the God of the Old Testament) was not at the same time the merciful and forgiving God of Christianity.

i. 3—11. *Against false teachers.*

3. *As I besought* (“exhorted”) *thee*: The apodosis to this is wanting. It would run somewhat as follows: So do I now repeat and confirm, in writing, my commission in regard to those false teachers. [It is supplied somewhat differently in A.V. by the insertion of the words *so do* at the end of ver. 4.]—On the rest of the verse, the proper translation of which is so simple that there can be no doubt about it, and no alteration has been attempted except upon irrelevant and dogmatic grounds, see the remarks on pp. 77 sq.—*That they teach no other doctrine*: The word only occurs here and in vi. 3. [The Greek has one compound word = “To teach another doctrine.”] The meaning is the same as in the phrase, “another gospel,” 2 Cor. xi. 4; Gal. i. 6, i.e. a false doctrine departing fundamentally from the apostolic doctrine. In the passages we have just referred to in Paul’s Epistles, what was meant was the Judaistic conception of Christianity directed against Paul. Here what is meant is the Gnostic doctrine directed against the doctrine of the church, as is shown by ver. 4.

4. *Fables and endless genealogies*: The former denotes the false doctrine in its general character as a mere creation of the brain, the latter its more exact contents. To the question of what is meant by these *endless genealogies*, various answers have been given. (1) Jewish genealogies, the family trees of the Old Testament, either in the literal sense, or with a figurative interpretation applying them to the religious states of the soul. But if it be literally the Old Testament genealogies that are meant, how could they be spoken of as fables, and the harmless study of them as “another” (i.e. false) doctrine? Figurative interpretations of them, relating to the religious states of the soul, are found in Philo, but cannot be proved to have been in vogue among the Essenes; nor do the other characteristics of these false teachers belong to the Essenes (see Introd. pp. 82 sq.). (2) Series of spiritual beings of the invisible world proceeding from the abyss of God; in this case, either the spirits belonging to the Kabbalistic wisdom of God, or those of the Essenic doctrine of angels, or of the Gnostic doctrine of æons. It cannot refer to the Kabbala, however, for it is *Christian* opponents who are here dealt with, not *Jewish*. The Essenes recognized, indeed, different orders of angels, but did not represent them as descended from

one another. This only agrees with the Gnostic doctrine of æons, which were represented as cosmic powers, personified intermediate beings between the super-material God and the material world, proceeding from one another, and therefore essentially connected with one another, and standing in a relation of dependence one upon the other. With this not only the epithet *fables*, but also *endless*, agrees excellently, inasmuch as these æons represented personified ideas, the series of which could be spun out indefinitely, and concerning which all sorts of fabulous statements might be made. This expression for the Gnostic series of semi-divine beings is found, moreover, in Irenæus and Tertullian.—*Which minister*, &c., should be, “Which offer controversy rather than divine salvation as it has been given in the faith.” The unshaken validity of the ecclesiastical doctrine, which has God’s true ordinance of salvation as its contents, is opposed to the tottering nature of the false doctrine, the controversies of which only concern fables.

5. By *the commandment* we must here understand, not the moral law, but the ecclesiastical rule of faith (as in vi. 14); what is meant is that which is to serve as a standard for the belief of the individual. This proves itself to be a genuine faith by its moral effect (the *end*), viz. “love out of a pure heart, and out of a good conscience, and out of unfeigned faith.” The true love, therefore, presupposes not only a pure disposition generally, but also especially the genuine faith, which must be understood here to mean not simply personal truth of conviction, but also actual external orthodoxy (in opposition to heresy).—This is the ecclesiastical application of the thought expressed in Gal. v. 6!

7. The false teachers are not called *teachers of the Law* as being Judaistic observers of the Law, like those of the Epistle to the Galatians, nor as being fundamentally opposed to it, like the Gnostic Marcion, as it might be, but as Judaizing Gnostics, who put forward their figurative interpretation of the Law as true knowledge of the Law. Such were the earlier Gnostics, such as the Ophites and Saturninus.

8, 9. In opposition to the false exposition of the Law by the false teachers, the true application of it by orthodox Christian teachers proceeds from the perception that the Law is not for the righteous man, who does right of himself, but for sinners

who require external discipline—a general moral proposition, which must not be confused with the peculiar Pauline doctrine of the Law (see Rom. v. 20; Gal. iii. 19—24), though it may remind us of Gal. v. 23.—*Unholy and profane*: Such as esteem nothing holy, and wickedly offend against God himself.

10. *Sound doctrine*: A conception peculiar to these three Epistles = the right doctrine, the doctrine which is in accordance with the ecclesiastical canon. It assumes the development of an ecclesiastical consciousness, a rule of faith (see note on ver. 5).

11. Read, "According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God," &c.: comp. 2 Cor. iv. 4. The glory of the blessed God is the subject-matter of the gospel, in so far as it proclaims the revelation and beatific communication of the divine perfection, and especially of the divine fulness of love, through Christ.—This verse imitates a formula which repeatedly occurs in the Pauline Epistles, without the same reason for it in the context here, as in Gal. ii. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 17 sq.

i. 12—17. *Personal.*

12. *Ministry*: "office."

[13. *Injurious*: a feeble rendering of a strong Greek word, which means properly, "wanton," "insolent," "ungovernable," or "licentious." It is also used of animals in the sense of "savage, untameable." In the New Testament it only occurs in one other passage, viz. Rom. i. 30, where Paul is piling up epithets to describe the worst aspects of heathen life, and is there rendered *despiteful*.]

15. *Of whom I am chief*: An exaggerated imitation of 1 Cor. xv. 9 ("the least of the apostles"), which, in the hands of the Pauline author of the Epistle to the Ephesians, had already passed into the unsuitable form, "the least of all the saints" (Eph. iii. 8).

17. *The King eternal*: lit. "the King of the æons," i.e. of the ages, which collectively of course form eternity. What is meant by æons here is not the Gnostic æons, which are fables (ver. 4), although no doubt there is an allusion to them, as though the orthodox conception should be opposed to the false one.—*The only wise God* should be "the only God." The word "wise" is not found in the best MSS., and is probably an inter-

polation from Rom. xvi. 27. The emphasis laid upon the unity of God is directed against the idea of a multitude of divine beings in the false doctrine of the Gnostics.

i. 18—20. *Exhortation to Timothy, and condemnation of false teachers.*

19. *Which some, &c.*: “which some having put away, made shipwreck concerning the faith.”

20. *Hymenæus and Alexander*: These appear in 2 Tim. ii. 17, iv. 14, as prominent heretics, but there they are not yet excommunicated.—*Whom I have delivered unto Satan, &c.*: comp. 1 Cor. v. 5. What is meant is not simply that they have been excluded from the community, but that they have been handed over to the executor of divine penal judgment in the natural world, this being the Hebrew and primitive Christian idea of Satan. That is to say, the passage expresses an imprecation of penal suffering on earth with a view to spiritual correction and deliverance.—[*May learn*: more accurately, “might be taught.” The idea of discipline and punishment, as well as instruction, was associated with the Greek word here used.]

ii. 1, 2. *Prayer for the government and those in authority.*

ii. 3—7. *The universality of the redemption.*

5. The unity of God, the creator of all, is the ground of the universality of salvation (comp. Rom. iii. 30). Conversely, the Gnostics, on the ground of their dualism, limited salvation to a portion of mankind, and established the distinction between sensuous and spiritual men.—*The man Christ Jesus*: comp. Rom. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 21. By this epithet it is not intended to deny the higher nature of Christ (see iii. 16), but only expressly to reject the Gnostic error that Christ was only a *seeming* man, and as such only *appeared* to die.

6. *A ransom*: as in Matt. xx. 28.—*To be testified in due time*: lit. “a testimony at the right time.” Christ’s work of salvation here spoken of is the subject of the Christian proclamation of salvation, which is made known to the world at the proper time (comp. Gal. iv. 4, *when the fulness of the time was come*).

7. *Am*: “was.” This express assurance that Paul had been appointed (by God) to be an apostle, and moreover to be an

instructor of the Gentiles in faith and truth (i.e. in the true doctrinal belief), serves to support the authority of the author, who speaks in his name, and to confirm his ecclesiastical doctrines against the heretics.

ii. 8—15. *The position of men and of women in the community.*

15. The function of woman is not to come forward publicly and to teach, but to devote herself to domestic life. By the fulfilment of her duties as a wife and a mother (assuming that she is truly Christian) she will attain her own personal perfection.—The historical motive for this recommendation of marriage (which does not agree with 1 Cor. vii.) is to be found in an opposition to the ascetic rejection of it by the false teachers (see iv. 3).—*In child-bearing*: “through child-bearing.”

iii. 1—14. *Concerning bishops and deacons.*

1, 2. *Bishop*: lit. “overseer.” The word also occurs in Tit. i. 7; Acts xx. 28; Phil. i. 1. These passages leave no doubt that originally the overseers were identical with the elders (presbyters). Both words were names for the same directors of the community. The difference between the names probably consisted simply in this, that the one name (inclining to the Jewish custom) referred to their official rank, the other to their official duty. Soon, however, it became customary for one member of the presidential board to appear as the first among his equals in office. And then, as the guidance of the community was more especially his business, the name of overseer (episcopos, bishop) was especially assigned to him. The appearance of this distinction between the bishop and the presbyters in the Epistle to Titus (Tit. i. 7, comp. ver. 5) should be noticed. In the passage now before us, it is more definitely fixed.—[*This is a true saying*: lit. “Faithful is the saying.” The Greek is the same as in i. 15.]

2. *The husband of one wife*: comp. “the wife of one man,” in v. 9, on the widows of the church. In both cases, the words can only refer to the prohibition of the second marriage of widows or widowers. It was the universal opinion of the church in those ages that a second marriage was a moral blot. It was scarcely allowable even for the laity (Tertullian forbade it to them), and in the case of clerics it was absolutely forbidden. This is still the custom in the Greek Catholic church, while the Roman

church went on to the celibacy of the priesthood.—*Vigilant, sober*: “sober, moderate.”

3. *Striker*: i.e. ruffian, bully.—[*Not greedy of filthy lucre*: better, probably, “not sordidly desirous of gain;” but the best MSS. omit this altogether, and it has probably been introduced from ver. 8.]

4. *Gravity* should be “dignity.”

8. *Deacons*: According to Acts vi. 1—6, these had originally the care of the poor, to which duty, however, were soon added various other services in relation to the external affairs of the community.—[*Grave*: “dignified,” see note on ver. 4, where the Greek word is similar.—*Not greedy*, &c., see note on ver. 3.]

9. *The mystery of the faith*: the mysterious contents of the doctrine, mysterious because it is only made known through the divine revelation in Christ, and is hidden from the natural world.

[11. *Grave*: “dignified,” or perhaps rather “demure,” the same word as in ver. 8.]

13. *Purchase to themselves a good degree* should be “obtain for themselves a good (lit. “beautiful”) position” (lit. “step”), i.e. of eternal blessedness, as is indicated also by the *boldness in the faith*. The idea is as far from being genuinely Pauline as that of vi. 19, and hence some would take it to mean a higher grade of ecclesiastical office; but the words do not exactly convey that meaning, and moreover this would assume a hierarchy of ecclesiastical grades of office too highly developed for that age.

iii. 15, 16. *The church and its creed as the foundation of truth.*

15. *The pillar and ground* (“foundation”) *of the truth*. This belongs to what has preceded, not to what follows. It describes an attribute of the community. Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 11, where Jesus Christ is the sole foundation, and Eph. ii. 20, where the apostles and prophets (in the church), with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, form the foundation, while here the church is spoken of outright as the foundation. Thus we see how the genuine Pauline idea was gradually supplanted by the Catholic ecclesiastical idea.—[Some commentators, maintaining that Christ, not the church, is the foundation of the truth, endeavour to obtain the same meaning here by placing a full stop after “the living God,” and

then continuing, "A pillar and ground of the truth, and confessedly great, is the mystery of godliness," &c.]

16. Read, "And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness; who was manifested in the flesh," &c.—*The mystery of godliness*: i.e. the mystery which is the subject of godly consciousness and of ecclesiastical belief. In the words that follow, this is expressed in a form in which we may probably recognize one of the oldest liturgical formulæ of the church.—"Who was manifested," &c. This is the best authenticated reading. "Who" means Christ, the substance and subject of the mystery.—*Justified in the Spirit*: i.e. proved, by the spirit that dwelt in him and proceeded from him, to be the true Christ (comp. Rom. i. 4).

iv. 1—11. *Against false teachers.*

1. *Now the spirit speaketh expressly*: i.e. the prophetic spirit saith plainly. The writer throws the description of the false teachers of his own time into the form of a prophecy revealed to Paul by the spirit.

4. This is in opposition to the Gnostic doctrine, according to which many kinds of matter, and especially all animal flesh, as being produced by generation, belonged to the domain of unclean spirits, and therefore it was defiling to men to partake of them. Comp. the discussion in Rom. xiv.

6. *Whereunto*, &c.: "in which thou hast ever been."

7. *Old wives'* should be "old women's."

8. *Bodily exercise*: ascetic abstinence. To reject this entirely was quite foreign to the Christian sentiments of the age; it is only the one-sided and exaggerated estimation of it at the expense of true devotion to the church that the writer desires to guard against.—*Promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*: either, the promise of the true and completely satisfying life here and hereafter, or else, promise (of all good things) for this earthly existence and for the future existence hereafter.

iv. 12—16. *Personal admonition to Timothy.*

12. *Of the believers*: "to the believers."—[*In spirit*: not found in the best MSS.]

13. *To reading*: The reading of the scripture in congregational worship, which was followed by edifying and instructive exposition ("exhortation" and "teaching").

14. *The gift that is in thee* (i.e. the endowment with office), *which was given thee by prophecy* (i.e. with pious wishes and benedictions), *with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*. This can only refer to a formal ecclesiastical consecration such as was customary in the church in the second century, but cannot be proved to have existed at an earlier period. The word *presbytery* also indicates a corporate authority, a spiritual rank which does not occur before the second century.

[15. *Profiting*: i.e. "progress."]

v. 1—16. *Pastoral precepts for conduct toward old and young.*  
*The widows of the church.*

3. *Honour*: Most modern commentators, following the example of the early ones, rightly understand this of consideration paid to the widows in regard to the support they received from the church (comp. *worthy of double honour*, in ver. 17). *That are widows indeed*: see notes on vv. 5, 9. Those who are not *widows indeed* are such as are not entirely solitary and helpless, and so do not *require* the assistance of the church (see ver. 4), or such as do not conduct themselves quietly and modestly as widows should, and so are *not worthy* of the assistance of the church (see ver. 6).

4. Read, "But if any widow have children or grandchildren, let these first learn to hold them that belong to them in honour, and to show gratitude to their parents," &c. This translation is required both by the construction of the Greek and by the context. It cannot be the widow who is to learn, but the children and grandchildren, first, because the verb is in the plural, and secondly, because the second requirement only applies to them. The words which we have rendered, "hold them that belong to them in honour" [lit. "reverence their own house"], are sometimes rendered, "rule their houses piously;" but the proper meaning of the verb is "reverence," "treat with piety," which is not the duty of widows to their children, but of children to their parents, the same as the gratitude which follows. It would be strange, too, if, in regard to the assistance given by the church, widows who were quite alone had precedence of those who still had children to provide for. The latter would rather require double assistance. On the other hand, it is perfectly natural that

those who were quite helpless should take precedence of those who had children or grandchildren capable of assisting them (see ver. 16).

5. Read, "But the true widow, she that is left solitary, hath fixed her hope in God," i.e. upon God alone, in her want of human care. This is the reason why the church should take charge of her.

7. *Give in charge*: "command."

9. Read, "As a widow let only such an one be received as is not under threescore years old," &c. What is meant is the admission into the class of widows of the church. These can neither have been deaconesses, nor simply women supported by the church. If the former, why should they have to be so old? If the latter, why should they only have been married once, and not be allowed to marry again, by which the community would be relieved from the burden of providing for them? They must have had a certain rank and position of honour in the church, along with public provision that was made for them. They formed a kind of spiritual order, of which a higher ecclesiastical sanctity was demanded, especially abstinence from second marriage, which was regarded as a blot (see note on iii. 2). Admission to this order seems to have been a kind of reward of the church (an institution for public provision) for such widows as had in their earlier life deserved well of the church (ver. 10). Hence others might also be received into this order who, without really being widows, had claims to such recognition and reward. In that case, though really virgins, they received the title of *widows* at the same time as the honour. This explains vv. 11 and 14.

11. Read, "But the younger women receive not as widows," &c., i.e. young women (no matter whether they be virgins or widows, in the strict sense) must not be received into the ecclesiastical order of "widows," and that on the ground that, whatever their good qualities might be, they have not the moral maturity and firmness which is the indispensable condition of this ecclesiastical honour, and especially because it is to be feared that they may not be willing and able to keep the vow of abstinence from marriage that is required on their admission to the order.

12. Read, "Having their sentence that they have violated

their first faithfulness," i.e. broken the vow to abstain from marriage which they took when they entered the ecclesiastical order of "widows."

14. *The younger women*: The Greek is simply "the younger" in the fem. plur., and might mean either "the younger ones," i.e. the younger widows, or "the younger women." What actually is meant is the younger women generally. Instead of pressing hastily into a spiritual order for which they have not yet the necessary moral maturity, they must look for their natural calling in marriage (comp. ii. 15). This is consistent with all that has preceded. On the other hand, if we suppose that the widows, properly speaking, are meant, an evident contradiction arises at once, inasmuch as second marriage would then be recommended to them, which, however, was made a ground of exclusion from the rank of "widows" of the church (ver. 9).

15. This necessarily supposes that this institution of widows of the church had been in existence for some time, and so points to a period pretty late in the second century.

v. 17—22. *Precepts for church discipline.*

17. *Double honour*: i.e. a double gift of honour.—*Especially they, &c.*: Thus there was a distinction among the elders between those who ruled and those who taught. According to this, the office of teacher was already a regular office in the community, which was by no means the case at the beginning, when teaching belonged to each member as the Spirit gave it to him.

18. The second quotation is from Luke x. 7. That the latest of the first three Gospels is here quoted as "Scripture" is striking evidence of the late date of the Epistle.

19, 20. We may suppose that these directions, nominally addressed to Timothy, were practically intended to apply to the bishop of the community at the time. This pronouncing sentence upon the presbyters shows us a very definite development of the episcopal authority over the presbytery.

21. The selected angels are angels of the highest rank in that hierarchy of angels of graduated ranks which we find frequently alluded to in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians.

22. This refers either to receiving into the church again those who had fallen away and been cast out for a time, or to the admission of catechumens into the community. By hasty admis-

sion of unrepentant sinners, the ruler of the community would become an accomplice of the sinners.

v. 23. *Admonition as to diet.*

In the form of personal warning as to diet, we have here a contravention of the one-sidedness of Gnostic asceticism, which had especially prohibited flesh (see note on iv. 4) and wine.

v. 24, 25. *Ecclesiastical discipline.*

24. The connection with ver. 22 shows without any doubt that this refers to the moral court of the church, and gives an additional reason for prudence in accepting catechumens or the lapsed. It should further be noted that this development of *regular ecclesiastical discipline to be exercised by the bishop* assumes the ecclesiastical circumstances of the second century.

vi. 1, 2. *Duties of servants.*

1. *His doctrine* should be "The doctrine," i.e. Christianity.

2. *Partakers of the benefit* should be "and undertake to do good." They (that is, the masters) occupy themselves in the exercise of Christian benevolence to all, even their servants. This is an additional reason why Christian servants should serve faithfully.

vi. 3—5. *Against false teachers.*

3. [*Teach otherwise*: see note on i. 3.]—*Wholesome*: i.e. "sound" (see note on i. 10).—*The doctrine which is according to godliness*: i.e. which is in harmony with the common consciousness of the church; in modern language, "good doctrine."

4. *Proud*: "darkened." [Lit. "enveloped in mist or smoke," or metaphorically, "in clouds of conceit," and then "conceited, silly."]

5. *Supposing that gain is godliness*: "supposing that godliness is a means of gain."

vi. 6—10. *Against covetousness.*

vi. 11—14. *Admonition to fidelity in the fight of faith.*

12. *Professed, &c.*, should be "confessed the fair confession," i.e. in baptism, in which the calling had been realized.

[13. *A good confession* should be "the fair confession," as in ver. 12.]

14. *This commandment* should be “the commandment,” i.e. the rule of faith, which must be kept pure from all contamination or falsification by false teachers (see notes on i. 5, vi. 20).

vi. 15, 16. *Doxology.*

This doxology, which only occurs here in this form, contains in its statements concerning God in part contradictions of the Gnostic theology, and in part connecting links with it. The Gnostic theology emphasized the super-sensuous nature of God, but offended against the unity of God, by assuming two or more final causes of the universe (see note on i. 17).

vi. 17—19. *Admonition to the rich to be godly and benevolent.*

[18. *To communicate*: i.e. to share their possessions with others.]

19. *A good foundation*: i.e. a foundation for their salvation. This merit of good works (comp. iii. 13) is a decided departure from the genuine Pauline gospel (see note on Rom. iii. 27).

vi. 20, 21. *Against false teachers; conclusion.*

20. *That which is committed to thy trust*: either his office, which he should take care to fulfil faithfully, or else—and from what follows this seems more probable—the true doctrine, the ecclesiastical tradition, the bearers of which (from the second century onwards) were the bishops, who are represented by Timothy throughout the Epistle (see note on v. 19).—*Profane and vain babblings, &c.*, should be “unspiritual and profane chatter, and the wrangling of the falsely so-called gnosis.”—In this verse, the main purpose of the whole Epistle, as set forth at the beginning (i. 3), is once more shortly summed up in conclusion, and this time with direct mention of the opponents that have previously been only indirectly indicated: “The falsely so-called gnosis” (knowledge). This shows that the opponents had openly claimed for their doctrine the title of “gnosis,” i.e. “higher knowledge,” and that they therefore belonged to the well-known historical heresy of the Gnostics. This claim to higher knowledge which is involved in their name the writer rejects, declaring that they have adopted this name *falsely* (i.e. without any right to it), inasmuch as their doctrine is, on the contrary, nothing but “profane chatter,” and it is so because it departs from the faith (ver. 21).

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

### i. 1, 2. *Introduction.*

1. *According to the promise of life:* The will of God, that has called him to be an apostle, is the same that has promised life in Christ, and for the fulfilment of this promise has established the apostleship.

i. 3—7. *Remembrance of the early life of Timothy, and his family, in the faith.*

3. *That without ceasing, &c.,* should be “as without ceasing,” &c.: This is a parenthesis explaining how it is that he comes to give thanks for Timothy, but not expressing the subject of the thanksgiving. Whether the subject is given in ver. 5 or omitted altogether may be left undetermined.

5. The un-Pauline origin of the Epistle is plainly betrayed by the fact that the Christian faith of Timothy is treated as the same thing as the Jewish faith of his mother and grandmother, just as the faith of Paul (ver. 3) has been represented as the unbroken continuation of the Jewish faith of his forefathers.

6. The gift of the office is referred to the laying on of hands in the dedication to the office (comp. 1 Tim. iv. 14).

7. *Spirit:* Not simply a state of the human spirit within, but (in accordance with the objective system of ideas, from which the ancients could never escape) a self-existent spiritual being imparted by God, to which belong the attributes of power, love, &c., whence it also produces the corresponding virtues in the spirit of man. This objective system imagines the various spiritual states of man to be separate superhuman spiritual beings.

i. 8—14. *Admonition to be faithful to the saving gospel.*

8. *Be thou partaker, &c.,* should be “suffer with (me) for the gospel.”

9, 10. The *author* of our salvation is God. The temporal

*means* by which it is brought about, and the beginning of its realization in the individual, is the holy calling of the individual (i.e. the calling to God's kingdom by means of the gospel, ver. 11). The *ground* of our salvation is found, not in our (meritorious) works, but in God's *own purpose*, more closely defined as His *grace, which was given* (actually applied) *to us in Christ Jesus* (as existing before the world and the representative of the community, which was contained in germ, as it were, in him, comp. Eph. i. 4) *before the world began, but is now* (properly, "has now been") *made manifest* (i.e. has appeared historically, and so been practically made known) *by the appearing of our Saviour* (i.e. deliverer) *Jesus Christ* (the historical Redeemer, whence the order in which the names stood before is here inverted), *who hath abolished death* (in the absolute sense of the word, death temporal and eternal, bodily and spiritual) *and hath brought life and immortality* (complete, satisfying and imperishable existence, the blessed state) *to light* (introduced life and immortality into the historical existence of humanity) *through the gospel* (as the medium of the call to life, which offers to the individual the fruit of the redeeming work).—This is a short summary of the fundamental ideas of the Pauline gospel, approaching, however, to the later Johannine development and application of them (e.g. "hath brought to light").

12. *That which I have committed*: The Greek is one word, meaning a thing committed or entrusted, and is the same that is used in 1 Tim. vi. 20; but here it is evidently employed in a different sense. The context shows that it here means the possession of saving grace given by God, the preservation of which unto the day of judgment he hopes to obtain from the power of God. It is probably used in the same sense in ver. 14, though there it might possibly be the same as in 1 Tim. vi. 20.

i. 15—18. *Personal.*

On this section of the Epistle, see Introduction (p. 85).

ii. 1—13. *Exhortation to Christian fidelity in suffering.*

1. *Be strong*: properly, "become strong."

2. *Among many witnesses*: i.e. "supported by many witnesses." There is an allusion here to some ceremonial act. It may have been baptism (see 1 Tim. vi. 12), or it may have been consecration to office (2 Tim. i. 6).

3. *Endure hardness*: "suffer." [So the best MSS. read, or, more exactly, "suffer with (me)," as in i. 8, see note on that verse.]

5. From the illustration of warlike contests the writer passes on to the peaceful rivalry of the games, and then (ver. 6) to a third illustration of a hard-working husbandman, all alike to show that only the indefatigable and persevering labourer of Christ may hope for results and reward of his labour, but that such a one is sure of his reward.

6. Read, "The husbandman who exerteth himself shall be the first to partake of the fruits."

8. *According to my gospel*: Reference to the statement of the fundamental principles of the Pauline Christology found in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. i. 3 sqq.), probably intended at the same time as a warning against heretical dissent in regard to Christology.

9. *Is not bound*: It is being preached freely, and making progress (comp. Phil. i. 12 sqq.).

10. *The elect*: Those who already believe in Christ, or will come to believe in him. The whole body of believers consists, according to the Pauline doctrine of predestination, of the number of those whom God from before the beginning of time has predestined to be saved by means of faith in Christ, and whom He has thus chosen out, or "elected," from the rest of humanity (Rom. viii. 29 sq., ix.; Eph. i. 4, 11; Acts xiii. 48).

11. Here there seems to be a reference to Rom. vi. 5 sqq., but the words are used in a different sense. There it is the mystical fellowship with Christ that is spoken of. Here, by "dying with him," we must understand the death of the body for Christ's (i.e. the gospel's) sake; and by "living with him," the bliss beyond the grave which is the reward of a martyr's death.

13. Read, "If we become unfaithful, he remaineth faithful (to himself), for he cannot deny himself." That in which God remains true to himself (taken in connection with the words, "he will deny us," ver. 12), can only be his penal justice, the fulfilment of his threats against human unfaithfulness. As to the question whether that is a genuine Pauline idea or not, we have only to compare Rom. xi. 29—32.

ii. 14—26. *Exhortation to resistance.*

15. Read, "Be diligent to show thyself to God as proved," &c.

—*Rightly dividing*: The Greek word, which does not occur elsewhere, must either mean to “keep rightly” (not to wander from the right way), or to “handle rightly” (divide, apply, expound, &c., correctly).

16. The false doctrine, which is described in the same way in 1 Tim. vi. 20.—The second clause should be, “For they will proceed further and further into ungodliness.”

18. It was consistent with the system of the Gnostics that they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection in its proper (ecclesiastical) sense, and interpreted it as a spiritual resurrection, consisting in the awakening from the death of error unto the true knowledge.

19. *The foundation* = the community founded by God (see note on 1 Tim. iii. 15).—*Seal*: An inscription, such as is put upon a foundation-stone or other part of a building as a motto. The two sentences of the inscription which the community bears express its consolation and its duty: (1) They that believe are known by God, that is, they are the objects of His love and providence; (2) Every one that nameth the name of Christ (i. e. professes that he belongs to Christ), must depart from all unrighteousness, i. e. must abstain entirely from everything ungodly in faith or in life, as a desecration of the community of God.

20. The actual existence in the community of unworthy members, which is inconsistent with the ideal state of things in ver. 19, is compared with the diversity of household vessels, which are not all noble, i. e. not all made of noble material and intended for noble uses. The comparison is of course defective, in so far as the less honourable vessels are necessary to the house itself, whereas the dishonourable members of the community are an unavoidable evil. Hence this point of view, from which it is intended to justify God in regard to the evil in the world, is exchanged in ver. 21 for the moral point of view, from which the writer declares what should be the conduct of the individual in relation to this mixed company.

21. *Purge himself from these*: viz. from the dishonourable vessels (i. e. members of the community), by breaking off all fellowship in their character and proceedings.

22. *Them that call on the Lord* = those who confess him (comp. Rom. x. 12; Acts ii. 21).

25. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*: It should be noticed how much milder and more tolerant, and moreover more hopeful, this attitude towards the false teachers is than that which we find in the First Epistle to Timothy. From this we may infer that we are here concerned with an earlier stage in the development of the false doctrine.

iii. 1—9. *The characteristics of the false teachers.*

1. See note on 1 Tim. iv. 1. The prophecy betrays itself flagrantly (vv. 5, 9) as a description of the present.

2. *Men* = the great majority, so that we have here a description of a general tendency of the age. This is not the same as “some,” in 1 Tim. iv. 1, who have fallen away from the faith of the church, and who form a definite company of heretics. There it is a false doctrine that has already developed into a schism that is attacked; here it is a school within the community itself, and a school that is to be condemned on moral rather than doctrinal grounds.

3. *Despisers of those that are good* should be “unfriendly.”

5. *Denying the power thereof*: They do not allow the morally purifying and ennobling power of godliness to be realized and have its proper effect.

6. This agrees with the accounts given of the Gnostics by the Christian Fathers, who tell us that they were especially fond of watching for opportunities of making proselytes among women.—[*Led away*, &c., refers to the women.]

8. *Jannes and Jambres*: These were the legendary names of the Egyptian wizards who tried to equal Moses.—The comparison of false teachers with wizards was very common in the early church (comp. the legend of Simon, Acts viii.).—*Reprobate concerning* should be “not staunch in.”

9. The apparent inconsistency of this verse with 13 and ii. 16 may be explained on some such supposition as that in those passages it is the inner deterioration of the false doctrine itself that is spoken of, and here its outward extension (propagandism) and the duration of its existence.

iii. 10—12. *The apostle's sufferings a universal example.*

10. *Hast fully known* should be “didst adhere to.”

11. If Paul were the writer of the Epistle, it would be impos-

sible to understand why he should choose to instance these persecutions of the first missionary journey (Acts xiii. xiv.), when Timothy was not yet in his company. But to the actual writer of the Epistle these persecutions as the first lay nearest to hand, and it never occurred to him that Timothy was not there at the time.

iii. 13. *False teachers.*

13. *Seducers* should be “magicians.”

iii. 14—17. *The advantage of an intimate acquaintance with sacred Scripture.*

15. *And that, &c.*: i.e. “and knowing that,” &c. He is to be made firm in the faith partly by remembering Paul’s own immediate teaching, and partly by seeing that it is in accordance with the ancient holy Scriptures (of the Old Testament).

16. Read, “All Scripture, as inspired by God, is profitable,” &c.—The term “inspired” is generally used of men (e.g. of seers or poets), and has here been extended from the writers of the holy Scriptures (comp. 2 Pet. i. 21) to the Scriptures themselves. By “all Scripture” is meant the Old Testament writings, the inspiration of which had by this time long been a standing article of belief, and was afterwards extended from them to the writings of the New Testament.—*Reproof, correction, instruction*, correspond to the three stages of the moral life: repentance of the evil, conversion to the good, progress in the good (repentance, faith, sanctification).

iv. 1—5. *The preacher’s battle with false teachers.*

1. Read, “I testify before God . . . and by his appearing and his kingdom.” These serve to strengthen the assurance or adjuration.—[The best MSS. omit *therefore*, and read “Christ Jesus” for *our Lord Jesus Christ*.]

3. *Sound doctrine*: The false doctrine is here depicted as the product of unbridled wilfulness and extravagance, in opposition to which sober earnestness is required.

5. *Watch thou*: “be thou sober.” [The Greek word is sometimes used in the sense of being wary, watchful, but its strict meaning is “to be sober.” In its literal sense it is used especially of abstinence from wine, but also in the more comprehensive sense of sobriety.]—*Make full proof of*: “perform honourably” [lit. “fulfil”].

iv. 6—8. *The prospect that is before the apostle.*

6. Read, "For I am already being offered." A similar idea is found in the Epistle to the Philippians (ii. 17), except that what the apostle had there set forth as a possibility, which he did not think likely to be realized (see Phil. i. 25), is here represented as an immediately impending reality. There may be a reference here to the passage in the Epistle to the Philippians.

8. *A* (or strictly, "the") *crown of righteousness*: The victor's crown as the reward of my righteousness, more probably than the victor's crown which consists of righteousness, or the crown of final justification.

iv. 9—21. *Personal wishes, memoranda and greetings.*

On this section, see the remarks already made in the Introduction (pp. 85 sq.).

17. *The preaching*, &c., should be "the proclamation might be made complete," &c.; that is to say, that the gospel might be spread abroad in every direction.

iv. 22. *Conclusion.*

## THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

### i. 1—4. *Introduction.*

1. *According to the faith, &c.*: This indicates the standard of the apostolic teaching, and the result that is aimed at in it.—*After godliness*: i.e. “according to godliness.”

2. Read, “In the hope of eternal life, which God, who is without deception, promised before primeval [or “eternal,” same word in Greek as “eternal” life] times.”

### i. 5—9. *The filling of spiritual offices.*

5. *Ordain elders in every city*: What is meant is not only one elder in each city (comp. “them that are set over you,” in the plur., 1 Thess. v. 12, and the “bishops” or “overseers,” Phil. i. 1). In each city there were several elders or overseers, among whom, in course of time, one came to be distinguished as the first among his peers, and then to be called “the overseer” (bishop). From a comparison of this verse with ver. 7, we may perhaps conclude that at the time when the Epistle was composed a distinction had begun to be made, but was not yet fixed, so that the “bishop” could still be included under the general term of “elders.” By the time when the First Epistle to Timothy was written, this was already changed (see notes on 1 Tim. iii. 1 sq., v. 19).

[6—9. Comp. 1 Tim. iii. 2—7.—*Faithful children*: i.e. probably, “children who are believers.”—*Given to filthy lucre*: same word as in 1 Tim. iii. 8, see note.]

9. Read, “Holding fast the faithful word that is according to the doctrine, that he may be powerful both to exhort in sound doctrine and also to confute gainsayers.”—*Faithful*, i.e. to be relied upon, is the word which corresponds with the doctrine, i.e. with the doctrine of the church. Hence we have here already an ecclesiastical doctrinal canon, a rule of faith. This supposes the circumstances of the second century.

i. 10—16. *Polemic against false teachers.*

10. From this it appears that the false teachers were mostly Jewish Christians. So in the First Epistle to Timothy, they are called “teachers of the Law” (1 Tim. i. 7). Similarly, vv. 14 sq. agree entirely with 1 Tim. iv. 1—8, with its Jewish fables and ascetic precepts. This fits the earlier Gnostics, those of the first quarter of the second century.

12. *A prophet of their own*: The saying here quoted, which is an hexameter verse in the Greek, “Liars the Cretans are, evil beasts and indolent bellies,” is probably from Epimenides, who flourished in the sixth century B.C., and who had the reputation among the ancients of being a great soothsayer.

15. *Unto the pure all things are pure*: i.e. He who is pure within, in his feelings and desires, is not morally defiled by the use and enjoyment of external things. It is not the external things that are morally good or evil, but the disposition and will of the man who either uses them rightly or misuses them.—“Both (not “even”) their mind and conscience are defiled.”—*Their mind*=their disposition, which is defiled by the impure motives connected with their false doctrine (ver. 11).—*Their conscience* is defiled by the consciousness of sin.

[16. *Reprobate*: see note on 2 Tim. iii. 8.]

ii. 1—10. *Moral exhortations for old men and women, for young women and men, and for servants.*

[2. *Grave*: comp. 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, 11.]

5. *Blasphemed*: see 1 Tim. vi. 1. The meaning is, so that the gospel may not be brought, by the immoral conduct of its confessors, into the evil repute from which Christianity itself has to suffer in consequence of the unworthiness of its outward adherents. We find that the opposite to this (vv. 8, 10) consists in becoming an ornament to Christian doctrine, by corresponding upright conduct, whereby the adversaries are made ashamed. The mainspring of Christian morality is therefore everywhere to be found in the honour of God and Christ. This honour rests upon the appearance of the grace of God (ver. 11) “that bringeth salvation” to men (ver. 11), as well as effects their sanctification (ver. 12).

8. *Of you*: “of us.” [The MSS. vary.]

ii. 11—15. *The moral discipline of grace.*

12. *Worldly lusts*: Either such as are characteristic of the world, i.e. of natural humanity; or such as are directed to worldly things, i.e. to external and perishable possessions.—*Soberly, righteously* (or “justly”) *and godly*: Christian virtue in its three bearings, as right conduct towards oneself (self-control, especially in regard to sensual indulgence), towards one’s neighbour (justice), and towards God (piety). The training in these virtues is the work of the grace of God that hath appeared, or of the gospel, partly as holding up the moral ideal, and partly as imparting the power and desire to attain it.

13. Read, “Waiting for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—“The blessed hope and appearance;” i.e. the hoped-for beatific appearance, viz. the return of Christ to judgment and to complete his kingdom.—“Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” This is probably the more correct translation, so that “great God” is taken with Jesus Christ in apposition. Not only is the construction of the Greek in favour of this, but also the fact that it is inconsistent with the usage elsewhere to take the “appearance” to refer to God, a phrase which is always used elsewhere of the appearance of Christ. There is, of course, no other example in the New Testament of the use of the word “God” as a simple definition of Jesus Christ; but in other Christian writings, contemporary with our Epistle (second century), it is not uncommon. It was the development of the docetic heresy, which treated Christ as a purely divine and only apparently human being, that first made the church somewhat more cautious in this respect (see note on 1 Tim. ii. 5).

14. The surrender of Christ to death is here said to be with a view to our redemption from rebellion against the Law (i.e. immorality) and to our moral purification. Paul himself regards it as having in view our redemption from the curse of the Law, or from the perdition involved by the Divine wrath. Practically, indeed, the two things are altogether the same.

iii. 1, 2. *Duty toward authorities, and Christian duty generally.*

1. *To be subject, &c.*: “to be subject to rulers and to authorities, and to be obedient.”

iii. 3—8. *The Christian's former conduct in sin; re-birth; renewal through the Holy Spirit; good works.*

3. *Sometimes*: "formerly."

5, 6. Read, "By the bath of re-birth and the renewing (by means) of the Holy Spirit:" Baptism is thus described here because in it the Holy Spirit is imparted ("poured forth" into man [A.V. *shed on us*]), and by the Holy Spirit the inner renewal is then completed, and a new man is formed out of the old man.

7. *Being justified by his grace*: "Justification," i.e. the divine declaration of righteousness, here appears as the result of the communication of the Spirit (ver. 5). We find the reverse of this in the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. iv. 6), where the communication of the Spirit appears as the result of sonship, i.e. of being justified. Practically, indeed, the one cannot be separated from the other.—*Heirs, &c.*: "heirs of eternal life, according to the hope."

8. *To maintain good works* should be "to devote themselves to good works." Though these are not the ground of our deliverance and salvation (ver. 5), yet they must be a necessary consequence of the grace bestowed upon us, as they also are the final aim of the Divine will (comp. ii. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 17).

iii. 9—11. *Against false teachers.*

9. This description of the false teachers agrees exactly with what is said in 1 Tim. i. 4—8. The stage of development which the false doctrines have here reached seems to be intermediate between that of 2 Tim. and that of 1 Tim. The false teachers are here described as heretics, i.e. as forming a definite party (a sect) in opposition to the ecclesiastical community, but still they are not yet formally excluded from the community, and hope is expressed of their conversion. The attack upon them is altogether milder here than in 1 Tim., but at the same time more distinct than in 2 Tim. From this, in agreement with other indications, we should be able to determine the chronological order of the three Epistles.

11. *Subverted*: "perverted."

iii. 12, 13. *Personal matters.*

iii. 14. *Exhortation to good works.*

[14. *Maintain*: see ver. 8.]

iii. 15. *Conclusion.*

## THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

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A SLAVE named Onesimus ran away from the house of a Christian of Asia Minor named Philemon, who was one of Paul's own converts (ver. 19). If we may trust the Epistle to the Colossians, Philemon and his family resided at Colossæ (Col. iv. 9). Apphia, who is mentioned in ver. 2, was no doubt his wife, and Archippus (see note on Col. iv. 17) one of the members of Philemon's household. In his flight, Onesimus appears to have been exposed to some danger, which led him to have recourse to Paul, who was then a prisoner. It is probable that Paul was in Rome, rather than in Cæsarea, at the time. A runaway slave would be more likely to make his way by sea to the imperial city than by land to Cæsarea. In Rome he would more easily find a place of concealment and means of supporting himself; and only in Rome, where Paul resided in a hired house of his own (Acts xxviii. 30), could he visit him without great risk. Paul took him into his own house, converted him (ver. 10), became deeply attached to him (vv. 12, 13, 16, 17), and sent him back to his master with this Epistle, in which, after the address and salutation (1—3), and a conciliatory introduction (4—7), he proposes to Philemon that he should forgive the offender and receive him as a brother (8—21). After the mention of the apostle's personal circumstances and movements (ver. 22), the conclusion then follows (23—25). This charming private letter is regarded by far the greater number of judges as a genuine Pauline Epistle, and as having been written in the same circumstances as the contemporary Epistle to the Colossians. And those who so regard

it are by no means exclusively adherents to traditional opinion. Still there are others who point to the remarkable resemblance between this and some portions of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians (see notes), and who regard it as a third with these two, and involved with them in one common lot. Hence it appears that at any rate the unconditional certainty which attaches to the authorship of the four great Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians and Galatians, is wanting even in the case of this Epistle. The only object in the composition of an imaginary Epistle of this kind would have been to set forth the ideal Christian relation between masters and slaves, just as, in the Epistle to the Colossians, the slave question had already been fully treated (Col. iii. 22—25).

## THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

1. *A prisoner*: see note on Eph. iii. 1.—*Fellowlabourer*: Paul hopes that he is a fellowlabourer; inasmuch as he is president of a community of believers meeting in his house. Aquila and Priscilla are spoken of in the same way in Rom. xvi. 3—5.

2. *Apphia*: The mistress of the house is also concerned in the reception of the runaway slave.—“The community in thy house:” see note on Rom. xvi. 3. The community is especially mentioned because Onesimus was now to belong again to this more intimate circle.

3. See note on Rom. i. 7.

4 = Col. i. 3; Eph. i. 16.—Read, “I thank my God always when I make mention of thee in my prayers.”

5 = Col. i. 4; Eph. i. 15.—*Toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints*: “In the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints.” [The prepositions are different in Greek, perhaps meaning faith in Christ and love toward the saints.]

6 = Col. i. 9; Eph. i. 17 sq.—Read, “That the participation of thy faith may become effectual through the knowledge of all the good which ye have in Christ Jesus.”—This verse states the object of the intercession of ver. 4, viz. that those who share in his faith (i.e. the saints mentioned in ver. 5) might, by means of the faith of Philemon, efficient in love, attain to actual experimental knowledge of the fulness of good, which is at the Lord’s service in the community. Hence “the hearts of the saints have been refreshed” (ver. 7).

7. *Bowels*: “hearts.” [So also in vv. 12, 20, read “heart.”]

8. *Might be much bold*: i.e. might with a bold heart and with confidence, without fear command thee.

9. *For love’s sake*: so that I may not interfere with the free exercise of its power.—*Beseech*: “exhort.”

10. *Son* [lit. "child"]: so Timothy, as converted by Paul, is called his son (1 Cor. iv. 17).

11. *Profitable*: Here there is a reference to the name Onesimus, which means useful or profitable.

[12. See note on ver. 7.]

13. *In thy stead* should be "for thee."—Philemon regards any service done to Paul as done to himself, so that Onesimus, in becoming Paul's servant, would have re-entered the service of his own master.—*Bonds of the gospel*: bonds into which the preaching of the gospel has brought him.

14. *Thy benefit*: The apostle thinks that Philemon would have no objection to his retaining the slave without more ado, but he sends him home again in order to give the master full opportunity of himself freely pardoning him and receiving him again into his household.

15. Paul has abstained from interfering in the matter on his own account, lest he should perhaps be opposing some divine purpose.

16. *Above a servant*: This does not mean that Onesimus is to cease to be a servant.—*In the flesh*: in the natural and earthly relation, according to which Onesimus belonged to the household of Philemon.

17. *Partner*: i.e. partner in Christianity.

18. *If he hath wronged thee*: Onesimus must have run away in consequence of some neglect of duty whereby his master had suffered.

19. A formal and legally valid agreement on the part of the apostle to pay what is owing. At the same time, however, the apostle reminds his wealthy convert that he may make counter-demands of a still greater amount.

[20. See note on ver. 7.]

21. *I wrote*: "I have written."

22. Comp. Phil. i. 25, ii. 24.

23, 24 = Col. iv. 10, 12, 14.

[24. *Marcus, Lucas*: better, "Mark," "Luke," as elsewhere.]

[25. Comp. Gal. vi. 18, and see note on Phil. iv. 23.]

# THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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## 1. THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE AND HIS READERS.

APPENDED to the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, or sometimes inserted amongst them, we find an Epistle with the title, "To the Hebrews." [It is only the later MSS. that call it the Epistle of *Paul* to the Hebrews, as in A.V.] The writer does not give his own name, as Paul does in all his Epistles, nor is there any express indication of the circle of readers for whom the Epistle is intended. The opinion of the early church concerning it was divided. Even in the East, where the Epistle to the Hebrews was accepted, the difference of its form from that of the other Pauline Epistles could not but be early remarked. In Alexandria, it was supposed at first that Paul, being an apostle to the Gentiles, was prevented by modesty from putting his name to an Epistle which was addressed to believing Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria (ob. post 211 A.D.) further perceived that Paul, who had not put his name to the Epistle lest he should frighten the Jewish Christians away from it, could not have written it as it stands. Paul must have written it in Hebrew, and Luke have translated it into Greek. Origen (ob. 254) went a step further, and saw that the Epistle could not have been written by Paul at all. He was "rude in speech" (2 Cor. xi. 6), and it was of far too Hellenic a style to have been written by him. Nevertheless, Origen recognized the ideas of Paul in the Epistle. Some other writer, perhaps Clement of Rome, as some said, or

Luke, as others said, must have set forth Paul's ideas in this peculiar style. Notwithstanding all this, however, the Epistle retained its position in the East. In the West, on the other hand, not only was its Pauline authorship denied, but the Epistle itself was entirely rejected. A Western catalogue of the sacred writings of the New Testament, dating from the end of the second century, speaks of it under the title of an Epistle "to the Alexandrians," and calls it an "imposture" foisted upon Paul in support of the heresy of Marcion. Tertullian (ob. circa 220 A.D.) ascribes the Epistle to the Hebrews to Barnabas, and refuses to give it full recognition as holy Scripture. Even Jerome (ob. 420) mentions that the Epistle to the Hebrews is rejected among the Latins. About this time, however, Augustine (ob. 430) succeeded in securing the recognition of the Epistle in the West.

The vigorous spirit of the Reformation emancipated itself from traditional opinion with regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Luther says: "That the Epistle to the Hebrews is neither from the hand of St. Paul, nor of any other apostle, is proved by ii. 3. It is plain that the writer here speaks of the apostles as himself one of their disciples. For St. Paul testifies with power (Gal. i. 1) that he has received his gospel, not from man, but from God himself. And beside this, it containeth a hard knot, inasmuch as in the sixth and tenth chapters it altogether denieth and refuseth repentance unto sinners after baptism; and in the twelfth chapter, ver. 17, it saith that Esau sought repentance and found it not. And this seemeth to be contrary to all Gospels and Epistles. And although one may explain this, yet the words are so clear that I know not whether it be sufficient so to do. It seemeth to me that it is an Epistle composed of many pieces, and treateth not of one thing in an orderly manner. However this may be, it is an exceeding fine Epistle, which speaketh in a manner both masterly and profound of the priesthood of Christ, out of the Scripture, and also expoundeth the Old Testament finely and richly, so that it is evident that it is the work of an excellent and learned man, who was a disciple of the apostles and had

learnt much of them, and who also had experience in the faith, and skill in the Scriptures. And although he layeth not the foundation of faith, as he himself testifieth (vi. 1), which also is the office of an apostle, yet he buildeth handsomely thereupon gold, silver, precious stones, as saith St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 12). Wherefore, though perhaps there be some wood, straw or hay mixed therewith, this shall not hinder us from receiving so fine a doctrine with all honour. And yet we may not make it equal to the apostolic Epistles. But who hath written it is unknown, and is like to remain unknown for a time; and indeed it is no great matter." And yet even Luther did not fail to make the acute suggestion that very likely Apollos might prove to be the author of the Epistle: "This Apollo," he says, "was a man of great understanding; the Epistle *Hebræorum* is surely his." And though it was possible for Protestant orthodoxy to fall back into the traditional theory of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is already one of the firmly established results of scientific scriptural research that *Paul cannot have been the author.*

In the Epistle (ii. 3) it is assumed that the word of salvation was first proclaimed by the Lord himself, and then came down through his immediate hearers to the author of the Epistle and his readers. This cannot have been written by Paul, who declares that he received his gospel from God and Christ without any human mediation (Gal. i. 12). Paul, who had passed through the chief school of the scriptural learning of the Jews in Jerusalem, could not fall into such errors regarding sacrifice and the sanctuary as we meet with in this Epistle, when, for example, it represents the high-priests as sacrificing daily (vii. 27, comp. x. 11), or places the altar of incense in the Holy of Holies, and the golden vase of manna and Aaron's staff in the ark of the covenant (ix. 4). Moreover, the writer is more eloquent, and has a greater command of the Greek language, than Paul (see 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 6). The Epistle to the Hebrews betrays the influence of the Alexandrian school in a greater degree than the Epistles

of Paul, both in its interpretation of Scripture and in its actual doctrine. In its scriptural exegesis, especially, it is distinguished by the "types" of that which is now fulfilled, which it finds in Old Testament history and ordinances of the Law. In doctrine it is distinguished by the idea of the divine Logos (word, or reason), by means of which the Alexandrian Jew, Philo (ob. post A.D. 41), had combined Old Testament theology with Greek philosophy, here appearing as an expression of the divine nature of Christ (Heb. i. 1, 2, iv. 12, 13). In Philo, the divine Logos was the Deity as revealed and immanent. Our author not only betrays the general influence of Philo, but is even acquainted with his writings (Heb. xiii. 5). He also departs from the doctrine of Paul in certain details. Paul declares that the Law itself is spiritual (Rom. vii. 14). The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of a Law of a carnal commandment (vii. 16) and of carnal ordinances (ix. 10). Paul knows of no mediator except in the case of the old Law (Gal. iii. 19). The Epistle to the Hebrews calls Christ the mediator of the new covenant (viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24).

If, on the one hand, the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot have been written by Paul, on the other hand it was not written very long after his death, certainly not after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. It must have been written while the temple service at Jerusalem still remained in all its magnificence. In the demonstration of the deficiencies of the Jewish hierarchical system there is no mention of the crushing blow which it suffered by the destruction of the temple. Sacrifice is expressly spoken of as a thing of the present (viii. 4, ix. 8, 9). It is true that the writer never speaks of the temple, but only of the Mosaic tabernacle; but this is due simply to the fact that he always has in view the original Mosaic institutions. From the fact that Timothy's imprisonment is over, and that there is a greeting from "them from Italy" (Heb. xiii. 23, 24), we may infer that the Epistle was written soon after the Neronian persecution of the Christians, which took place in the year 64 A.D.

The Epistle to the Hebrews must have been written, then, by

some one who belonged to the school of Paul and was a friend of Timothy. The Levite Barnabas of Cyprus (Acts iv. 36), to whom the Epistle was sometimes ascribed by the ancient Christians, is excluded by the same objections in regard to the temple and matters connected therewith that apply to the Pauline authorship. There is no definite reason for assigning the Epistle to Luke. Still less can we suppose that it is from the hand of Clement of Rome. Everything, however, converges upon *Apollos*, the subject of Luther's happy guess. According to the Book of Acts (xviii. 24 sq.), Apollos was a learned Jew of Alexandria, who, having been already "instructed in the way of the Lord," came to Ephesus (about 55 A.D.), and there spake and taught diligently the things concerning Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. This Christianity of the baptism of John would be a lower Jewish-Essenic stage of Christianity, which did not yet make any distinction between Christian baptism and the baptism of John. Apollos, then, would come from Alexandria, where he may very well have passed through the school of Philo, to Ephesus, being at this time a Jewish Christian such as is described in Heb. vi. 1, 2. Here he was instructed by Priscilla and Aquila in the teachings of Paul. Having been thus introduced to the Pauline conception of Christianity, he went into Achaia (to Corinth), where he proved from the Scriptures, especially to the unbelieving Jews, that Jesus was the Christ. In Corinth, Apollos doubtless carried on the work of Paul, but after a fashion peculiar to himself, standing probably in somewhat the same relation to Paul as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (see 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 4—6, iv. 6). In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which will have been written in the year 58, we find Apollos again at Ephesus, where he is mentioned in conjunction with Timothy (xvi. 10—12), with whom he was no doubt acquainted. In the Epistle to Titus (iii. 13) he is mentioned again. Apollos then would belong first to the school of Philo, then to the Jewish Christians of Alexandria, to whom Christianity might very well be early preached by the immediate hearers of Jesus (Heb. ii. 3),

and then in Ephesus he joined the school of Paul and became intimately acquainted with Timothy.

If Apollos was probably the author of the Epistle, we must then look for its readers in Alexandria; and there is even an ancient title to the Epistle, from which it would seem that it was addressed to that city. Doubtless the name "Hebrews" gave rise early to the idea that it was addressed to the primitive Christian community in Palestine. Now even supposing it to be possible that a writer might employ the Greek language in addressing the members of that community, it was plainly the custom there to use the original text of the holy Scriptures, and not the Greek version. Our author, however, rests all his arguments upon the Greek version of the "Seventy," with all its errors (see Heb. x. 5, xi. 21), and without paying any attention whatever to the original. Heb. ii. 3, again, would not be addressed to the original community, the nucleus of which was formed by hearers of the Lord himself. No one could use towards that community such language as we find in Heb. v. 12 sq., standing as it did at the head of all Christendom. The good offices to the saints for which the readers are praised (Heb. vi. 10) were probably directed toward the primitive community in Jerusalem. Another reason why the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot have been addressed to the primitive community in Jerusalem is, that that community had suffered, on any hypothesis, more than one bloody persecution (Acts vii. 54 sq., xii. 1 sq.), including that of the year 62, in which James, the brother of the Lord, perished. The Hebrews of our Epistle, on the contrary, though they had suffered some tribulation very soon after their conversion (Heb. x. 32 sqq.), and still had contests to endure, had not yet come to the shedding of blood (xii. 4). The Hebrews of this Epistle are certainly not to be sought in Palestine. It is an error, again, to suppose that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to an un-mixed Jewish-Christian community. These Hebrews did not form a complete Christian community. They were only a part, though they may have been the original nucleus, of a larger Christian

community, from whose gatherings they were already beginning to absent themselves (x. 25), whose rulers they are exhorted to obey (xiii. 17), and whose rulers and members they are to greet (xiii. 24). This also shows us that the Epistle cannot have been addressed to any Palestinian community.

But, on the other hand, the Epistle may very well have been addressed to Alexandria. The believing Hebrews of that city would share the sufferings of the Jewish persecution under the emperor Caius Caligula (38—41 A.D.) (Heb. x. 32 sq.). Some time during the long period of its existence (ii. 3, v. 11 sq.) the community may have lost by death its original president (Heb. xiii. 7). They might remain very little changed, while the Gentile Christians by degrees increased till they were in a majority. In Alexandria there was so numerous a Jewish population, that the hostility of the unbelieving Jews which the believing Hebrews had to contend with (Heb. xii. 3 sq.) is nowhere more intelligible than here. Jerusalem was not too far from Alexandria for the believing Hebrews to be able to keep up active intercourse with the Jewish hierarchy by means of journeys to the festivals and pilgrimages from time to time to the temple (see Acts viii. 27, xxi. 23 sq., xxii. 17, xxiv. 11, 17). This made it necessary to keep them to their Christian faith (Heb. iii. 1, iv. 14, x. 23), and only here could such an Alexandrian culture be assumed in the appeal. That the earliest Alexandrian Fathers know nothing of the Epistle being addressed to Alexandria is also explained by the fact that these "Hebrews" did not form an unmixed Jewish-Christian community, but only a portion of a larger community consisting mainly of Gentile Christians. Relying simply on the fact that it is addressed to "the Hebrews," they supposed that it must have been intended for the Christians in Palestine. The supposition that it was intended for Alexandria also falls in admirably with the hypothesis that it was written by Apollos, who was himself one of these very Hebrews (Heb. xiii. 19). We can scarcely suppose that it was addressed to Rome, where the blood of Christians

had flowed freely since the year 54. This would be inconsistent with Heb. xii. 4.

If, then, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Apollos and addressed to the Jewish Christians of Alexandria, it would be written soon after the Neronian persecution of the Christians in Rome, which took place in the year 64 (see Heb. xiii. 24), and before the bloody persecution of the Jews in Alexandria in the year 66. The Christian Hebrews could not altogether escape the latter persecution, so that Heb. xii. 4 could not have been written after it. It is no wonder that the Epistle of James (ii. 25), which was written during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81—96), refers to the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 31).

The Epistle to the Hebrews is as far as possible from being simply a doctrinal disquisition. It is written to meet an urgent necessity. It is occasioned by the danger to which the Christian confession of faith on the part of the Hebrews was exposed partly by its persistent adherence to the mere elements of Christianity (Heb. v. 12—vi. 2) and partly by the attempts of the unbelieving Jews to persuade it to actual apostasy from Christianity (Heb. iii. 12, vi. 4—6, x. 28 sqq., xii. 25). Hence the repeated exhortations to hold fast to the Christian confession (Heb. iv. 14, x. 23, comp. iii. 1).

## 2. DOCTRINE.

The writer, taking his stand upon Pauline principles, addresses himself to a Jewish Christianity which had scarcely passed beyond unbelieving Judaism, and now threatened to relapse into it. He is familiar with the Epistles of Paul (comp. Heb. vi. 6 with Gal. iii. 1; Heb. v. 12 with 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 14 with 1 Cor. ii. 6; Heb. x. 30 with Rom. xii. 19, &c.). Like Paul (Gal. iii. 19), he represents the Old Testament religion of the Law as proclaimed by angels (Heb. ii. 2). Like Paul (Gal. iii. 19; Rom. v. 20, x. 4), he attaches only a temporary validity to the Law, lasting until the time of reformation, i.e. until the redeeming

sacrifice of Christ (Heb. ix. 10). Like Paul (Gal. iii. 16 sq.), he speaks of the seed of Abraham whose cause the Son of God took upon himself (Heb. ii. 16). Like Paul, he emphasizes the importance of faith (Heb. iv. 2, vi. 12), and expressly affirms the righteousness of faith (Heb. x. 38, 39, xi. 6, 33). But the Paulinism of the Epistle to the Hebrews betrays at the same time the peculiar school of Jewish Alexandrianism, which was most fully developed in Philo, both in its manner of dealing with Scripture and also in its doctrine concerning the divine Logos.

In its freedom with regard to the Jewish religion of the Law, the Epistle to the Hebrews is not inferior to Paul himself. Here, as in Paul's writings, the religion of the Law is preceded by justification by faith; but here the latter is not limited to faith in the promise of a seed which was given to Abraham. Here justifying faith is more generally conceived, and is more comprehensive (Heb. viii. 11) than in Paul's writings. Faith is confidence in that which is hoped for, an unhesitating conviction of unseen things generally. Abraham no longer appears, as in Paul, as the forefather of all believers. Saving faith begins as far back as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and, in the case of Abraham himself, with the departure from Canaan. The religion of the Law is represented by our author, as by Paul, as only an indirect revelation of God through angels (Heb. ii. 2), and by angels to whom the present world has been put in subjection (ii. 5). He lays even more emphasis upon the imperfection of the Law than Paul himself. The Law is weak and powerless, and has made nothing perfect (vii. 18, 19). Its ordinances are dead works (vi. 1, ix. 14). The Law has only a shadow of good things to come (x. 1). It is no longer in itself spiritual (as in Rom. vii. 12, 14), but contains carnal commandments and precepts (Heb. vii. 16, ix. 10). With its diverse commands concerning meats, it is positively alien to Christianity (xiii. 9). Further, in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is not the moral element in the religion of the Law, as in Paul's writings, but the priesthood and the sacrificial system, that are chiefly dwelt upon.—The non-Levitical priesthood of Melchi-

sedec, to which Abraham, the ancestor of the Jews, and indeed of Levi himself, did homage with the offering of tithe, takes precedence in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. vii.) of the priesthood of the Law. It was not until after this important phenomenon that the sanctuary of the Law was erected, the worldly sanctuary of this creation (ix. 1, 11), only a type of the true heavenly sanctuary (ix. 24), only a shadow of heavenly things (viii. 5, x. 1). The very repetition of the sacrifices of the Levitical priests proves their incompleteness (x. 1, 2). They produce only a purifying of the flesh (ix. 13), do not take away sins (x. 11), and do not purify the conscience (ix. 9).—The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (viii. 7 sqq.) finds in Jer. xxxi. 31 sqq. proof of the imperfection of the old covenant in the announcement of a new covenant, with laws for the mind written in the heart. Holy Scripture itself has declared the old covenant obsolete, in that it waxeth old nigh unto vanishing away. Long after the existence of the priesthood of the Law, an eternal priest of the order of Melchisedec is promised in Psalm cx. 4 (Heb. v. 6, 10, vi. 20, vii. 11, 17).

In its view of the new covenant, the Epistle to the Hebrews to some extent differs throughout from Paul, looking less to what takes place in man than to what is offered on the part of God. Here the doctrine of the nature of Christ comes into the foreground. Paul himself conceived of the Redeemer only as the heavenly man (1 Cor. xv. 47; Rom. v. 15; Phil. ii. 6 sq.). The Epistle to the Hebrews, availing itself of Philo's doctrine of the Logos, proceeds to the deity of Christ. In connection with the Solomonic doctrine of Wisdom (comp. Heb. i. 2, 3, with Wisd. of Sol. vii. 25—27), Christ is raised to the sphere of divine beings (Heb. i. 3, 8); and in another passage (iv. 12, 13) he is distinctly declared to be the divine Logos. Here, then, the Christian Messianic faith is already amalgamated with the Philonic idea of the Logos. The Redeemer is conceived of as the central point of a supernatural world. He is the reflection of the Divine glory, the imprint of the Divine nature, for whom and

through whom are all things (i. 2, 3, ii. 10). The deity of Christ is an expression of the exaltation of the new revelation of God above the old revelation in Judaism by means of angels.

The new complete revelation of God took place in the first instance, according to our Epistle, by the Son of God taking upon himself flesh and blood, and becoming like unto men (ii. 14, 17, comp. x. 5). He shared the universal human lot of temptation, yet remained without sin (iv. 15, vii. 26). He learnt obedience in the school of suffering (v. 7, 8). Yet it was only by his death, as the perfect sacrifice, that he completed the redemption proper as a purification from sins (i. 3). Here there is nothing new in the mere conception of the death of Christ as a sacrifice, but what is new is, that the Epistle to the Hebrews represents the Redeemer as the true high-priest, who offered himself, once for all, as a blameless sacrifice (ix. 14), and who, by his own blood, has founded the new covenant (ix. 13 sq., x. 29, xiii. 20). His death was a unique sacrifice (vii. 27, ix. 14, 26, 28, x. 10, 11, 14) for heavenly things (ix. 23), capable of taking away sins. Thus the priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec, was fulfilled. The Redeemer has now become the high-priest of heaven (iv. 14, vi. 19, 20, viii. 2, ix. 11, 24). He sits at the right hand of God (i. 3, viii. 1, x. 12, xii. 2) as a priest for ever (vii. 21 sqq.). Thus by his blood he has consecrated the entrance to the heavenly sanctuary (x. 19), and purified the consciences from dead works, to serve the living God (ix. 14).

The doctrines of the deity of Christ and his high-priesthood have given a new turn to Paul's doctrine of justifying faith. On the one hand, it has been placed more in the background, while, on the other hand, it has been made more universal. But still saving faith forms a distinct contrast to the Jewish religion of the Law (vi. 1, ix. 10). The manifestation of the heavenly priesthood has revealed the worthlessness of the earthly (viii. 4). The Epistle to the Hebrews occupies a position distinctly opposed to Judaism. The Jews, who were accustomed to speak of the Gentiles without more ado as sinners, are here themselves

described as sinners (xii. 3, comp. vii. 26). The writer not only calls upon the believing Hebrews to go on beyond the elements, the lower Jewish-Christian stages of Christianity, and advance at length to Christian perfection (vi. 1 sq.), but he bids them depart entirely from the Jewish religious communion (xiii. 13). The Epistle to the Hebrews, in fact, openly teaches that apostasy from Moses, of teaching which Paul is accused by the Jewish Christians in the Book of Acts (Acts xxi. 21). The universality of Christian salvation which is declared in ii. 9, 15, is by no means surrendered again by a limitation to the natural posterity of Abraham and the Jewish people in ii. 16, 17.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the most important of those writings which effected the separation of Christianity from Judaism. It is in every respect a worthy sequel to the Epistles of Paul, and by its amalgamation of Paulinism and Jewish Alexandrianism it successfully prepared the way for the peculiar doctrinal development of Christianity.

### 3. ARGUMENT.

The Epistle to the Hebrews opens straight away with a statement of the superiority of the Christian revelation of God to the Jewish (i. 1—4). In this statement the writer depends mainly upon the deity of Christ, but also points out at the same time his high-priesthood. The scriptural proof of the exaltation of Christ as the Son of God, and himself God, above the angels, is immediately followed by an exhortation to consider well the new revelation through the Son, which is higher than the ancient revelation through angels (i. 5—ii. 4). The goal also of the salvation of the new revelation exalts it above the angels to whom the present world is subject. The prospect of a future world, which will be given into subjection to man, has been revealed to the believers through the death and glorification of the Redeemer, who, as early as the latter part of this section of the Epistle, is spoken of as a high-priest (ii. 5—18). Jesus is then

set forth as apostle and high-priest of the Christian faith, and his exaltation above Moses in this respect is pointed out (iii. 1—6). By his interpretation of a passage of Scripture (Ps. xc. 7—11) the writer then endeavours to preserve the Hebrews from apostasy, and to direct them to the divine invitation to a rest that awaits them (iii. 7—iv. 13).

The way has now been prepared for the proper kernel of the Epistle (iv. 14—x. 18), in which is developed the high-priesthood of Jesus in opposition to the Levitical priesthood of Judaism. First, the readers are admonished, having Jesus as high-priest and Son of God, to hold fast the confession of faith, which was endangered by Judaism itself (iv. 14—v. 10). The contrast between the high-priesthood of Christ and the high-priesthood of the Jewish Law, leads on to the conception of Christ as a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. cx. 4). This new conception of Christ, however, the writer cannot set forth to the Hebrews whom he is addressing, without first censuring the low stage of their Christianity, and warning them of the terrible results of apostasy (v. 11—vi. 20). It is not till he has done this that he proceeds to expound the superiority of Christ's high-priesthood after the order of Melchisedec to the Levitical priesthood of Judaism (vii. 1—x. 18). This exposition is as anti-Jewish as it is Alexandrian, and indeed Philonic. The perfection of the high-priesthood of Christ, of whom Melchisedec was the type, consists, according to our author, on the one hand in the revelation of heavenly things, of which the Law with its earthly sanctuary was but a shadow, and on the other hand in the inner change in the mind which is purified and reconciled by it.

The section which then follows (x. 19—39) shows us that even this doctrinal exposition has also a very practical aim, for here the readers are admonished firmly to maintain their Christian faith, and not to forsake the gatherings of the Christian community; then a second time a terrible judgment is threatened against those who fall away from the Christian faith, and the readers are reminded of the firmness they displayed in the period

immediately following their conversion. The mention of faith next leads to a scriptural demonstration of the fundamental doctrine of Paulinism, the doctrine of righteousness by faith (xi.), which was still a stumbling-block to the Jewish Christians. After this doctrinal exposition, the writer returns again to his exhortation (xii.). The Hebrews are exhorted to stand fast in the fight against Jewish hostility, and once more emphatically warned against apostasy from Christianity.

In conclusion (xiii.), we have further special exhortations, in which the general purpose of the whole composition is not lost sight of. Jewish-Christian doctrines are set down as alien to Christianity (xiii. 9). Complete separation from the Jewish religious communion is demanded (xiii. 13). The letter then closes, in genuine epistolary style, with the personal wish of the writer soon to be restored to his readers (xiii. 18 sq.), the announcement of his speedy arrival, in company with the liberated Timothy (xiii. 23), and general greetings.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

### i. 1—4. *The superiority of the Christian revelation to the Jewish.*

Here the two fundamental ideas of the deity and the high-priesthood of Christ are emphatically brought forward.

2. *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things*: The inheritance of the world was regarded as the promise given to Abraham (Rom. iv. 13). The Christians are joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. viii. 17), heirs of God through Christ (Gal. iv. 7). Christ is heir of all things, as the head of the future world.—“Through whom he also made the world-ages” (not *the worlds*): Christ is here represented as the divine word (the Logos) of Jewish Alexandrianism as developed by Philo, according to which the whole creation took place by means of the word (Logos) of God; just as, according to the pre-Philonic Wisdom of Solomon (Wisd. vii. 27), all things were created by means of the wisdom of God. The great world-ages are two, the present and the future (Matt. xii. 32). The future world-age is also mentioned in Heb. vi. 5.

3. Read, “Who being the reflection of his glory and the imprint of his being, and bearing all things with the word of his power, and having made the purification of our sins through himself, hath sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.”—“Reflection . . . imprint:” The Alexandrian book of the Wisdom of Solomon had already used similar language with regard to the wisdom of God (Wisd. vii. 26). The school of Philo conceived of the Divine wisdom expressly as the word (Logos) of God.—“Bearing all things with the word of his power:” According to Philo, the word (Logos) of God is the immanent God himself. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Son of God is so conceived of.—“Having made the purification of our sins through himself:” The Son of God, in his manifestation in the flesh upon earth, has completed the redemption of sinful humanity by his death. Here we have already an indica-

tion of the high-priestly office of Christ.—“Hath sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high:” Christ exalted after his redeeming death.

i. 5—14. *Demonstration of Christ's exaltation above the angels from various passages in the Old Testament.*

All the quotations in this passage are from the Greek version.

6. Read, “But when he shall again have brought in the first-born into the world,” &c.—The quotation is from Ps. xcvii. 7, here applied to the return of Christ in his glory. It is only in the Greek version that there is any mention of the worship of all the angels.

7. *Spirits* should be “winds.”

8, 9. From Ps. xlv. 6 sq., where, according to our author, Christ is addressed as God.—*A sceptre of righteousness*: lit. “a sceptre of straightness.”—*Therefore God, even thy God*, &c.: “Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee,” &c.

10—12. From Ps. cii. 25—27. Only in the Greek version could the writer find Christ spoken of as God.

ii. 1—4. *Exhortation to consider well the new revelation.*

Christ being thus exalted, the new revelation through the Son of God should be the more earnestly considered and taken to heart. It is far higher than the old revelation of the religion of the Law which the writer of our Epistle (ii. 2), like Paul (Gal. iii. 19), represents as proclaimed by angels (comp. also Acts vii. 53), a view derived from the description of God's retinue of angels at the giving of the Law (Ps. lxxviii. 11; comp. also the Greek version of Deut. xxxiii. 2), of which Paul and the author of our Epistle avail themselves to depreciate to some extent the religion of the Law. [The reading of the last words of Deut. xxxiii. 2 is doubtful. The Greek version has, “On his right hand were angels with him.” Psalm lxxviii. 11 should probably be rendered, “Yahveh giveth the word; the women who tell the tidings are a great host,” the real reference being then to some victory over the enemies of Israel.]

1. “Lest at any time we should be swept past” (not, *let them slip*): i.e. lest we should be carried away past salvation. Human life is represented under the figure of a stormy voyage, and salvation as the harbour in which we are safe.

2. *For if, &c.*: “For if the word spoken through angels was made firm.”

3. *If we neglect* should be “if we have neglected.”—*By*: “through.”—The salvation preached at first through the Lord himself has been confirmed by those who heard him, not only to the readers, but also to the writer himself. Hence neither could Paul be the writer, nor the primitive community in Palestine the readers.

4. Read, “God bearing witness together with them by signs, wonders and divers powers, and by communication of the Holy Spirit according to his will.”—God himself here bears witness in favour of the preaching of the gospel by means of miraculous powers and gifts of the Spirit (comp. 1 Cor. xii. ; Gal. iii. 5).

ii. 5—18. *The superiority not only of the origin but also of the goal.*

The salvation of the new revelation is superior to the angels, to whom the present world is subject, not only in its origin, but also in its goal.

ii. 5.

It is not the future, but only the present, world that is subject to the angels. The later Jews regarded the seventy or seventy-two nations of the world as under the protection of special guardian angels (Dan. x. 13, 20 ; Ecclesiast. xvii. 17 ; comp. also the Greek version of Deut. xxxii. 8). [The Greek version of Deut. xxxii. 8 reads, “When the Most High divided the nations, the sons of Adam whom he scattered, he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God.”]

ii. 6—9.

The writer interprets Ps. viii. 5—7 (where the Psalmist says that God has made man a little lower than the angels, and made all things subject unto him) to mean that God has made man inferior to the angels for a little while, and that finally all things, even the angels, shall be subject to him. Thus the words of the Psalm have already been fulfilled in Jesus, who has tasted death for all and has been crowned with glory.

6. *Visitest* should be “regardest.”

7. *Thou madest him, &c.*, should be, “for a little while thou hast made him lower than the angels,” &c.

9. *Who was made, &c.*, should be, “who for a little while was made lower than the angels.”

ii. 10.

Read, “For it became him to make perfect through sufferings, as the general of their salvation, him for whose sake are all things, and through whom are all things, after he had brought many sons unto glory.”—“Him for whose sake,” &c.: i.e. the Son of God (Heb. i. 2).—“After he,” &c.: i.e. the Son of God upon earth.—“General:” i.e. leader.

ii. 11—18.

The perfecting of the Son through sufferings was necessary for the sake of the fellowship between the Redeemer and the redeemed. The Redeemer calls those who are to be redeemed his brothers (Ps. xxii. 22), expresses as a man his confidence in God (Is. viii. 17), and he as the Son of God speaks of the redeemed as children of God (Is. viii. 18) and therefore his brothers. In order, therefore, that he might be made like unto them, he has taken upon him flesh and blood; yea, he has even suffered death in order that he might take away the power of the devil, who (through sin, see Rom. v. 12) had the power of death, and that he might deliver men from the slavery of the fear of death. He takes up the cause, not of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. The phrase “seed of Abraham” need not be taken in the natural sense, but may very well be understood, as in Paul, of the spiritual descendants of Abraham, i.e. men who are believers. So also the “house of God” (iii. 6, x. 21) is Christendom; “that within the veil” (vi. 19) is heaven (comp. ix. 24). The veil is interpreted as the flesh of Jesus (x. 20). The camp (xiii. 13) is the Jewish community. Because the Son of God espouses the cause of (believing) men, it was necessary that he should be made like them in all things, that he might be merciful, and as a faithful high-priest atone for the sins of the people, i.e. not only of the Jewish people, but of the true (believing) people of God, i.e. of Christendom (see iv. 9, xiii. 12).

12. *Church*: “community.”

14. *Are partakers*: lit. “have been made partakers.”

16. Read, “For he taketh not up the cause of angels, but of the seed of Abraham doth he take up the cause.”

iii. 1—iv. 13. *Exhortation not to lose sight of the Christian confession and trifle it away in Mosaism.*

iii. 1.

The Hebrews are exhorted to give heed to the apostle (i.e. one who is sent by God) and high-priest of the Christian confession, Jesus, who has brought the new revelation of Christianity, and completed the reconciliation of the believers with God. This is the first express exhortation to hold fast to the Christian confession, which was endangered by Mosaism (comp. iv. 14, x. 23).

iii. 2—6.

The exaltation of Christ above Moses. Christ is faithful unto God, who hath made him. Moses was only faithful in the house of God as a servant (Num. xii. 7). Christ, as Son of God, is over the house of God, which in its perfection is Christendom.

2. *Appointed* should be “made” or “created.”
3. *Inasmuch as* should be “in the same degree that.”
5. *To be spoken after*: “to be spoken.”
6. *His own* should be “His,” i.e. God’s.

iii. 7—iv. 13.

Discussion of Ps. xcvi. 7—11, with a view to the preservation of the Hebrews (addressed in the Epistle) from falling away from the Christian confession into pure Mosaism. Long after the Mosaic time they are called upon, “to-day,” if they hear the voice of God, not to harden their hearts, as did the people of the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness, who forfeited their admission into the divine rest. Let the Christian Hebrews look to it that no one in unbelief fall away from the living God into Mosaism (iii. 12). Still that same word “to-day” is uttered, still the promise remains of admission to the divine rest. This promise is not only later than God’s rest after creation (iv. 4), but it is also later than the Mosaic age, and has by no means been fulfilled by Joshua’s conquest of the promised land (iv. 8). This promised divine rest lies altogether beyond Mosaism. Let them beware then of that unbelief whereby those who lived in the days of Moses forfeited their admission to the rest which God had provided! The word (Logos) of God, which speaks in the holy Scripture, is able to judge the thoughts and intent of the heart—yea, it is omniscient (iv. 12, 13); and in saying this the

writer gradually comes to identify the word of Scripture with the divine Logos of the Alexandrian school, with which at the beginning of the Epistle (i. 2, 3) he practically identified the Son of God, with whom indeed he is really concerned throughout.

10. *And they, &c.*, should be “and they (with emphasis on *they*) did not recognize my ways.”

16. Read, “For who were they that heard and provoked? Was it not all that came out of Egypt by Moses?”

18. *Believed not* should be “were disobedient.”

iv. 1. *Fear*: i.e. “take care.”—*To come short*: strictly, “to have come short.”

3. *If they shall enter*: “they shall not enter.”—There should only be a comma at the end of this verse.

5. *If they shall*: “they shall not.”

6. *Unbelief* should be “disobedience.”

8. *Jesus*: “Joshua.” [Jesus is the Greek form of the name.]

9. *A rest*: lit. “a keeping of sabbath.”

11. *Unbelief* should be “disobedience.”

12. *Quick*: i.e. “living.”—*Discerner*: “judge.”

13. *With whom we have to do* should be “of whom we speak.”

iv. 14—v. 10. *Exhortation on the ground of the possession of this high-priest.*

Those who possess this high-priest are exhorted to remain faithful to the Christian confession, and not to be blinded or enticed away by the brilliancy of the Jewish high-priesthood.

iv. 14—16.

14. Read, “Who has passed through (not *into*) the heavens” (comp. vii. 26, ix. 11; Eph. iv. 10), i.e. into the Holy of Holies, where, exalted above all the heavens, he enjoys full communion with God.

15. *The feeling of*: “sympathy with.”

v. 1—6.

v. 2. *That are out of the way*: “that go astray.”

3. The Jewish high-priest has to offer sacrifice not only for the sins of the people, but also for his own sins (comp. vii. 27).—*By reason hereof*: i.e. because of his infirmity (ver. 2).

4. He has been called to his office like Aaron.

5, 6. And Christ also has a divine calling as Son of God (Ps. ii. 7), and as a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. cx. 4).

## v. 7—10.

In the days of his flesh, in the school of suffering, in bitter agony of soul (comp. Matt. xxvi. 39 sqq.), he learnt obedience; but at the same time he was heard, so that now he is able to become the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey him.

7. *In that he feared*: “because he held God in honour” [lit. “because of his piety”].

10. *Called*: “Named” [lit. “Addressed”].

v. 11—vi. 20. *The writer censures in his readers the low stage of their Christianity.*

## v. 11—14.

After so long a time, they are still only beginners in Christian knowledge, requiring milk, and not perfect so as to be able to bear solid food (comp. 1 Cor. ii. 6, iii. 2).

11. Read, “Whereof we should have much to say and hard to explain, since ye have become dull of hearing.”

[12. *For the time*: i.e. considering the time that has elapsed since your conversion.—*First principles*: lit. “elements of the beginning.”]

14. *Of full age*: “perfect.”—*To discern*: better, “to distinguish between.”

## vi. 1—3.

Read, “Wherefore let us now leave the beginnings of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation,” &c.

The readers are exhorted now at last to rise from the mere elements of Christian doctrine to perfection, and not to lay over again the mere foundations. Repentance from dead works is repentance from following the Jewish Law (comp. ix. 14). A believing trust in God was wanting to Judaism, notwithstanding all its belief in the One God. The doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands (confirmation) was the elementary teaching which was given along with baptisms, often repeated after the fashion of Essenism and the school of John (comp. Acts xviii. 25, xix. 3), and with the imparting of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands (comp. Acts viii. 17, xix. 6). The doctrine of the

resurrection of the dead and an eternal judgment would be especially likely to be forsaken by the Alexandrian Jews. But all these are the mere elements of Christianity.

## vi. 4—6.

May those who have almost fallen back into Judaism consider the terrible penalty of apostasy from Christianity to Judaism, this new crucifixion of the Son of God (comp. Gal. iii. 1) of which there is no repentance.

Read, "For those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift and been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and have fallen away, it is impossible to renew again unto repentance, since they crucify unto themselves the Son of God, and put him to an open shame."

## vi. 7—20.

The writer still hopes for the best, especially when he calls to mind the love which the Hebrews have shown by their services to the saints (vi. 10), i.e. in gifts of love to the primitive community at Jerusalem (comp. 2 Cor. viii. 4; Rom. xv. 25). Let them only hold fast their hope unto the end, and be assured of the promise which God has confirmed by an oath (Gen. xxii. 16 sq.)

7. *By whom* should be "for whose sake."

10. *Labour of love* should be simply "love."

[14. *Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee*: a Hebraism = "I will assuredly bless thee and multiply thee."]

[16. *The greater*: i.e. that which is greater, or perhaps him who is greater, than themselves.—*And an oath, &c.*, should probably be, "And of all their dispute the oath is an end for confirmation" (i.e. it finally settles the matter).]

17. *Wherein* should be "Wherefore."—*The heirs of promise*: "the heirs of the promise."—*Confirmed it* should be "mediated."

19, 20. *That within the veil* which the firm anchor of faith enters into is the Holy of Holies (Exod. xxvi. 33; Lev. xvi. 2, 12, 15) of heaven, whither Jesus has gone before, having been made an eternal high-priest after the order of Melchisedec.

vii. *The high-priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedec.*

This high-priesthood of Christ is worked out altogether after

the fashion of Philonic exposition of Scripture, in order to demonstrate the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood.

## vii. 2.

Melchisedec, king of Salem, the priest of the most high God, to whom Abraham gave a tithe of the booty he had taken in war (see Gen. xiv. 18—20), as being called Melchisedec, is (in Hebrew) king of righteousness; and as king of Salem he is (also in Hebrew) a king of peace.

## vii. 3.

Without father, without mother, without descent, without beginning or end of life, he stands before us, not in reality, but still in the Scripture, which is intentionally silent on all these points, and he is thus an image of the Son of God, a priest for ever (comp. ver. 8).

## vii. 4—10.

This Melchisedec is superior to Abraham, who paid him the tithe and received from him the blessing. Nay, in Abraham he even received tithe from Levi, Abraham's descendant.

## vii. 11—19.

The fact that, in Ps. cx. 4, another high-priest of the order of Melchisedec is announced, proves that the completion has not been attained through the Levitical priesthood of the order of Aaron. With the change of priesthood, a change of the Law is also announced. Christ, of whom this has been said, is of the non-priestly tribe of Judah, and is therefore a priest, not according to the law of carnal commandment, but according to the power of an indissoluble life. Hereby the old Law, which was too weak and unprofitable, has been abolished and a better hope brought in.

11. Read, "Now if the completion were by the Levitical priesthood . . . what need would there still be to say that a different priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec and not after the order of Aaron?"

[14. *Evident* = well known.]

15. *For that*: "if."

16. *Endless* should be "indissoluble."

[18, 19. Many commentators translate: "For there is indeed a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the Law made nothing perfect);

but there is a bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God." This is the sense of Luther's version also.]

## vii. 20—22.

The new priesthood was introduced by a divine oath (Ps. ex. 4), which is wanting in the case of the priesthood of the Law, so that Jesus appears as the surety of a much better divine testament (covenant).

## vii. 23—25.

The priests of the old Law are many, because they are mortal; this one new priest is the first to have an imperishable priesthood, because he remains for ever; wherefore he can completely save those who approach God through him.

25. *To the uttermost*: i.e. "altogether."

## vii. 26—28.

In Jesus at last we have a holy high-priest, exalted above heaven, who has not, like the high-priests of the Law, to sacrifice first for his own sins and then for those of the people, but has offered himself once for all, himself not a weak man like the others, but made perfect for ever.

27. It is an error on the part of the writer to suppose that the high-priests of the Law had to offer sacrifice daily. They were only obliged to do so once a year on the day of atonement.

28. *Which*: i.e. "the oath."—*Consecrated*: "perfect."

viii. *The high-priest in heaven.*

Special stress is laid upon the fact that the Christian high-priest sits at the right hand of God in heaven. Thus Christ is the priest of the heavenly sanctuary. The priests after the Law in the earthly sanctuary (the building of which is described according to the pattern which was shown to Moses upon the Mount, Exod. xxv. 40) serve only an image and shadow of heavenly things. Christ has attained a higher priesthood, as the mediator of a better covenant (testament), which was also ordained under better promises (viii. 6). The imperfection of the first covenant (testament) and the promise of a new covenant, a law written in the hearts, is plainly to be read in Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

4. Read, "Now if he were on earth he would not be even a priest."

5. Read, "Who serve the image and shadow of heavenly things."

6. Read, "But now he has obtained an office which is the more excellent in proportion as he is the mediator of a better testament, which has been given indeed under better promises."

ix. 1—10. *The great inferiority of the service of the earthly sanctuary in the first covenant.*

The description of the tabernacle is after Exod. xxv.—xxx. There was first the fore-tabernacle, the holy place [A.V. *sanctuary*], then behind the second veil the tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies. In the latter our author (ver. 4) erroneously places the golden altar of incense which stood in the holy place (Exod. xxx. 1—6, comp. xl. 26; Levit. xvi. 18). Similarly he erroneously places the golden pot of manna [Exod. xvi. 33 sq.] and Aaron's rod [Num. xvii. 10] in the ark of the covenant, which (according to 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10) contained only the tables of the Law. That the high-priest might only enter the Holy of Holies once in the year on the day of atonement to sacrifice for his own and the people's transgressions, is interpreted (v. 8—10) to mean that the way to the holy had not yet been found so long as the first tabernacle (the fore-tabernacle) stood; that this is a figure referring to the present time, in which those who serve God cannot make their sacrifices perfect according to conscience, since they are nothing but carnal ordinances (ver. 10, comp. vii. 16) concerning meats and drinks and washings, which are imposed not for ever, but only until the time of reformation.

[3. *Holiest of all*: lit. Holy of Holies, a Hebraism for "holiest."]

4. *Censer* should be "altar of incense."

8, 9. Read, "The Holy Spirit signifying that the way to the holy had not yet been revealed so long as the fore-tabernacle stood, which is a figure for the present time in which are offered," &c.

ix. 11—28. *The superiority of Christ's priesthood.*

Christ, as high-priest of the good things to come, has passed once for all through the perfect tabernacle not made with hands, i.e. through heaven (comp. iv. 14), and not with blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, into the sanctuary, and has found an eternal redemption.

## ix. 11—14.

If in the worldly sanctuary the blood of beasts (Num. xix. 1 sqq.) sanctified unto the purification of the flesh, so much the more will the blood of Christ cleanse the consciences from dead works (of the Law) to serve the living God. The sacrifice of Christ, as distinguished from the temporary external sacrifices of the old covenant, was a moral act of sacrifice of obedience, and being offered by virtue of eternal spirit, it has also an inner and *eternal* validity.

11. *By*: "through."—*Building* should be "creation."

12. *Having obtained* should be "and obtained."

14. *Your*: "our." [The authority of the MSS. is pretty equally divided.]

## ix. 15—28.

Christ, then, is the mediator of a new covenant (testament) (comp. Matt. xxvi. 28), which has been founded through his blood, just as the first covenant was established not without blood, and as according to the Law almost everything was purified with blood (see Exod. xxiv. 3 sqq., and also the same idea in Num. xix. 1—6, and in the sprinkling of the *books* of the covenant and the tabernacle and the vessels belonging to it with blood). With such blood the types of heavenly things (in the Law) had to be purified. But the heavenly things themselves required better sacrifices. Christ entered not into the sanctuary made with hands, but into heaven itself, in order to appear for us before God. He did not offer a sacrifice repeatedly, like the high-priests of the Law, but he offered himself once for all, that he might then appear unto them that awaited him, for their salvation (comp. Col. ii. 6—17).

21. *Blood* should be "the blood."

22. *Purged*: "purified" [same word as in ver. 23].

24. *Holy places*: "holy place."—*Are the figures*: "is an antitype."

x. 1—18. *Conclusion of the exposition of the high-priesthood of Christ.*

## x. 1—4.

The Law has only a shadow (comp. Col. ii. 17) of the good things to come. Its sacrifices must be continually repeated, because they bring sins to remembrance indeed, but are unable to wipe out the consciousness of sin.

## x. 5—10.

From Ps. xl. 6—8 (following the erroneous Greek version, “a body” for “my ears”) it is concluded that Christ, at his entrance into the world, which was foretold in the book of the Old Testament, was to do away with the whole legal system of sacrifice.

8. Read, “He saith before,” &c.

## x. 11—18.

While the priests of the Law with their continual sacrifices cannot wipe out sins, Christ with the one sacrifice of his body has at once completed everything, and now sits at the right hand of God, after he has founded the new covenant of laws given in the hearts, and accomplished the forgiveness of sins.

12. Read, “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down for ever on the right hand of God.”

[13. *Expecting*: i.e. “waiting.”]

15, 17. “For after that he had said before, This is the covenant, &c. . . . the Lord saith, I will put my laws,” &c.

x. 19—39. *Exhortation to steadfastness.*

Practical exhortation, with confidence in the entrance opened through the blood of Jesus and in the possession of the great high-priest over the house of God, inflexibly to hold fast to the confession of the hope.

## x. 19—22.

19. *Holiest*: “holy place” [same word as in ix. 2, 12, 24].

20. Read, “Which (entrance) he hath consecrated unto us as a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, through his flesh,” &c.

## x. 23—25.

23. *Faith*: “hope” [so all MSS.]

24. The Hebrews should provoke one another, not to works of the Law, but to love and good works.

25. Exhortation not to forsake the gathering together of the Christian community, as some of them were already beginning to do, since the day of the return of Christ is approaching (comp. ver. 37).

## x. 26—31.

The terrible punishment for deliberate apostasy, for which there is no atonement. The penalty for the rejection of the

Mosaic Law was death (Deut. xvii. 2—7). Much greater will be the punishment of him who has trodden under foot the Son of God, counted the blood of the covenant (testament), wherewith he was sanctified, common (profane), and treated despitefully the Christian spirit, a spirit of grace in opposition to the religion of the Law.

[28. Read, "He that hath transgressed the Law of Moses dieth without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses."]

30. Read, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." From Deut. xxxii. 35, with the same departure from the original and the Greek version as in Rom. xii. 19. [Some MSS. omit "saith the Lord," which may have been added here from Rom.]

#### x. 32—34.

The Hebrews, already wavering in their Christian confession, are reminded of the first period of their enlightenment or conversion to Christianity. At that time they endured a great fight of sufferings, partly by being themselves made a gazing-stock with reproaches and afflictions, partly by having become companions of those who so lived, viz. the oppressed Christian brethren in the faith. For they suffered with those who were in bonds (not with "me in my bonds," as some early MSS. have it), and bore the spoiling of their goods joyfully.—All this agrees with the persecution of the Jews in Alexandria under the emperor Caius Caligula (38—41), which Philo describes. This persecution of the Alexandrian Jews would no doubt also fall upon the young Jewish-Christian community.

34. Read, "For ye had compassion on those in bonds, and took with joy the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven." [Some of the best MSS. omit "in heaven."]

#### x. 35—39.

The Hebrews still require patience, in order that they may receive the promise through the fulfilment of the Divine will.

37. The return of Christ is to be expected to come soon.

38. From Hab. ii. 3, 4 (here quoted more fully than in Rom. i. 17), let them learn that cowardly retreat leads to destruction, but faith leads to the deliverance of the soul.—*The just* should be "my just man."

xi. *The writer's own peculiar conception of the fundamental principle of Paulinism.*

The writer desires not only to keep the Hebrews to the Christian faith generally, but also to win them to a Christianity free from the Law.

xi. 1—3.

Faith is not here, as with Paul, confined to the acknowledgment of Jesus as the promised Son of God, but, from the first, is understood more generally as confidence in that which is hoped for, an unhesitating assurance of the invisible.

1. Read, "But faith is an undoubting conviction of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."

2. *The elders*: "the ancients."

3. From the definition of faith in ver. 1, it follows that the subject of faith is God, His creation of the world, and the recompense which He gives (ver. 6).—*The things which are seen were not* should be "that which is visible was not."

xi. 4—7.

The series of witnesses to the faith does not begin, as in Paul (Rom. iv. 11), with Abraham, the ancestor of righteousness by faith, but as far back as Abel, who after his death still speaketh (comp. xii. 24; Gen. iv. 10), Enoch, Noah, who were all heirs of the righteousness which is of faith.

7. [*Fear*: rather, "piety."—*By the which* refers to his faith.] *Which is by faith* should be "according to faith."

xi. 8—10.

Abraham's saving faith is no longer confined, as Paul has it, simply to the promise given to him and his seed, but is extended to a heavenly Jerusalem (comp. Gal. iv. 26), and the firmly-founded city of the supernatural world (comp. Heb. xi. 14, 16).

xi. 11, 12.

That which Paul describes as the justifying faith of Abraham (Rom. iv. 18 sqq.), is here transferred to Sarah, viz. faith in the promise in spite of its inconsistency with what might naturally be expected.

11. Read, "By faith, Sarah herself received strength to found a seed [i.e. a family], even contrary to her time of life" (lit. "the time of her age").

## xi. 13—16.

General remarks upon the faith of the patriarchs, who felt that they were strangers upon earth and sought a heavenly fatherland.

13. Read, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and greeted them, and confessed that they were strangers and aliens on the earth."

## xi. 17—19.

The sacrifice of Isaac (Gen xxii. 1 sqq.) is adduced as a special proof of Abraham's faith, which is shown by his confidence in God's power to raise from the dead; wherefore, figuratively speaking, Abraham received his only son back again. As the fore part of the tabernacle is a figure of the present age (ix. 9), so this receiving of Isaac, who was offered as a sacrifice, is a figure of the resurrection of the Redeemer from his sacrificial death.

## xi. 20—22.

21. *And worshipped*, &c., should be "and worshipped towards the top of his staff."—The writer here follows the incorrect Greek version of Gen. xlvii. 31, which speaks of the staff instead of the bed.

## xi. 23—29.

23. See Exod. i. 22, ii. 1, 2.—*Proper*: "fair" [the same word that is rendered "fair" in Acts vii. 20].

26. A far-reaching extension of the idea of prefigurations of Christianity in the Old Testament. Moses, in surrendering the treasures of Egypt with a view to a heavenly recompense, is said already to have borne (typically) the reproach of Christ.—[*Had respect unto*: i.e. "looked to."]

27. His faith is said to have prevented him from fearing the wrath of the king when he left Egypt (Exod ii. 15).—*Endured* should be "was strong" or "steadfast."

## xi. 31.

The writer boldly ventures to reckon even the harlot Rahab as a heroine of faith because of her friendly reception of the spies.

## xi. 33—38.

33. *Stopped the mouths of lions*: see Judges xiv. 16; 1 Sam. xvii. 34 sqq.; Dan. vi. 22; 1 Macc. ii. 60; [Eccles. xlvii. 3].

35. *Women received their dead raised to life again* (lit. “by resurrection”): see 1 Kings xvii. 17 sqq.; 2 Kings iv. 18 sqq.—“But others were tortured:” see 2 Macc. vi. 18 sqq., vii. 1 sqq. Those who were tortured despised outward deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

37, 38. *They were stoned*: see 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22.—*Sawn asunder*: According to an ancient tradition, which is probably referred to here, the prophet Isaiah is said to have been sawn asunder by command of the Jewish king Manasseh.—*Slain with the sword*: see 1 Kings xix. 10, 14; [Jer. ii. 30, xxvi. 23]; Zech. xiii. 7.—[*Tempted*: This appears strange in the middle of a list of violent deaths. “Burnt” or “pierced” has been suggested, either of which words in Greek would differ very slightly from the word which stands in the text meaning “tempted.”]—*They wandered about, &c.*: see 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, xix. 4, 8 sqq.; 1 Macc. ii. 28, 29; 2 Macc. v. 27, vi. 11, x. 1.

xi. 39, 40.

The fulfilment of the promise, which the earlier age did not see, has been reserved for the Christians.

xii. *Continuation of the exhortation to righteousness by faith, which has been interrupted by the cloud of witnesses in the preceding chapter.*

xii. 1—3.

Laying aside every impediment, they are to prepare themselves for the race that is set before them (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 24), and at the same time to look to the beginner and completer of their faith, Jesus, who by his death upon the cross has attained to the right hand of God. Let them consider what contradiction he had to endure from sinners, as the Jews are here called (comp. Heb. vii. 26), not the Gentiles (Wisd. x. 20; Matt. ix. 10, xi. 19, xxvi. 45, comp. Luke xviii. 32; Gal. ii. 15), in order that their courage may not fail.

1. “Wherefore let us also, seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside,” &c.

2. *Author*: “beginner.” [The same word that is translated “captain” in ii. 10, and “prince” in Acts iii. 15, v. 31.]

xii. 4—11.

The Hebrews, in resisting sin (on the part of the Jews), have

not yet come to the shedding of blood, i.e. they have not yet suffered any bloody persecution. And yet in the struggle they have already forgotten the scriptural saying (Prov. iii. 11 sq.), that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Only bastards, and not children, are without chastisement. To the Father of spirits, as God is called in ver. 9 (comp. Num. xvi. 22, xxvii. 16), let them submit even in chastisement, for this finally produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness, i.e. the fruit of peace which consists in righteousness.

xii. 12—17.

Let us, then, in the contest lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and take care not to stumble. Especially the Hebrews are admonished to let no root of bitterness spring up among them (after a corrupt reading of the Greek version of Deut. xxix. 18) whereby the multitude would be defiled. What is probably meant is apostasy from Christianity to Judaism, as is shown by the warning that follows, that no one, like Esau, sell his (Christian) birthright for meat. After this no repentance was possible to Esau (comp. Gen. xxvii. 34 sqq.), just as the author of our Epistle has already said there is no repentance for apostasy from Christianity (vi. 4—6).

14. *Holiness*: "sanctification" [so lit.].

xii. 18—29. *Warning against apostasy.*

From these verses it is evident that the writer is concerned with the question of apostasy from Christianity to Judaism.

xii. 18—21.

They have not come, as when the Law was given on Sinai, to a tangible mountain which burnt with fire (see Exod. xix. 18; Deut. iv. 11, v. 23, ix. 15), to gloom and darkness and tempest (see Deut. iv. 11, v. 22), to the sound of a trumpet (see Exod. xix. 16, 19, xx. 18) and a voice of words (i.e. the words of God in the giving of the Ten Commandments, Exod. xx.; Deut. v.), the hearers of which prayed that no more might be spoken to them (see Exod. xx. 18, 19; Deut. v. 25, xviii. 16). For they did not bear the commandment (Exod. xix. 12, 13) that even a beast which touched the mountain must be stoned. Moses himself spoke with fear of the terrible sight (see Deut. ix. 19).

19. Read, "And to the sound of a trumpet, and to a voice of

words, the hearers of which begged that no more might be said unto them."

[20. *Could not endure*: lit. "did not bear."]

xii. 22—24.

They have come, rather, to Mount Sion (frequently spoken of in the Old Testament as the dwelling-place of God and the place of future salvation; see Ps. xlvi. 3, l. 2; Is. ii. 2, 3; Mic. iv. 1, 2, &c.), to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (comp. Gal. iv. 26), to many thousands of angels (the retinue of God), to the community of the first-born, gathered together to the festival, who are written in heaven, i.e. to those righteous ones who were enumerated in ch. xi. who are not yet in heaven, but whose names are written there (comp. Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3). They have come to God himself, the Judge of all, to the spirits of perfected just men (i.e., probably, the Christians who had already fallen asleep), to the mediator of the new covenant, Jesus, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel (comp. xi. 4).

22. *An innumerable company*: lit. "tens of thousands."

23. *General* should be "festival."

xii. 25—29.

They must therefore see that they do not reject him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice shook the earth (see Exod. xix. 18; Judges v. 4 sq.; Ps. lxxviii. 8, cxiv. 7), who hath promised to shake once more heaven and earth (Hagg. ii. 6). This "once more" the writer takes to signify an impending change of the whole creation, in order that that which is unshaken may remain. With the prospect of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, they must therefore serve God in thankfulness, but at the same time with fear before him as a consuming fire (Deut. iv. 24).

27. *Removing*: "changing."

28. *Let us have grace* should be "let us cherish gratitude."

xiii. *Special exhortations added to the great exhortation to stand fast in the Christian confession.*

xiii. 1—3.

Exhortation to brotherly love, to hospitality, whereby some (e.g. Abraham and Lot, Gen. xviii. xix) have entertained angels, and to sympathy with prisoners and those who are in adversity.

## xiii. 4.

Marriage must be kept thoroughly in honour.—Read, “Let marriage be held in honour among all,” &c.

## xiii. 5, 6.

5. The writer quotes Deut. xxxi. 6 (comp. 1 Chron. xxviii. 20 ; Josh. i. 5) with the same variation with which the Alexandrian Jew, Philo, quotes it in one of his writings.—[*Conversation*: i.e. “conduct.”—*Never*: better, “in no wise.”]

6. *The Lord*, &c.: “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear. What shall man do unto me?” [So the best editors divide the verse.]

## xiii. 7.

Exhortation to remember the teachers who have died, whose faith should be imitated.—*Them that have rule over you*: “your teachers” [lit. “your leaders”].—[*Conversation*: i.e. manner of life.]

## xiii. 8, 9.

8. [This verse should not be connected with “end” in the preceding verse, but is a separate sentence: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.”]—To this mention of Jesus Christ as the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, the writer attaches a warning against diverse doctrines alien to Christianity, dealing with the unprofitable externality of meats and with sacrifices, that is to say, a warning against doctrines of Judaism.

## xiii. 10—12.

The readers are assured that they have an altar of which those who serve the tabernacle may not eat. For, as the beasts sacrificed by the high-priest (on the day of atonement) were burned without the camp (Lev. xvi. 27), so Jesus, in order that he might by his own blood sanctify the people (of them that believe), suffered without the gate (Matt. xxvii. 32).

## xiii. 13—16.

Therefore the Christian Hebrews are required to go forth to him without the Jewish camp, bearing his reproach, i.e. to break off entirely from the Jewish religious communion. We have here (upon earth) no abiding city (the earthly Jerusalem, the existence of which is still evidently assumed), but seek one which is to come (comp. xi. 10, 13 sqq.). Therefore let the sacrifice of praise be offered to God at all times through Christ—not from

time to time through the Levitical priests—sacrifices of praise and of beneficence.

[15. *Giving thanks*: i.e. our lips which give thanks.]

[16. *Communicate*: i.e. “share.”]

xiii. 17.

17. Further exhortation to obey the teachers or rulers [A.V. “them that have the rule over you;” lit. “your leaders”], who were probably not of Hebrew blood.

xiii. 18, 19.

Intercession for the writer himself, especially that he may come very soon to the readers again.

[18. *Willing to live honestly*: better, “desiring to live honourably,” or “in a seemly manner.”]

19. *The rather*: “more abundantly.”

xiii. 20, 21.

The writer, in conclusion, wishes his Hebrew readers all practical help from the God of peace, who hath raised the great Shepherd of the sheep from the dead (comp. 1 Thess. v. 23).

20. This reference to the resurrection of Christ is the only one in the Epistle.

xiii. 22.

May the readers hear the hortatory address.

xiii. 23.

Timothy has been set free from his bonds again, i.e. from the imprisonment into which he seems to have been brought as travelling companion to Paul (comp. Phil. i. 1, ii. 19). The writer hopes, with him, to see the readers, if he shall come soon.

xiii. 24, 25.

The greeting which is sent to all the rulers or teachers of the Hebrews and to all the saints, i.e. the remaining members of the community, shows us that these Hebrews only formed a part of a larger Christian community. But the greeting which the writer sends from the brethren from Italy, places us in the time immediately following the Neronian persecution of the Christians, which must have driven many Christians out of Italy.—The greetings of these confessors of Christianity had special weight.

[24. *Them that have the rule over you*: see note on ver. 17.—*They of Italy*: strictly, “they out of Italy.”]

## THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

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A CONSIDERABLE period elapsed before the Epistle which we now possess under the name of James met with distinct acceptance in the collection of New-Testament writings. It was known, indeed, in the Eastern Church as early as the middle of the second century. Though there was an inclination there to acknowledge it as a work of apostolic origin and to incorporate it in the New Testament, still there were serious objections to it, which were probably the cause of the delay in its general acceptance. It was not until the beginning of the second half of the fourth century that the Eastern Church decided formally in favour of its acceptance among the New-Testament writings. In the Western Church, where for a long time it had been but little regarded, it was not until the end of the same century that a secure place was assigned to it among the other Epistles of the New Testament.

From this time the doubts which this Epistle had given rise to in the Christian church were laid to rest until they awoke again in the age of the Reformation. Luther's strong objection to it is well known. In the year 1522, in his Introduction to it, he denies its apostolic origin, saying: "Methinks it must have been some good pious man that took some sayings of the disciples of the apostles and put them down on paper, or perhaps it was written by another from his preaching." In his Introduction to the New Testament, written in the same year, he speaks of it in the well-known contemptuous terms that have already been quoted in our General Introduction (Vol. I. p. 23). To this severe sentence upon the Epistle of James, Luther always adhered,

and it is evident from his later declarations that the ground of his special objection to the Epistle was the impossibility of reconciling its doctrine of faith and justification with the Pauline doctrine.

In accordance with the spirit that afterwards penetrated the Protestant Church in Germany, the unfavourable opinion of the Epistle which Luther expressed was gradually abandoned; but, on the other hand, in recent times the revival of thorough and independent scriptural research has given rise to new objections. The chief source of these objections is the attack upon the Pauline doctrine of faith and justification which is made in the second chapter (ii. 14—26). There were many, indeed, who thought they might silence their doubts about this passage by supposing that what was attacked was not so much the doctrine of the apostle Paul himself as the misuse that was early made of it; that fundamentally Paul and James agreed entirely in regarding faith as the necessary condition of justification and reconciliation, and works as the natural fruit of faith and therefore necessary to salvation; that James's zeal was only directed against those whose crass misunderstanding of this doctrine had allowed them to be betrayed into the foolish idea that a dead faith, productive of no results, was itself sufficient to justify before God, whereas really justification and eternal salvation could only be imparted by God to him in whom faith proved fruitful in good works.

This view, however, of the attitude of the author of our Epistle towards the doctrine of the apostle Paul was based upon an error. New and thorough investigation has shown that whoever wrote it not only attacked the misunderstanding and misuse of this doctrine, but disapproved of the doctrine itself, and that altogether his view of Christianity and its relation to the Law of the Old Testament was very different from that which was held by the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

His position was, on the whole, the Jewish-Christian position. Hence he altogether rejected Paul's great principle that by the

foundation of a new order of salvation which Christ had accomplished, and especially by the death which he endured, the Law, which had never been intended to be more than temporary, had been abolished, and that Christians therefore, whether they had previously been Jews or Gentiles, were no longer bound to observe it. That the abolition of the Law was the condition on which alone Christianity could be developed into the universal religion which it was destined to become, was an idea that he had never entertained. To him, on the contrary, Christianity itself was also *law*, only he saw in it the *completion of the Law* (i. 25), without in any way inferring from this that the Christians, including even those who were of Jewish origin, were free from its dominion. If he also considered that the highest moral principle of Christianity was the commandment of love (ii. 8), he explained this, not on the supposition that Christianity was something quite different from the Law, but only that it was the Law itself in its highest development. It was to him a law of liberty (i. 25), not because it removed from its confessors the oppressive yoke of Jewish ceremonial service, but rather because it loosened for them the fetters which had hitherto restricted their moral liberty, and placed them in the happy state in which they fulfilled of free inner impulse all that the Law prescribed. Like Paul, he also ascribed to Christianity, as the word of truth, the power of transforming man and making him a new man (i. 18). But the new life thus produced in the confessors of Christianity is expressed, in accordance with his views, not in the faith-abounding spiritual union with Christ, on which Paul everywhere laid such stress (and which was to him the condition of the attainment of all the blessings obtained by the death of Christ, and, above all, the condition of the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, Gal. ii. 20), but in the fact that the confessor of Jesus, in virtue of the love that fills him, applies all his powers to the perfecting of *works* of beneficence. It is one of the results of this view that the writer attaches throughout his Epistle the utmost importance to *works*, whereas Paul, on the other hand,

always places the inner living *faith* in Christ in the foreground. The writer's whole attitude towards Christ is altogether different from that of the apostle Paul. The latter always starts from Christ, and refers to him all the instruction, the exhortations and admonitions, the threats and consolations, to which he gives utterance. In the Epistle of James, Christ is strikingly in the background. Though he is spoken of as the Lord of glory (ii. 1), yet he is seldom mentioned; and his death on the cross and his resurrection are never mentioned at all. If we try to picture to ourselves a man of this tendency, and with these views of Christianity and its relation to the Law, we shall easily understand that he could not look with favour upon the Pauline doctrine of justification, and that he would inevitably be all the more prejudiced against it if he had met with examples of men who erroneously took it to mean that nothing further was required for the attainment of forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation than that one should believe in Christ as the promised deliverer, and in his death as a vicarious sacrifice for the reconciliation of men with God. If, as his Epistle seems to indicate, he had read some of Paul's Epistles, those, at least, to the Galatians and the Romans, still he had failed to penetrate into the whole truth and depth of the Pauline doctrine of faith and justification. He agreed with the apostle Paul that faith was a condition of justification and eternal salvation. But his conception of faith was altogether different from Paul's. While Paul understood by faith a complete spiritual communion with the Redeemer through the deepest conviction of the divine honour of Jesus and his bloody death of reconciliation—an absorption of the entire spiritual life in him, so that the Christian was in Christ and Christ in him (Gal. ii. 19, 20; 2 Cor. v. 15; Rom. xiv. 8, 9)—to the writer of our Epistle faith was rather a fact of the *thinking* mind, a conviction of the existence of the one only God (ii. 19), and of the Messianic office and heavenly glorification of Christ (ii. 1). Setting out from this conception of faith, it was impossible for him to ascribe to it the same influence as Paul. To the latter, faith

was the source of an entirely new holy life in Christ, and of enthusiastic love to God and man. Our author, on the other hand, regarded faith as something that is still to be made perfect, and that finds this required perfection in the love that is due to other causes, and the good works produced by this love. In his view, good works are not the natural product of faith (as in Gal. v. 6), but they are an external addition to faith which unites with it. Having this idea of faith, our author naturally could not accept Paul's doctrine that forgiveness of sins and justification are bestowed upon man for his faith's sake alone (Rom. iii. 28; Gal. ii. 16). In his opinion, good works are also required for justification, while according to the Pauline doctrine they can only spring from the joyful consciousness of the entirely new relation to God that has been already attained through justification.

That a writing standing in a position of antagonism to Paul's views of Christianity and his doctrine of justifying faith, like that in the consideration of which we are now engaged, could be produced during the apostolic age, will not be a matter of surprise to any one who is acquainted with the circumstances of the Christian church at that period as revealed to us in the New Testament itself. The Book of Acts and the Epistles of the apostle Paul, especially the Epistles to the Galatians and the Corinthians, bear witness that the Christians of Jewish origin, and especially those belonging to the community at Jerusalem, could not understand his system of ideas, that they met him with hostile feelings, and that there were some among them who endeavoured to throw suspicion upon him in the communities which he had himself founded, and to obstruct his apostolic labours. The circumstance that those who thus acted loved to appeal to Peter and James (Gal. ii. 12; 1 Cor. i. 12), leads us to suppose that even they were not satisfied with Paul, that they disapproved of his principle of the abolition of the Law, and regarded his doctrine of justification by faith as erroneous and dangerous.

This disagreement between Paul and these two apostles, favoured the opinion which was early current in the church, that the Epistle before us was the work of James. But since there are several men of this name who appear in the New Testament, it still remains to inquire which of them may be regarded as the probable author of this Epistle. It was not the apostle James, son of Zebedee and brother of John; for he was beheaded in the year 44 in Jerusalem, by command of king Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 1, 2). Nor was it indeed this James whom ecclesiastical legend made the author of our Epistle, but one who did not belong strictly to the company of the apostles, one whom we early meet with, however, as an influential member of the Christian community at Jerusalem, and held in high esteem there, who plays a prominent part in the assembly of apostles and elders described in the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, with whom Paul had several interviews there (Gal. i. 19, ii. 9), who, as Paul expresses it, was regarded, together with Peter and John, as a pillar of the church (Gal. ii. 9), and whom Paul even speaks of as an apostle (Gal. i. 19). This James was for a number of years president of the Christian community in Jerusalem, until, as the Jewish historian Josephus informs us, he suffered a martyr's death in the year 62 at the instigation of the then high-priest Ananus.

Josephus calls this James a *brother of Jesus*, and Paul also speaks of him in the same way (Gal. i. 19). The simplest explanation of this is that he was actually a brother of the Lord. And indeed among the brothers of Christ mentioned in the Gospels we find one named James (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). The opinion has very frequently been expressed that he was not, properly speaking, a brother of Jesus, but is only loosely spoken of as such, and was really a cousin; that, in fact, he was one and the same person with James, the son of Alphæus, whom we find among the apostles, who was related to Jesus as the son of his mother's sister (John xix. 25; comp. Mark xv. 40). This is not the place to discuss this opinion, especially as it rests

upon assumptions to which there are important linguistic objections.

We are therefore fully justified in regarding the revered president of the community at Jerusalem as an actual brother of the Lord. We might be surprised, indeed, to find this James among the enthusiastic adherents of Jesus, inasmuch as his brothers did not believe in him (John vii. 5). It appears, however, that after the crucifixion a great change took place in them. A short time after Jesus disappeared from the earth, we find his brothers among the believers (Acts i. 14). Was it, perhaps, the resurrection of Jesus that produced this change of tone in them, and was the James of whom Paul tells us that the Lord had appeared to him (1 Cor. xv. 7), and whom he appears to distinguish from the apostles, the very man of whom we are speaking?

To him, then, the Christian church early ascribed the Epistle which is still extant in the New Testament under his name. In favour of this opinion some arguments may be adduced, the importance of which cannot be doubted. It agrees with the known ideas of James, and with the relation in which he stood to Paul. It is confirmed by the circumstance that the writer of the Epistle does not reckon himself one of the apostles, but calls himself a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (i. 1). If what is stated by ancient Christian writers be correct, that the surname of the "righteous" was given to him, and that he was distinguished for the strictness of his life, this would explain the great emphasis which he lays upon the performance of good works. [This surname is commonly rendered "the just" in English, from the Latin "justus," but the word is the same in Greek that is better rendered "righteous."]

The hypothesis that this James was the author of our Epistle is further supported by the indications which we find in the Epistle itself of the date of its composition. There is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Christianity, however, has already spread beyond the limits of Palestine (i. 1). The believers have been subject to divers trials (i. 2), and it

would seem as if all had not remained steadfast under them (i. 13 sq.). The writer is painfully moved by the moral delinquencies which have crept in among the Christians, especially the oppression which the poorer and humbler brethren suffer at the hands of the rich and those of higher rank (v. 1 sqq.). He blames also the vain desire to put oneself forward as a teacher in the Christian gatherings (iii. 1). Everything appears to him to indicate a complete revolution of all things, which he expects will be brought about by the re-appearance of the Lord in all his glory (v. 7, 9).

But if these arguments may be adduced in favour of the theory that the James who has been supposed by the church to have written the Epistle really was the author of it, we must not omit to mention, on the other hand, that there are certain difficulties in the way of this supposition which readily explain the opposition to it which has been raised by a considerable number of very distinguished theologians of our own day. Grave suspicions are at once aroused by the fact that the Epistle is not distinctly mentioned as a work of James until the third century, and that famous early Christian teachers express themselves doubtful about this authorship, or even expressly deny that it is his. It is further remarkable that the writer calls himself a *servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ* (i. 1), and not *brother of the Lord*, as he was early called (Gal. i. 9). Attention has also fairly been drawn to the dependent relation in which the Epistle appears to stand to several of the New-Testament writings, especially some of the Epistles of the apostle Paul. It may further be urged that it is not easy to explain how James, considering the circumstances of his life which are known to us, could have attained such skill in Greek style as the writer of the Epistle displays. Hence, however well supported the opinion that this Epistle was written by James, the well-known head of the community at Jerusalem, it cannot after all be regarded as certain. The true origin of the Epistle remains doubtful.

Whoever the writer may have been, he follows no strict

arrangement in his composition, but gives himself up to the natural flow of his thoughts, and sometimes passes rapidly from one subject to another. His language is vivid, forcible, and sometimes rises almost to poetic flights. His skill in the manipulation of the Greek language distinguishes him in a remarkable manner from almost all the other writers of the New Testament, at the same time that it cannot but force upon us the question raised above, how he attained it.

## THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

### i.

*Exhortation to steadfastness amid trials, and to prayer for wisdom.*

*The poor and the rich are admonished. Instruction regarding temptations. Exhortation to practical religion.*

1. *The twelve tribes*: the usual phrase for the Jewish nation (Matt. xix. 28, &c.). What James means is the Israelites who have come over to Christianity, or more accurately, as appears from the words *which are scattered abroad* (lit. "in the dispersion"), converts to Christianity from among the Israelites dwelling out of Palestine. From the point of view of his own doctrine, he saw the proper nucleus of the Christian church only in the Jewish Christians. The Gentile Christians appeared to him to stand in somewhat the same relation to the church in which the proselytes stood to the Jewish people.

2. It is evident from the context that what is here meant is persecutions that are suffered for the faith's sake.—*Fall* should be "have fallen."

3. *Patience* should be "steadfastness."

4. Read, "But let steadfastness be perfect unto the end [lit. "have a complete work"], that ye may be perfect and blameless, and nothing may be wanting to you."

5. What is spoken of here is that moral *wisdom*, which is a necessary condition of moral goodness.

9—12. It is quite clear from ver. 12 that the sayings contained in these verses are connected with the exhortation to a steadfast endurance of trials in ver. 2. Poor and rich alike must endure steadfastly in times of religious persecution; the former supported by the prospect of the glorious exaltation promised them in the kingdom to be established by Christ at his second coming; the latter in the consciousness that wealth after all is perishable, and all earthly glory must end in the dissolution which will take place with the return of Christ.—*Let the brother,*

&c.: "But let the brother who is low glory in his exaltation" [so lit.]. Lowliness here includes poverty.—The *rich* (and high) will perish, as such, i.e. will cease to be rich and high, he will lose his earthly happiness and his honour before the world.—*Endureth*: i.e. passes through without yielding.—*Temptation*: "trial"—*When he is tried*: "when he has been proved."

13—15. God tempts man, not for the purpose of driving him to apostasy and sin, but rather to give him an opportunity of proving his faith. He who succumbs to temptation has only himself to complain of that he has not opposed the necessary resistance to the evil lusts and desires awakened by the temptation.

15. *Finished*: "completed."—*Death*: This word signifies here, as often in the New Testament, all the physical and spiritual misery which arises from sin.

16 sqq. So far from its being possible that God should compel any one to evil, He is the source of every good that man enjoys.

17. *Father of lights* [lit. Father of the lights] should be "Cause of the heavenly lights."—*Shadow of turning* [so lit., the meaning probably being shadow caused by turning]: "alternation of day and night."

18. Conclusion from what has preceded.—*Begat*: of course in the spiritual sense.—*First fruits of his creatures*: What the first Christians were made by the second birth, brought about by the help of God, all succeeding Christians should be, viz. new creatures made holy.

19. *Wherefore*: i.e. because as Christians we have been begotten anew by God.—[Some of the best MSS. read, "Ye know, my beloved brethren; but let every man," &c.]

21. *Superfluity of naughtiness*: i.e. that wickedness which is so abundant.—*Engrafted*: "implanted."

22. *Deceiving your own selves*: imagining that the mere hearing of the word is itself sufficient for salvation.

23, 24. The *word* of truth makes us aware of our moral imperfection and excites us to improvement. Unfortunately, many soon forget again what they had recognized for a moment in the light of the gospel.

25. Read, "But whoso hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and continued therein."—It is evident that by *the perfect*

*law of liberty* the writer means nothing else than the word of truth, the gospel; but what particular attribute of it leads him to call it the law of liberty is not quite certain. Probably it is because it leads men to do from a free inner impulse that which it prescribes.

26. *Seem to be*: “think himself.”—In this verse the writer already has in his mind the fault, which appeared, seemingly, in his time in many forms, of the misuse of the tongue both in unbidden teaching and also in the utterance of angry speeches.

[26, 27. *Religion*: The word here used denotes rather a religious act, “divine service” as we should call it, than religion generally.—*God and the Father*: better, “the God and Father,” or “our God and Father.”]

## ii.

*Warning against party spirit, and against an inactive faith.*

2. We may be quite sure that the writer here has in his mind actual cases which had come under his own observation, and which had roused his indignation all the more because he was already somewhat prejudiced against the rich.—[*Goodly . . . vile*: more exactly, “brilliant” . . . “dirty.”]

4. Read, “Have ye not then become at variance with yourselves, and judged according to bad principles?”—The believing Christian must surely know that material wealth gives a man no real worth, and that in Christ rich and poor are one.

5. Read, “Hath not God chosen those who are poor in the estimation of this world to be rich in regard to faith,” &c.

6. *Despised*: “dishonoured.”—It is clear from v. 4 sqq. that there were rich Christians who behaved in a most reprehensible manner towards the poorer brethren. It need scarcely be said, however, that the reproaches here made by James against rich men generally could not strictly apply to them all.

7. “The good [A.V. *worthy*, lit. “beautiful”] name” is here undoubtedly the name of Christ, after whom the confessors of the gospel had first been called Christians in Antioch (comp. 1 Pet. iv. 14).

8. *The royal law*: the highest and most excellent; as Jesus himself had declared it to be (Matt. xxii. 39).—*According to the Scripture*: Lev. xix. 18.

10. The transgression of each individual law testifies to a want of due respect for the whole Law.

13. *Rejoiceth against judgment* should be "awaiteth judgment with joyful confidence" [lit. "boasteth of judgment," or, as some take it, "triumpheth over judgment"].

18. It might seem here as if an objection was raised to James's view. But the speaker who is introduced is really on his side, and from his position is attacking the Pauline doctrine of faith.

19. *Devils* should be "evil spirits."

21. The case of Abraham is introduced in the Epistle to the Romans (iv. 15) for an exactly opposite purpose.

25. The case of Rahab also is adduced in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 31) in favour of the doctrine of justification by faith.

### iii.

*Warning against forwardness in teaching and the abuse of the tongue. The necessity of true wisdom.*

1. The writer takes up again what he has previously said (i. 19). It must be remembered that in his days teaching in the Christian assemblies was not attached to any special office, but was open to any one.—Read, "My brethren, be not many teachers, and consider that we (the teachers) shall be subject to a more severe judgment."

2. [Lit. "For we all stumble in many things. If any man stumble not in word," &c.]—*In word*: i.e. in his speech generally. The easier it is for a man to trip in his speech, the more strongly does the wise control of the tongue tell in favour of a man's self-control and moral conduct generally.

5. *How great a matter*: "what a forest."—[The Greek word sometimes employed to denote material (*matter*) generally, means in the strict sense "wood."]

6. *Course of nature* should be "wheel of our life."

13. *Conversation*: "conduct."

17. *Intreated*: "persuaded."

18. Those who teach and live in the spirit of peaceful wisdom have an improving and soothing influence upon others.

## iv.

*Warning against contentiousness. Exhortation to humility and prohibition of unloving judgments. Indication of the common source of all these sins, viz. the dominion of desire.*

1. *Lusts* should be “desires” [or more lit. “pleasures”].

2. *Desire to have*: “envy.”

3. *Consume it upon your lusts*: better, “waste it in your pleasures.”

4. The Hebrews, who conceived of the relation of their nation to God as a marriage, regarded all who were unfaithful to God as adulterous. The particular faithlessness toward God which the writer here had in his mind, consisted in an extravagant love of the world.

5. *The spirit, &c.*, should be “The spirit that dwelleth in us longeth jealously:” i.e. longeth for God, and this longing excludes the love of the world.—What passage of Scripture the writer has in his mind is uncertain, perhaps Deut. vi. 5.

6. Read, “Yea, it (i.e. the spirit) giveth greater grace, wherefore it (i.e. the Scripture) saith,” &c.—The spirit giveth greater grace, i.e. he who is restrained from the love of the world by the spirit of God, which quickens him, obtains thereby an incomparably greater blessing than the world can give.—The passage quoted is from Prov. iii. 34, and is also cited 1 Pet. v. 5. The proud, mentioned here, are such as are puffed up with foolish pride on account of worldly possessions and honour. The humble are those who strive after God only, and attach no value to worldly things.

8. *Purify* should be “sanctify.”

9. True repentance is necessarily united with inner tribulation (2 Cor. vii. 10).

11, 12. The law is here the Christian law, which makes love the fundamental commandment. Evil-speaking and inconsiderate judgment of others, is a serious transgression of this law; and, at the same time, judgment and condemnation of others is an unwarranted interference in that which is the prerogative of the law.

13. Those who are addressed in the section of the Epistle extending from here to v. 6, are the same his aversion to whom the writer has already several times signified, pretended Chris-

tians who were lost in worldliness, and had become haughty and overbearing, and involved themselves in the guilt of serious injustice to the poorer and humbler brethren. Looking to the return of the Lord, which was believed to be at hand, James proclaims to them a heavy sentence.—*And continue, &c.*, should be “and spend a year there and trade,” &c.

[15. Read, “Instead of saying,” &c., ver. 14 being a parenthesis, and ver. 13 being taken up again here.]

17. A general expression of a deep truth, applied here, however, especially to the persons addressed in this passage, who as Christians ought to learn the impropriety of their overbearing disposition and the sacred duty of humility.

## v.

*Warning to unjust rich men. Exhortation to patience. Prohibition of oaths. Recommendation of Christian intercession.*

2. In prophetic style, that which is regarded as immediately and with certainty impending is spoken of as already accomplished.

3. The destruction of your wealth shall be the announcement of your own destruction.—[*For the last days*: lit. “in the last days.”]

4. *Kept back by fraud* should be “withheld.”—The offence here alluded to was strictly forbidden in the Old Testament (Lev. xix. 13; Jer. xxii. 13).

5. *A day of slaughter*: i.e. a day when a beast has been slaughtered for the house.

7. *Until he receive* should be “until it receive.”—*The early and the latter rain* = the autumnal and spring rains.

8. *Draweth nigh*: “is nigh.” Lit. “has drawn nigh.”

9. *Grudge not*: “sigh not.” The meaning is, do not secretly pray for one another’s punishment, lest you be condemned for such an expression of vengeance.

11. Read, “Behold we count them blessed which endure steadfastly. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and the end which the Lord brought about. See that He is compassionate and merciful.”—*The end*: the blessed termination of the sufferings of Job.

12. *Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay*: i.e. abide by your simple yes or no.—The circumstance that the writer only quotes

here such forms of oath as were not held to be binding among the Jews (by the heaven and by the earth), has led some to the conclusion that he did not forbid swearing by God, which is expressly allowed by the Mosaic Law (Lev. xix. 12; Deut. vi. 13). But this is contradicted by the words which immediately follow, which seem to contain an unconditional prohibition of oaths. In this sense, then, the writer appears to have understood the words of Christ (Matt. v. 33—36). Still it may be supposed that this prohibition only relates to voluntary oaths, not to those which are imposed by the duly constituted authorities.

13. *Psalms*: should be "hymns of praise."

14, 15. That the Jews ascribed important healing powers to oil, is plain from Jer. viii. 22, xlvi. 11; Luke x. 34; Mark vi. 13. James further ascribes here a power to the prayer of the elders and anointing the sick with oil, which was assuredly as little justified by experience then as it would be to-day. The appeal of the Catholics to this passage in favour of their doctrine of extreme unction is altogether inadmissible; for it contains no precept of Christ, but simply refers to usages of the time. What is spoken of here is not a sacramental transaction, but simply what is to be done for the physical and spiritual welfare of the patient.

16. Read, "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much if it be in (living) operation" [lit. "worked"].—Here the same excessive confidence in the healing power of prayer is expressed as in the preceding verses.

17, 18. See 1 Kings xvii. 1, xviii. 41 sqq.

20. The word *death* is here used in the same sense as in i. 15. The meaning of the last words of the verse is: He will save a soul from destruction by helping the convert to obtain forgiveness of his many sins.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

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THE First Epistle of Peter purports to have been written by the apostle in Babylon (v. 13), i.e. in Rome; and (John) Mark is supposed to have been with him as a spiritual son. This is entirely in accordance with the ancient tradition, which represents Peter as having come to Rome, and there, with Paul, suffered a martyr's death in the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64). Nor is mention wanting of Silvanus, the friend of Paul, by whom Peter is supposed to have written this Epistle (1 Pet. v. 12). The whole Epistle belongs to a period of persecution of the Christians (iii. 15, 17, iv. 14—17, v. 9, 10). From such a position of affairs Peter is here represented as having addressed an Epistle to the Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

The composition of the First Epistle of Peter by the apostle Peter in Rome at the beginning of the Neronian persecution cannot be reconciled, however, with the contents of the Epistle itself. The close association of Peter with Silvanus, the friend and follower of Paul, is simply evidence of the attempt to bring Peter and Paul together in complete harmony with one another; and the Peter of this Epistle, both in thought and expression, is an imitator of the Pauline Epistles (i. 5, ii. 6, 11, 13, iii. 18). The Epistle even betrays a dependence upon the Epistle to the Hebrews (iii. 18), the Revelation of John (v. 12), and the Epistle of James (i. 1, iv. 8, v. 5).

Decisive, however, is the fact that the Epistle assumes a universal persecution of the Christians throughout the whole world, or at any rate throughout the Roman empire, especially in v. 9.

The Neronian persecution was confined to the Christians of Rome. It was intended as a penalty inflicted upon them for the guilt of the burning of Rome. We cannot place this Epistle earlier than the time of the emperor Trajan (A. D. 98—117), who issued the first legal decree in regard to the proceedings of the Roman authorities against the Christians, and expressly enacted that the name or confession of Christianity itself, without any crime, if it were not practically denied, was to be punished with death. This is the very state of the law which the First Epistle of Peter assumes. The Christians who are slandered by the heathen as evil-doers simply because they are Christians (ii. 12, iii. 16 [iv. 14]), must live in constant expectation of being dragged to trial and condemned to death (iii. 15, 17, iv. 19). They are punished without any other guilt, simply as Christians (iii. 15, 17, iv. 1), and the penalty is death (v. 10). This persecution extends to the Christian brotherhood throughout the whole world (v. 9). The exhortations to obedience to the emperor and all who are in authority (ii. 13 sqq.), are explained by the fact that the Roman authorities had already begun to take legal proceedings against the Christians as such. Nor is it merely accidental that, in the inscription of the Epistle, Pontus and Bithynia are mentioned. It was to the governors of these provinces that the emperor Trajan sent out his decree concerning the Christians. On the other hand, that we must not look later than the time of Trajan is plain from the fact that the persecution was regarded as a "strange thing" (iv. 12), and from the reference to informers [A. V. *busybodies*, iv. 15] whom this very emperor punished.

We must conclude, then, that the Epistle was written by a Roman Christian, in the time of Trajan, in the name of the apostle Peter, whose memory was so celebrated in Rome, and that it was intended to strengthen all Christendom, but especially the most oppressed communities of Asia. Although he has written only in the name of Peter, he has exhorted oppressed and suffering Christendom in a genuinely Christian spirit. The recognition and use of this Epistle begins with the end of the first half of

the second century. Its post-apostolic origin has first been shown by modern Protestant scriptural research.

The tone of the Epistle itself also confirms what has been said above as to its origin. We find no sign remaining of that semi-legal Christianity which the real Peter represented, and represented in actual opposition to Paul. The conception of Christianity as free from the Law, which was introduced by Paul, underlies the whole. The good works which are required (ii. 14, 15, 20, iii. 6, 17, iv. 19) are no longer works of the Law. Nevertheless, the First Epistle of Peter does not take up a special Pauline position. It employs Pauline thoughts and expressions, but in a general Christian sense. This appeal in the name of Peter is Pauline in principle, but not in the sense of any definite opposition to Jewish Christianity. In iii. 21, there is a certain amount of opposition to Judaism. Elsewhere, it is not justification, but salvation of the soul generally, that is attached to faith (i. 5, 9), and the power of love to wipe out sins is acknowledged (iv. 8), after James v. 20. The believers, who are here represented simply as Gentile Christians (i. 14, 18, ii. 9, 10, iii. 6, iv. 13), have obtained the abolition of their sins through the death of Christ (i. 2, 19, ii. 21, 24, iii. 18, iv. 1), and by his resurrection have been born again unto a living hope (i. 3, 21). Christendom, which has been born again to a new life (i. 2, 3, ii. 2), is therefore the spiritual temple of God (ii. 5, iv. 17), having been made so by the indwelling of the Spirit of God (iv. 14). The only new doctrine here is that Christ, after the death of his body, preached to the spirits imprisoned in the under-world (iii. 19), and brought the gospel even to the dead (iv. 6). The doctrine of the descent of Christ into hell, which is found here for the very first time, has been one of the chief stumbling-blocks of modern rationalistic interpretation, but it contains originally the beautiful thought that the salvation of Christianity was offered even to the spirits of the under-world.

The object of the Epistle is to exhort the readers and to confirm them in their Christianity in the midst of persecution (v. 12).

After the address (i. 1, 2), the writer begins with an encouraging direction of his readers, who are in the midst of the crucial fires of persecution, to the future glory (i. 3—12). In accordance with this expectation, the suffering Christians are exhorted in general terms to holiness in the conduct of life altogether, a holiness such as belongs to Christianity, and worthy of the redemption through the blood of Christ and the destination of Christendom to be a holy people of God (i. 13—ii. 10). The exhortation to holy conduct then descends more into particulars in regard to the position of Christendom surrounded by a heathen world, and in regard to its own degrees and offices (ii. 11—iii. 12). Beginning with the relation to the heathen and the heathen authorities (ii. 11—14), it passes on to consideration of the conduct of freemen (ii. 15—17), servants or slaves (ii. 18—25), wives and husbands (iii. 1—7), and finally runs off into a general conclusion (iii. 8—12). Thirdly, more definite attention is paid in the exhortation to a steadfast confession of Christianity in a time of persecution (iii. 13—iv. 6). Sufferings must be borne for righteousness' sake after the pattern of Christ, who, having been slain in the flesh, manifested his spiritual life even in the underworld, and by his resurrection was exalted to the right hand of God (iii. 13—22). In treating of the sufferings of Christ in the flesh, the exhortation passes again to the subject of morality in general, strengthened now, however, by its reference to Christ as judge of the living and the dead (iv. 1—6). By a reference to the *nearness* of the universal judgment, the exhortation is made still more incisive and more urgent (iv. 7—19). The conclusion (cap. v.) contains general exhortations addressed to the elders and to private members of the communities (v. 1—11), and finally terminates in a purely personal statement and personal greetings (v. 12—14).

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

### i. 1, 2. *Address.*

1. *To the strangers scattered throughout, &c.*, should be "to the chosen sojourners of the dispersion in," &c. The Christians were regarded as only sojourners upon this earth (comp. i. 7, ii. 11; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. xi. 13). The dispersion of the Jewish people of God throughout the world had already been transferred to the new people of God, the Christians (James i. 1).

2. *Elect* should be omitted here, having already been taken in ver. 1.—*Sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*: i.e. sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ (comp. Heb. xii. 24) as the ancient people of God was sprinkled with the blood of the covenant (comp. Exod. xxiv. 8; Heb. ix. 19).

### i. 3—12. *The future glory a consolation in suffering.*

#### i. 3—9.

3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*: Christ still occupies a position *inferior* to that of God.

5. Strictly, "Who are kept (as in ward) in the power of God," &c. This being kept in ward by faith, reminds us of the keeping in ward under the Law with a view to the faith that was to come, in the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. iii. 23). Faith is actually regarded as the medium of the divine destination to salvation, and not even, as in Paul's writings, as man's own peculiar act. This is anything rather than Petrine.

7—9. Read, "That the test of your faith may be found much more precious than gold which perishes, but is tested by fire, unto praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ; whom, not having seen, ye love; in whom, not now seeing him, but believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving (i.e. since ye receive) the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

#### i. 10—12.

The glory of Christian salvation is here exhibited by reference

to the yearning of the prophets who foretold it, and the inquisitiveness of the angels who sought to penetrate its mystery.

10. *The grace that should come unto you* should be “the grace that concerns you,” or “is directed towards you.” [Lit. “the grace unto you.”]

12. Read, “To whom it was revealed that they served not themselves, but us [or, according to the best MSS., “you”], in those things which have now been announced to you through them that have preached the gospel,” &c.—“Served us in those things,” i.e. officially announced them to us.—*With the Holy Ghost*: “through [lit. “in”] the Holy Spirit.”

i. 13—ii. 10. *General exhortation to holiness of life and conduct.*

13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind*: Figurative expression from the girding up of the loins in running.—*And hope, &c.*: “and hope entirely for the grace that is being offered unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

14, 15. Read, “As children of obedience, not fashioned like unto the former lusts in your ignorance, but according to the Holy One who called you, be ye also holy in all conduct.”—“The Holy One who called you” = God.

16. Comp. Levit. xi. 44, xix. 2. In accordance with the Christian view, the passage here quoted is applied to inner moral purity.

[18. *Conversation* = conduct of life.]

19. *As of a lamb without blemish and without spot*: The beasts for sacrifice were required to be without any defect; see Levit. xxii. 20 sq.

21. *That your faith, &c.*, should be, “so that your faith and hope are in God.”

22. Read, “And sanctify your souls in the obedience of truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, and love one another fervently from a pure heart.” [Some old MSS. read simply, “from the heart.”]—“In the obedience of truth:” i.e. in obedience to the truth.

[23. *For ever*: not in the oldest MSS.]

24. Comp. Is. xl. 6 sq.—*The grass withereth, &c.*: “The grass is withered and the flower fallen away.”

ii. 2. Read, “And, as new-born babes, desire ye the reasonable pure milk, that ye may increase in it unto salvation.”

4, 5. Read, "To whom approaching as unto the living stone, rejected by men, but with God chosen, precious, ye likewise as living stones are being built up, as a spiritual house, to a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ."—Isaiah spoke of a chosen precious cornerstone in Sion (Is. xxviii. 16).—Christendom is here represented as the true spiritual temple of God (comp. iv. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 16 sq.; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Heb. iii. 6; 2 Thess. ii. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 15). But as a spiritual temple, Christendom serves for the execution of the sacred priestly office of bringing spiritual sacrifice. The writer is not speaking here simply of the universal priesthood of the Christians. Each individual Christian is indeed a living stone in the temple of God; but only as a community, or collectively, do they exercise the office of priest. Of any hierarchy over the community there is not a word.

6. The passage from Is. xxviii. 16 is here amalgamated with Is. viii. 14, just in the same way as it had already been in Rom. ix. 33.

7. Read, "Yours, then, who believe, is the honour; but to them that disbelieve," &c.—"The honour," in opposition to the "shame," of the unbelievers. [The point of the quotation is partly lost by calling the stone "*precious*," and then rendering this verse, "yours is the *honour*." The two Greek words are similar. The stone has been *rejected* by men, but is *precious* or *honourable* in the sight of God. There is shame and honour belonging to it. The honour is the share of the believers, the shame is the share of the unbelievers.]

8. Destination of the unbelievers to disobedience or to stumbling. In all this there is a predestination, just as in the case of faith which appears (i. 5) as purely the work of God.

9. [*A peculiar people*: i.e. a people who are God's own special possession.]—*Praises* should be "excellence."—What has been said of the Jewish nation as the ancient people of God (Is. xliii. 20 sq.; Exod. xix. 6), is here transferred to Gentile Christendom.

10. Gentile Christendom depicted after Hos. ii. 23.

ii. 11—14. *The right attitude toward the heathen and heathen rulers.*

11. *As strangers and pilgrims* on the earth, and therefore

mindful of the heavenly calling.—*From fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*: comp. Rom. vii. 23; James iv. 1.

12. *Conversation*: “conduct.”—*Whereas* should be “in the matter in which.”—Evil reports among the heathen against the Christians as evil-doers, who were accused of blasphemy, incest, cannibalism. The heathen must be brought to a different view by seeing for themselves the Christian conduct, so that finally, in the day of visitation, they may praise God on account of the beautiful deeds of the Christians (comp. v. 6; Luke xix. 44). This refers to Matt. v. 16, but here it is not until the day of God’s (gracious) visitation that the heathen will praise God on account of the beautiful deeds of the Christians.

13. The exhortation to obedience to the authorities is evidently after Rom. xiii. 1 sq., even to the very expressions used. The king, both here and in ver. 17, is the Roman emperor.

ii. 15—17. *A word to those who are free.*

17. *The brotherhood*, both here and in v. 9, is Christendom.—*[The king*: see note on ver. 13.]

ii. 18—25. *A word to the slaves.*

21. *Us . . . us* should be “you . . . you.”

22—24. The type of the sufferings of the Messiah is worked out after Is. liii. 9, with reference to Matt. xxvii. 27—31, 39—50, and to the circumstances of the readers, the expiation of sins after Is. liii. 5; Deut. xxi. 23, applied as in Col. ii. 14.

23. *Himself*: “it.”

24. Read, “Who himself carried up our sins in his body on to the tree.”

25. *Bishop*: properly, “overseer.”

iii. 1—7. *Married life.*

[1. After *husbands*, read, “that even if any obey not the word, they may without the word,” &c.—*Conversation* should be “conduct,” both here and in ver. 2.]

4. Read, “But the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible nature of the meek and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God.”

6. *Calling him lord*: see Gen. xviii. 12.—*And are not afraid with any amazement* should be “and do not fear any terror.”

The Christian women, even in the case of mixed marriages, must fearlessly acknowledge their Christianity.

7. Read, "In the same manner, ye men, deal reasonably (lit. "dwell in reason") with that which is womanly, as with the weaker vessel, giving them honour as joint-heirs of the grace of life," &c.—*Vessel*: comp. 1 Thess. iv. 4.—"Giving them honour as joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered." If the women are not esteemed as Christian sisters, the prayers of the Christian husbands will not be heard, for on Christian ground the women stand on an equality with the men.

iii. 8—12. *The disposition which should unite in itself all the individual virtues together.*

10—12. From Psalm xxxiv. 12—16.

iii. 13—iv. 6. *Steadfast confession of Christ and of the holiness of Christianity in times of persecution.*

13. *If ye be followers of* should be "if ye be zealous for [lit. "are become zealots of"] that which is good."

14. Suffering for righteousness' sake, an expression which has already been used in Matt. v. 10 of the persecutions of the Christians.—[*But and if ye suffer*: i.e. "And if, after all, ye actually do suffer."]

15. Read, "But sanctify the Lord Christ [or "sanctify Christ as Lord"] in your hearts. And be ready at all times to give an answer to every one that demandeth an account of the hope that is in you, but with meekness and fear."—Sanctify the Lord Christ: i.e. hold him holy.

16. *Whereas* should be "in that in which."—[*Conversation* should be "conduct."]

18. That Christ suffered *once* is after Heb. ix. 27, 28.—*The just for the unjust*: comp. Rom. v. 6.—[*Put to death*, &c., refers to Christ.]

19, 20. The spirits in prison, disobedient in the days of Noah, to whom Christ preached after his death, are departed spirits (comp. Heb. xii. 23). The spirits in the under-world had manifested disobedience before the judgment of the flood, after which a second judgment is to come (comp. iv. 17). In Noah's ark were eight souls, viz. Noah and his three sons, together with

their wives, who were saved by water from the corrupt world. The water of the flood is strictly the means of their deliverance, of which the water of baptism is an antitype.—*When once*, &c., should be “when the long-suffering of God was waiting,” &c.

21. Read: “The antitype of which, even baptism, doth now also save you,” &c.—*Answer*: “covenant” [lit. “question”].—Baptism which brings salvation is opposed to the Jewish washings, which are merely a putting away of uncleanness of the flesh. The baptismal confession, with question and answer, is a vow to God. Baptism, as immersion, is symbolic of the death and burial of Christ, and delivers through the resurrection of Christ, because it leads to the new life in correspondence with the resurrection of Christ (i. 3; comp. Rom. vi. 5).

22. Christ sitting at the right hand of God is Lord over all angels and powers.

iv. 1. Suffering in the flesh, whereby not the earthly life but sins cease, indicates a union with the suffering of Christ (2 Cor. v. 14).—*In the flesh* should be “according to the flesh.”—*Hath ceased*: i.e. “hath rest from sin.”

2. Read, “That the remaining time in the flesh he may no longer live to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

4. Read, “Wherein they think it strange that ye do not, blaspheming, run with them into the same excess of profligacy.”

6. The gospel was preached to the dead by Christ when he descended into hell, in order that, having been judged in human fashion, in death as the wages of sin (comp. Rom. v. 12) they might still, if they would turn in belief to the gospel, live in the spirit as God lives and will have us live.—*According to men*: i.e. after human fashion.—*According to God*: i.e. after divine fashion.

iv. 7—19. *The preceding exhortation is strengthened by reference to the fact that the judgment is near at hand.*

7. *Be ye therefore sober*, &c.: “be ye therefore temperate and be sober [the word is also used figuratively = “be wary, watchful”] unto prayer.”

8. [Read, “And above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love covereth a multitude of sins.”]—From Prov. x. 12, understood as in James v. 20.

9. *Grudging* should be “murmuring.”

10. Comp. Rom. xii. 6 sqq.; 1 Cor. xii. 4 sqq.; 1 Cor. iv. 1.

11. *To whom be praise*, &c., should be “whose is praise,” &c.

12. [Read, “Beloved, be not astonished by the fire among you, which is for a trial for you, as though some strange thing had happened to you.”]—The fire is the purifying fire of tribulation in the time of persecution.

13. Read, “But in proportion as ye share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice.”—[*That when*, &c.: lit. “that in the revelation of his glory, rejoicing ye may be glad.”]

14. Read, “If ye be reproached in the name of Christ, blessed are ye; for the spirit of glory and of power, and the spirit of God resteth upon you.” The rest of the verse should be omitted.—The spirit of glory and of power, which together with the spirit of God resteth upon the despised Christians, will be the Holy Spirit (comp. Matt. v. 10, 11).

15. *Busybody in other men’s matters*: a spy, sycophant. Trajan had promulgated severe laws against informers, so that this verse confirms the supposition that this Epistle was written during his reign.

16. *But let him*, &c., should be “but let him praise God in this name.”

17. The judgment of God begins with the house of God, i.e. with Christendom, and ends terribly with the unbelievers.

19. Read, “Wherefore let even them that suffer according to the will of God,” &c. [The best MSS. continue, “commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator.”]

v. 1—11. *Exhortations in regard to the life of the community.*

1. It is probable that the *younger* (ver. 5) are contrasted with the *elders* here. Still what is meant here is not simply those who are older in years, but the presidents of the community, with whom the apostle ranks himself as a fellow-elder.

2. *Taking the oversight*: An allusion to the office of bishop as overseer [two of the oldest MSS. omit this].—[*Willingly*: some ancient MSS. add, “according to God.”—*Not for filthy lucre*: probably better, “not being sordidly desirous of gain;” comp. 1 Tim. iii. 8.]

3. *God’s heritage* should be “the lots.”—The officers of the

community were elected among the Christians, as well as among others, by lot (Acts i. 26), whence the name *clerus* (lot) for the clergy [hence the English words clerk, clergy, &c.]. What is meant here, however, is not the officers, but the whole community, spoken of like the ancient community of God to which the promised land was divided by lots (comp. Num. xxvi. 55; Josh. xiv. 2, xix. 51).

4. *The chief Shepherd*, whose under-shepherds the elders are (comp. Heb. xiii. 20).—[*A crown*, &c. : strictly, “the imperishable (Gr. “amaranthine”) crown of glory.”]

5. *Ye younger* : This, like the words *the elders* in ver. 1, is not to be understood to refer simply to the age of those addressed. The expression already practically answers pretty nearly to the term “laity.”—*For God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble* : from Prov. iii. 34, after James iv. 6.

7. After Ps. lv. 22.

10. *Us* should be “you.”—*Make you perfect*, &c. : “will make you perfect, will stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

v. 12, 13. *Personal.*

12. Silvanus, or Silas, appears elsewhere as a companion of Paul.

13. *The church that is at Babylon elected together with you* : lit. “The chosen with you at Babylon,” i. e. the Christian community in Rome. As the imperial heathen city of the time, Rome bears the name of Babylon as early as the date of the Apocalypse (Rev. xiv. 8, xvi. 19, xvii. 5, xviii. 2, 10, 21).—*Marcus* [Mark] not literally the son of Peter, but his spiritual son (comp. 1 Cor. iv. 17; Philem. 10).

v. 14. *Farewell salutation.*

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

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THE Second Epistle of Peter assumes the existence of the first (iii. 1), and purports to have been written by the apostle in view of approaching death (i. 14, 15). It is thrown into the form of a written memorial which the apostle desires to leave to the believers (i. 12 sq.); but the real occasion which gives rise to it is the appearance of false doctrines and doubts. The false doctrine is the free-thinking Gnosticism, as in the Epistle of Jude, which is here transcribed (ch. ii.), with the omission of the quotations from the apocryphal writings, and with some additions. This Gnosticism already appears here as a declared heresy (ii. 1). The exclusion of it, which was aimed at in the Epistle of Jude, is here essentially completed (notwithstanding what is said in ii. 13). The doubts we have mentioned refer to the expectation of the return of Christ, the ground of which appeared to be failing through long delay. Both these phenomena point to the very latest age of New Testament literature. It is assumed, moreover, that the Epistles of Paul have already been collected; and they are regarded as holy scripture (iii. 15, 16). The composition of this Epistle by the apostle Peter himself is out of the question. We must look rather to the second half of the second century. It is probable that it was written by a Roman Christian.

It is not till the third century that we find the first trace of any knowledge of this Epistle, and even as late as the beginning of the fifth century the majority rejected it.

In regard to the attitude of the writer, it may be said that he

belongs to the period of the reconstruction of the Catholic Church. Of the attitude of that section of the church to which the actual Peter belonged, scarcely anything remains. In place of the historical opposition of Peter to Paul, we find a brotherly recognition of Paul and his Epistles (iii. 15, 16). The writer bases the true faith first of all upon prophetic utterance as a pure inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and then, in addition, upon his own testimony as an eye-witness (i. 16—21). He appears as the representative of this true faith first against the free-thinking Gnosticism, which he speaks of as worse than pure heathenism (ii. 20, 21), and then against those who doubt as to the return of Christ, to whom he declares that in the sight of God a thousand years are as one day, and that the long-suffering of God, who desires to admit all to the possibility of repentance, is the cause of the delay (iii. 8, 9). The writer then sets forth his peculiar doctrine of the destruction of the world by fire (iii. 10, 12). This Epistle is mainly instructive as a document of the formation of the Catholic Church.

After the address to all fellow-believers (i. 1—4), and a general exhortation (i. 5—11), Peter sets forth the motive which he has for writing, introducing himself as an eye-witness of Jesus, and appealing further to divinely inspired prophecy (i. 12—21). He then turns to the attack upon the (Gnostic) false teachers, whom he speaks of first as if he were foretelling what is to come, and afterwards as though they were already present. In this attack he expresses all his deepest horror (ch. ii.). Then he answers the doubts of his contemporaries as to the return of Christ by an appeal to the divine standard of time, and the delay of divine long-suffering (iii. 1—10). The mention of the impending destruction of the world by fire, leads to the final exhortation to make preparation for the day of the Lord. In support of this the writer finally appeals to Paul and his Epistles, referring at the same time to misunderstandings of the latter (iii. 11—16). The conclusion of the Epistle touches once more upon the notorious perversions of the age (iii. 17, 18).

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

i. 1—4. *The address to all fellow-believers.*

1. *The righteousness, &c.*, should be “the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—The deity of Christ is here assumed (comp. Tit. ii. 13).

3, 4. Read, “Seeing that his divine power hath given unto us all things that serve unto life and godliness by his own glory and virtue, by which have been given unto us precious and very great promises (namely), that ye by these should be made partakers of the divine nature, if ye flee from the worldly destruction of desire” [lit. “having fled away (or escaped) from the destruction in the world in desire”].

i. 5—11. *General exhortation to religious and moral excellence.*

5. *And beside this*: “wherefore.”

7. “And to godliness brotherly love, and to brotherly love universal love.” This universal love extends still further than the brotherly love.

8. *In the knowledge* should be “unto the knowledge.”

9. *Cannot see afar off* should be “is short-sighted.”—Such an one is blind to the higher light, and his power of vision is only sufficient for that which is near at hand, for earthly things.

i. 12—21.

*The writer's motive in writing, and the importance which attaches to him as an eye-witness of Jesus, honoured with special divine inspiration.*

13. *In this tabernacle*: i.e. the tabernacle of the body (comp. 2 Cor. v. 1). In ver. 14 this metaphor is confused with that of clothing.

14. This revelation of Christ concerning the impending end of Peter's life may be found in John xxi. 18, 19.

16—18. Reference to the narrative of the transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 1 sq.

19. Read, "We have a still surer prophetic word."—Still firmer than the figure of the transfiguration, which merely indicates the second coming of Christ, is the prophetic word of the final appearance of Christ, which foretells its complete fulfilment. It is an apocryphal book of the Old Testament that is here quoted (2 Esdras xii. 42, "and as a lamp in a dark place"). The dark place signifies the darkness in the hearts of the Christians, in which the full light does not shine until the coming of Christ (comp. Eph. v. 14).

20. No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, i. e. of human invention. The prophets themselves did not know to what their prophecies referred. So that it is only by divine enlightenment that the interpretation is made possible.

21. "For prophecy was never produced by the will of man," &c. Prophecy is a pure inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

#### ii. *Against false teachers.*

Here we have almost the whole Epistle of Jude transcribed, with the exception of the quotations from two apocryphal books, viz. the Assumption of Moses and the Book of Enoch, and with some additions.

[1. *Damnable heresies*: lit. "heresies [or "sects"] of destruction;" the same word as "destruction" at the end of the verse.]

2. Read, "And many shall imitate their debaucheries," &c.

3. Read, "And in avarice, with words of their own imagination, they will seek to make a profit out of you, and their judgment for a long time past delayeth not, and their destruction slumbereth not."—The Gnostic false teachers lectured for money (comp. ver. 14).

4. [*But cast them down, &c.*: lit. "but having sent them to Tartarus in chains (or, as some of the oldest MSS. read, "in caves") of nether gloom, delivered them to be reserved unto judgment."]—On the sinful angels, comp. Jude, ver. 6.

5. *Noah, the eighth person*: comp. Gen. vii. 13. Noah was one of the eight who were saved in the deluge (comp. 1 Pet. iii. 10). *The old world* is the world before the deluge. [*Noah . . . a preacher* [lit. herald] *of righteousness*: There is no record in the Old Testament of any saying of Noah's, except the cursing of Canaan and blessing of Shem (Gen. ix. 25 sq.). The reference

here seems to be to Gen. vii. 1, Noah being regarded as a type, and so, unconsciously, a herald, of the righteousness to come.]

[7. *Filthy conversation*: better, "licentious conduct."]

8. *That righteous man* should be "the righteous man."—*Dwelling among them in seeing and hearing*: i.e. While he dwelt among them, so that he could not help seeing and hearing their wickedness.

[9. *Unjust*: better, "unrighteous."]

10, 11. *Presumptuous, &c.*, should be "bold, presumptuous; they tremble not to blaspheme against glories; whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, pronounce not a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord."—Contempt of dominion and blasphemy of glories, as in Jude, ver. 8. The description of the false teachers here passes from the future to the present. The actual time of the composition of the Epistle appears.—With ver. 11 comp. Jude, ver. 9.

12. [Lit. "But these, as unreasoning animals, born naturally to be taken and destroyed, blaspheming in the things that they know not, shall also be destroyed in their destruction, receiving the wages of unrighteousness (or, as some old MSS. read, "suffering wrong as the wages of unrighteousness"), counting the day's revel pleasure (i.e., as some take it, "finding their pleasure in self-indulgence, which lasts but for a day," or, as A.V. has it, "counting it pleasure to riot in the day-time").]—*Spots are they, &c.*, should be, "They are blots and monsters who riot in their love-feasts when they feast with you." There is, however, another reading: "in their deceit," for "in their love-feasts," i.e. with that which they have gained by deceit (comp. Jude 12).

[14. *Cursed children*: lit. "children of a curse."]

15, 16. Comp. Num. xxii. 5 sqq.; Jude 11.

17. *Mist* should be "gloom" [strictly, "the gloom of the lower world," the same word that is rendered "nether gloom" in the note on ver. 4].

18. *They allure, &c.*, should be "they allure in lusts of the flesh through debaucheries those who are scarcely escaping from those who walk in error."—Those who are scarcely escaping from those who walk in error, are weak Christians who are almost carried away by the unbelieving Gentiles (comp. ver. 20).

[19. *Servants*: strictly, "slaves."]

20. "The last things are worse with them than the first:" an echo of Matt. xii. 45; Luke xi. 26.

22. Comp. Prov. xxvi. 11.

iii. 1—10. *Confutation of the doubts concerning the return of Christ.*

2. The prophets are here added to the words of Jude, ver. 17.—*The commandment, &c.*, should be "the commandment of your apostles," &c.—[The words "of the Lord and Saviour" depend upon "commandments," not upon "apostles."]

5. Comp. Gen. i. 2, 9.—*The earth standing out of the water and in the water* should be "the earth formed out of water and through water."

7. *By the same word*: "by his word" [the MSS. vary].—A destruction of the world by fire (comp. vv. 10—13) was not taught in the Old Testament, nor is it found elsewhere in the New Testament. The Stoic philosophers held the doctrine of a destruction of the world by fire to be repeated from time to time. A burning of the world once for all is spoken of in the Jewish Sibylline prophecies about 140 B.C., and about 79 A.D. There were Gnostics also, as, for example, the Valentinians, who expected that the material world would finally perish by fire. Following our Second Epistle of Peter, this idea became more and more generally accepted among Christians.

8. Contrast between divine and human reckoning of time, after Ps. xc. 4.

9. *To us-ward* should be "on your account."

10. The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night (comp. 1 Thess. v. 2). The elements which are to be dissolved with heat (comp. iii. 17) are not what are now commonly known as the four elements, but the heavenly powers regarded as animated, viz. sun, moon and stars as the elements of the universe (comp. Gal. iv. 3, 9; Col. ii. 8, 20).—[The words *in the night* are omitted in three of the best MSS. Probably they have simply been added here from 1 Thess. v. 2.]

iii. 11—18. *Exhortation to preparation for the day of the Lord.*  
*Conclusion.*

iii. 11—16.

Holy conduct is the first sign of preparation.

11. *Conversation*: "Conduct."

12. Read, "Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord, on account of which," &c.—It is necessary not only to hold fast to the expectation of the coming of the Lord, concerning which doubts were already arising (iii. 4), but also to hasten it by bringing oneself into the state which God in his long-suffering is waiting for (comp. iii. 9). That this is the writer's meaning is clear from iii. 14.

13. *Nevertheless*: "but."—*His promise* should be "his promises."—The promises of a new heaven and a new earth are found in Is. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; Rev. xxi. 1 sq. Righteousness dwells in those who endure piously.

15. This reference to one of Paul's writings is probably to 2 Thess. ii. 1 sq.

16. The perversion of that which is hard to understand in Paul was probably not limited simply to the doctrine of the return of Christ, but extended to the whole opposition to the primitive apostolic Christianity, which the writer refers to a false interpretation of the Epistles of Paul—and also of *the other scriptures*. The Epistles of Paul are already regarded as holy scripture.

iii. 17, 18.

The second sign of readiness is freedom from errors and a mature recognition of Christ as the Saviour.

[18. *For ever*: lit. "to the day of eternity."]

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

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THIS Epistle is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria (who died between 211 and 220 A.D.) as a "*Catholic*," i.e. "*general*," Epistle, and is further included in the series of *Catholic* Epistles. The ancient church judged rightly in thus regarding it not as a letter in the ordinary sense, but as a writing which, while in epistolary form, was really addressed to *the whole church*. The authorship of the Epistle was not doubted, simply because its contents corresponded to a want of the church. That which was Catholic seemed necessarily to be Apostolic. The result, however, of scientific methods of inquiry has been to show that the apostolic origin of the Epistle cannot be maintained. The Epistle was not mentioned and used, or at any rate there is no sure evidence of its being mentioned and used, until towards the end of the second century. The external evidence regarding it is just the same as in the case of the Fourth Gospel. More than this, the question generally as to the origin of the Epistle is most closely intertwined with that of the origin of the Gospel. Not only the general ideas and the theological position, but even the expression and style of the two are so very much alike, that we are compelled to refer both to the same writer. The supposition of the apostolic origin of the First Epistle falls to the ground along with the theory of the apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, and moreover the Epistle itself refers to the tradition of the apostles in a way which cannot belong to the apostolic age (ii. 24).

The Epistle has been regarded as a recommendation of the Fourth Gospel intended to accompany it, or a second part of the

Gospel, the practical or polemical part, which was at first united with the Gospel and afterwards separated from it. Of this, however, there is no proof. We must rest content with the plain fact that the writer, in view of setting forth the ecclesiastical conception which he represents, was not satisfied to restrict himself to the form of the gospel narrative, and chose to make use of the epistolary form also for his purpose. That the Epistle is later than the Gospel is very probable; partly because the Epistle evidently purports to have been written by an apostle, and yet gives no hint as to his identity, but leaves the reader to infer it from the connection of the Epistle with the Fourth Gospel; and partly from allusions to the Gospel, in which it is assumed that it has already become publicly known (comp. i. 1—3 with John i. 1—14; i. 4 with John xv. 11; ii. 27 with John xiv. 26, &c.). It must be acknowledged, however, that some have regarded the Epistle as the earlier writing, especially on the ground that we find mention in it of the "last day" (ii. 18, 28, iii. 2, iv. 3), while it is said that the Gospel is silent in regard to this, and therefore belongs to a period when the hope of the return of the Lord was already falling more into decay. But while it is quite certain that the withdrawal of this hope in the Gospel is a sign of its late origin, the hope itself does not seem even there to have been entirely surrendered (comp. John v. 28, 29).

If it be asked what special occasion moved the author of the Epistle to write it, we may find an answer in the dangerous growth of the Gnostic sects (see Introduction to the Gospel, Vol. I. pp. 197 sq.). In the commentary on the Epistle, it will be shown that the references to them, and especially to their view of the personality of Jesus, are much more extensive than is usually supposed (comp. especially notes on v. 13—21). There is no trace in the Epistle of any contest with Jews and Jewish Christians. We might rather suppose that the Jews, with their denial of the divine sonship of Jesus in the fourth Gospel, are intended to take the place of the Gnostics, whom the writer could scarcely transpose to the time of Jesus.

An inscription of the Epistle "To the Parthians," which arose from an error, was for a long time accepted as reliable, and the Epistle was consequently taken to have been addressed to the Jewish Christians among the Parthians. But as the writing itself is only thrown loosely into epistolary form, and all its utterances are in the tone of the fatherly appeal of the aged apostle under whose authority the writer shelters himself, we cannot properly look for any address at all. The Epistle is in fact addressed to all those who hold the faith of the church, and not limited to any particular section. This is the only supposition which is consistent with the loose epistolary form, and with the subject matter of the composition.

The argument of the Epistle is not very easy to trace. The difficulty is due to its apparently fragmentary character and the loose connection of the thoughts contained in it. In despair of finding any proper sequence of ideas, many have sought to infer from this want that the Epistle itself must have been composed by the apostle when enfeebled by old age. Some, again, speak of the "easy and familiar" style, which maintains no strict order and easily repeats itself. The Epistle, however, shows quite as decided traces of artistic arrangement and strict thought as the Fourth Gospel (see especially ii. 12—14, v. 6—9, v. 18—21). If one attends to the connecting links between these peculiar series of thought, with their mystic language struggling to set forth the inner life in all its fulness and reality, the following result should appear as to the arrangement of the material of the Epistle.

i. 1—4. *The Introduction.* The form of the salutation (which sounds somewhat weak in verse 4, viz. in the wish that the joy of the readers may be full) is made a vehicle to convey the central thought of the writer, his doctrine concerning the nature and person of Christ, which he regards as the very kernel or pole-star of the gospel. The conclusion of the Epistle brings us back again to the very same thought (v. 20). Starting from this point, the apostolic address, which is rather hortatory and con-

solatory than directly didactic, proceeds in three successive discourses. These three discourses all deal with the same subject, but they attack it from different points, and each one is more profound and penetrating than the preceding, so that there is an unmistakable climax which is reached by three successive stages.

*The First Part* of the apostolic appeal (i. 5—ii. 11) starts from the fundamental truth of the gospel that God is light, whence is inferred the necessity of "walking in the light," i.e. in the commandments of God, and especially in love.

*The Second Part* (ii. 12—iii. 18) starts from the fact that the readers are actually in possession of salvation, a fact which is set forth in three-fold form and with increasing intensity. To these three forms of this possession corresponds a three-fold exhortation: 1. Be steadfast in the love of the Father (ii. 15—17); 2. Deny not the Son, but retain the apostolic doctrine concerning Christ (ii. 18—28); 3. Keep yourselves unspotted from the works of the devil, especially from Cain's sin of an unloving spirit (ii. 29—iii. 18).

*The Third Part* (iii. 19—v. 12) proceeds with the blessed consciousness of sonship with freest access to God, and adds to this the two-fold evangelical commandment of faith in the name of Jesus, as the Son of God, and brotherly love. From this springs a confident admonition to stand fast in faith in him who has appeared in the flesh, in spite of all the seductions of false prophets (iv. 1—6), and a second admonition to be steadfast in the brotherly love which springs from God, unites us to God, and is founded upon a faith supported by the testimony of God himself (iv. 7—v. 12). This testimony to the divinely established faith in the Son, without whom no man can have life (v. 12), brings the third part to a close.

*The Conclusion* (v. 13—21) not only states the purpose which the writer has before him, but also contains a warning against any fellowship with those who, by their denial of him who has been manifested in the flesh, are involved in deadly sin, and against apostasy from the true God who is eternal life. Those

who have regarded the concluding verses (v. 14—21) as an appendix which has no internal connection with the fundamental principle of the Epistle, a kind of after-thought on the part of the writer, or even an addition made by another hand, such as we find in the twenty-first chapter of the fourth Gospel, only show how imperfectly they have succeeded in understanding either the ideas or the construction of the Epistle.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

### INTRODUCTION. i. 1—4.

The salutation is intended to introduce the leading thought of the Epistle at once into the reader's mind. It cannot fail to remind us of the introduction to the Fourth Gospel. It contains exactly the same view of the eternal Word of life, which had come into the world in a visible and tangible form in the person of Jesus Christ (John i. 14, xx. 27). The writer further desires to appear as an apostolic eye-witness. Hence the representation of his authority is here still more fictitious than in the Gospel. In the Gospel, it is only for the statement of xix. 34 that he directly appeals to the authority of John as an eye-witness (comp. Vol. I. pp. 19, 203 sq.). In this First Epistle, there can be no doubt that he intends to represent John himself as speaking throughout.

1. From ver. 2, it is clear that *that which was from the beginning* can only mean the Son of God (as in ii. 13, 14), and not the gospel. That he is spoken of as "that which," instead of "he who," is only due to the comparison with what follows.—*Seen*: or better, "beheld," i.e. seen for some time, not simply for a moment. The emphasis here laid upon the tangibility (*our hands have handled*) is due to the writer's opposition to the Gnostic school, which dissipated the human life of the Redeemer into a mere appearance of reality.—*Word of life*: This does not mean the word "concerning life," but the personal Word who is the source of life for all, and hence is called *the Life* in ver. 2.

2. This Eternal Life is a person, and as such a complete reality, who has become ours by revealing himself to us.

3. The plural pronoun *we* is probably intended to include the testimony of the other apostles.—*With us*: Fellowship with those who declare this message, is more definitely fellowship with the Father and the Son, i.e. an actual fellowship in eternal life, which must of course lead to perfect joy.

4. An extension of the usual greeting, which simply wishes the readers “joy”—corresponding to the lengthiness of the whole of the first sentence. [Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford and Tregelles, following two of the best MSS, agree in reading, “And these things we write, that our joy may be full.” This must then be understood, not as a salutation, but as the expression of the writer’s desire that his joy, and the joy of those whom he represents, may be made perfect by the success of his Epistle in healing the divisions of the church, and uniting in brotherly love all who “confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (iv. 2).]

PART I. i. 5—ii. 11.

i. 5—ii. 2. *The believers are warned against walking in darkness.*

5. *Of him* should be “from him,” i.e. from the Son of God who has appeared.—*God is light*: This denotes the perfection of God; it excludes alike the evil and the worthless. The complete revelation of this “light” took place through the Son. It is the foundation of perfect saving knowledge, inasmuch as the fulfilment of our divine destiny has its roots in it.

6. *Darkness* should be “the darkness.”—Fellowship with God allows no evil conduct. He who is in darkness is not in the light. To confess God, and yet to sin, is a practical denial of the truth.

7. Along with fellowship with God goes also the fellowship of the redeemed among themselves, and the true fountain of purification is opened to them.—The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth continuously, as long as sin still remains, inasmuch as faith in God’s act of love, completed in the surrender of His Son to death, breaks down the power of sin and leads to the remission of debt.

8. We cannot deny that we have sin. To do so would itself be self-deception, and a proof that we have no part in the truth.

9. *Sins*: It should be noticed that the writer speaks of sins in the plural. We must confess not only our sinfulness in general, but our individual sins and faults. Probably this includes penitent confession before the congregation.—*He is faithful and just, &c.*: God manifests His faithfulness in the prospective forgiveness, His justice (or better, righteousness), in cleansing us from all unrighteousness.

10. We not only deceive ourselves (ver. 8), but we also dispute the truthfulness of God, who cares for us as for sinners, and thereby declares us to be sinners.—His word is a word that redeems from sins, and that therefore cannot manifest its saving power in one who denies his sin. There is no doubt that this is connected with the writer's contest with the Gnostics, who regarded themselves as the pre-eminently spiritual.

ii. 1. *Children*: This expresses the warm feeling of a father's heart, but at the same time it claims filial respect.—*Sin* = fall. This refers to such sins as endanger the whole possession of salvation and participation in Christian fellowship. Such a sinner is directed to the mediation and advocacy of Jesus Christ before God, penitent confession of the sin being of course assumed (i. 9). Only one who is righteous can effectually pray for the unrighteous.—[*Advocate*: Gr. "Paraclete," the same word that is rendered "Comforter" in John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7.]

2. Jesus Christ is not only an advocate, but also a propitiation [there is no definite article in the Greek], i.e. his death contains in itself the power of removing guilt and judgment. It is just as the propitiatory sacrifice which suffices for the sin of the whole world, that he is also the effectual advocate for those who are his in individual serious falls into sin.

ii. 3—11. *Admonition to walk in the commandments of Jesus and especially in brotherly love.*

3. *Hereby we do know that we know him*: i.e. that we have a true knowledge of God and not merely imaginary.—*His*: God's, not Christ's.

5. *Verily*: i.e. "in truth."—Pious obedience to the word of God is the measure of love to God, and the genuine sign of belonging to God.

6. *As he* (i.e. Christ) *walked*: That we should walk in the footsteps of Christ is the command of God.

7. The commandment which is not new, but old, is usually taken (with ref. to John xiii. 34) to be the commandment of love, but without sufficient ground. The context shows that the reference is to the requirements of the gospel generally. The writer says that he does not write a new commandment, for man shrinks in fear from new demands. Yet in another connection he speaks of it (ver. 8) as a new commandment, in order

to guard against its being received with indifference as a thing universally known. It is new in the world and to the world, inasmuch as it has never before been made a perfect truth, but is now being made so in Christ and those who are his; now that the darkness, i.e. the ungodly state of sin and blindness, is passing away and the true light already shines.—The words *from the beginning* at the end of the verse should be omitted.

[8. *Is past*, some render “is passing away.”]

9. Brotherly love is a very necessary part of the true walking in light. What is meant is not neighbourly love generally, but love of the brethren in the Christian community.

10. *Abideth*: In love lies a protecting and preserving power. He who loveth is free from offence, and is not made to fall.

11. *In darkness* should be “in the darkness.”

#### PART II. ii. 12—iii. 18.

ii. 12—14. *Three grounds upon which the three exhortations rest.*

12—14. Some have translated here, “I write unto you. . . . *that*,” &c. (instead of *because*); but this is incorrect, being in contradiction to the parallel in ver. 21, and altogether weakening the sense.—*His*, i.e. Christ’s, inasmuch as he is the advocate (ii. 1) and the propitiation (ii. 2). The expression *for his name’s sake* is probably used with a reference to the idea of believing on his name (v. 13) [see note however on v. 13.] Faith, according to the Epistle, is the channel of salvation and so also of forgiveness.—*Him that is from the beginning*: the only begotten (i. 1).—*The wicked one*: the devil, the prince of this world, who, indeed, since the work of redemption was completed has been powerless against the believers.—*Children* is a term of endearment intended to apply to all to whom the Epistle is addressed. *Fathers* denotes the elder portion, and *young men* the younger portion, each being reminded of that particular aspect of salvation which must afford them the strongest motive for the pursuit of a Christian life. The old, in view of approaching death, find comfort in him who was from the beginning before the world, and so is surety to them for eternal life. The young men, who stand in the midst of fiery temptation, must derive courage and firmness from the thought that the hardest

thing of all is already accomplished, that by their faith they have already won the victory over the prince of this world.—Corresponding with this three-fold *I write*, we now find three times *I have written*. *I write*, in the last sentence of ver. 13, should be “I have written.” The words *I write* (vv. 12, 13) undoubtedly refer to what immediately follows, what the writer has in his mind and is just going to write, viz. the exhortations to which vv. 12—14 form an introduction, and the motive of which is contained in these verses. The words *I have written* refer, on the other hand, not to anything that has already been written, but to the act of writing the whole Epistle itself (comp. v. 13). What the writer means is, I should not have written to you at all unless you had known, &c. We certainly must not suppose that any letter had previously been written, or that the Fourth Gospel is here referred to. This repetition is deliberately and skilfully planned to impress more strongly on the readers’ hearts the three motives of the writer. It serves to confirm what he says by developing and explaining it.—The word *children* is not intended to denote the infant portion of the community, but is an affectionate term including all members.—*Ye have known the Father*: Forgiveness is an individual manifestation, the chief manifestation indeed, of the fatherly love of God. They know and possess it fully, with all its blessed consequences.—*Him that is from the beginning*: This is simply repeated, and standing as it does between the variations in the first and third of the three clauses, this simple repetition is the more impressive. This knowledge of the Son is a point which the writer especially desires to keep clearly in view. He hastens on to it in ver. 13, and returns to it again in iv. 2. The extension of the writer’s declaration of his motive in writing to the young men is only explanatory. Let them know and consider that they are strong, that is to say, strong in overcoming temptations on the part of the world, and that the basis of their strength, the word of God, has a place in them, and that by means of faith in the word they have already overcome the evil one, so that, as far as they are concerned, he is already vanquished, and in regard to him they have only to take care that their victory is not snatched away from them again.

ii. 15—17. *First exhortation, answering to the first motive.*

Put far away from you the love of the world, and be steadfast in the love of the Father.

15. *The world*, against which the readers are warned, is the vain and unclean impulses of man as displayed in non-christian society.—*The things that in the world*: i.e. the treasures which it offers, and which are pursued in it.—Love of the world and love to God are inconsistent with one another; hence love of the world is not for those who *know the Father*, and have received from Him *forgiveness of sins*.

16. *Lust*, or desire, placed in connection with its object and its satisfaction.—*Lust of the flesh*: probably all those sensual pleasures which we speak of as debauchery.—*Lust of the eyes*: the sinful gratification of the eyes by immoral spectacles (it must not be supposed to mean avarice).—*The pride of life*: a showy manner of life which is inwardly worthless. A definite classification of different kinds of worldly love is not to be looked for here. The readers simply have the well-known phenomena of the world pointed out to them.

17. He who loves the world passes away with the world and its lust.

ii. 18—28. *The second exhortation, corresponding to the second motive.*

Be steadfast in the apostolic doctrine that Jesus is the Christ, that so you may be in the Son and in the Father.

18. [*Last time*: lit. "last hour."—*Shall come*: lit. cometh.—*Last time*: lit. "last hour."]—The end of the present age of the world. The appearance of Christ is at hand.—The Rabbis also speak of an Antichrist. According to Christian ideas, the appearance of Antichrist was to precede the return of Christ and the manifestation of his glory.—*Many*: From the appearance of many, the writer infers that the one Antichrist is at hand. The use of the plural makes the definition of *Antichrist* not only more comprehensive, but also more spiritual. The writer considers the denial of divine truth to be the essence of antichristianity, especially the denial of divine truth regarding the person of Jesus Christ.

19. *They went out from us*: Here the writer is evidently

speaking of a school which had already gone to the length of actual separation.—*But they were not of us*: They never belonged properly and inwardly to us. There is no bond of relationship between them and us.

20. *Uction*: i.e. “anointing.” You are in possession of the Spirit. The Gnostics, whom the writer of the Epistle is attacking, in their conceit claimed that they alone were truly filled by the Spirit, and consequently they refused to admit that the general body of the church, the Catholics, as they are called, were in possession of the Spirit.—*From the Holy One*: i.e. from God. Possibly an antithesis is here understood, viz. that this anointing is from God, and not, like that of the antichristians, from the unholy and lying god of this world.—*And ye know all things*: The truth of the gospel is disclosed to you. This also is probably directed against the pride of the Gnostics, who denied that the church possessed the true and full knowledge, and claimed it entirely for their own little circle. [There are two ancient MSS. that read, “Ye do all know.”]

22. Read, “Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.”—The denial that Jesus is the Christ is set forth as the climax of falsehood. In this consists the peculiar essence of antichristianity, the necessary sequel to which, in the writer’s view, is the denial of the Father also, a consequence which the Gnostics themselves, it must be confessed, did not infer.

[23. The words in italics in this verse, though omitted in many of the later MSS., are found in the four oldest, and are undoubtedly genuine.]

24. [*Abide . . . remain . . . continue*: the same word in the Greek.]—The readers are directed to the primitive apostolic doctrine. If they firmly adhere to this, they will preserve an abiding communion with the Son, and through him with the Father, and so preserve eternal life.

27. Read, “But as one and the same anointing [so some MSS. read, but others “his anointing”] teacheth you concerning all things, so it is true and is no lie; and as it (i.e. the anointing) hath taught you, so remain in him.”—“One and the same,” i.e. for you and for everything.—*And is truth, &c.*: You may trust to the testimony of this Spirit. It will not give you any lie.—*In*

*him*: i.e. in Christ, who is the very person concerning whom the Spirit testifies and teaches.

28. [*When he shall appear*: or perhaps “if he shall appear.”]—*And not be ashamed, &c.*, should be “and not have to depart in shame from him at his coming.”

ii. 29—iii. 18. *The third exhortation, answering to the third motive.*

Practise righteousness and brotherly love.

ii. 29—iii. 10. *Practise righteousness.*

29. *He*: i.e. Jesus Christ, in whom as the Son ye must abide.—*Doeth*: The emphasis is on this word (comp. iii. 7, 18). It is not talking of righteousness, but the practice of it, that shows the child of God.—*Ye know that every one, &c.*, should be “know ye that every one,” &c.: From their knowledge that he is righteous they are to draw this conclusion. [The Greek is ambiguous, and may either be taken thus or as in A. V.]—*He . . . him*: i.e. God, not Christ.

iii. 1. *The sons of God*: “children of God.” [So the Greek, after which the oldest MSS. add, “and (such) we are.”]—The greatest, indeed the all-embracing, gift bestowed by the Divine love is the Divine sonship.—*Should be called*: i.e. should be appointed to the rank and privilege of children of God (comp. Rom. viii. 17).—*The world*: We are, it is true, not recognized as such in all our glory by the world. Rather do we receive precisely the opposite treatment. We may comfort ourselves in this by remembering that the world knows not God himself, so that our treatment at the hands of the world is only the same as His.

2. In spite of the world’s refusal to recognize us as such, we are already children of God, and still greater things are in store for us, nothing less, in fact, than that complete likeness to God, i.e. participation in His glory and enjoyment of it, which shall be communicated to us by our seeing Him in His own complete nature.—[*When* should probably be “if.”]—*He shall*: “it shall.”

3. *Purifieth himself* should be “keepeth himself pure,” i.e. preserveth his stainlessness.—*He*: i.e. Christ. He is our example. His purity is the only true and authorized standard for ours.

4. Read, “Every one that committeth sin committeth a breach of the law, and sin is the breach of the law.”—*Whosoever commit-*

*teth sin* = whoever leads a life of sin.—No doubt there were many in those times, as in our own day, to whom a life of sin appeared to be merely weakness, and unavoidable. Among the Gnostics, however, against whose influence this Epistle is especially intended to warn its readers, a school soon made its appearance which, under the pretext that the perfect are free from the Law, gave the rein to every lust, and boasted of its denial of Jesus as merely the Messiah of the Law. In opposition to this, the writer declares that every commission of sin (of course as *willed*) is a breach of the Law, i.e. a positive transgression of the Divine will. In fact, this is declared to be the very essence of sin.

5. [*Our*: omitted by some of the best MSS.]—The writer appeals against seductive errors to the Christian consciousness of the readers, which declares that the manifestation of the Son is equivalent to the abolition of sin and guilt, and that the Redeemer himself is sinless.

6. To abide in him and to sin are inconsistent with one another. Therefore whosoever truly and in the full sense of the words *abideth in him*, sinneth not. From this thought, to which it must be confessed experience only feebly corresponds, follows the obligation of not desiring to sin. A man of sin is not only without part in him, but is altogether without any understanding of him (*hath not seen him, neither known him*).

7. "Little children, let no man lead you astray:" From this we see that the danger, which threatened the readers, of mistaking the nature of sin was due to false teaching. These words further give to ver. 6 a definite application. These preachers of a life of moral indifference are the very reverse of men who know Christ, although they lay claim to a special knowledge.—*He that doeth righteousness*: We must not only talk of righteousness, but must also practise it, exhibit it in our lives, just as Jesus proved by his acts that he is the righteous one.

8. What is meant here is only a spiritual and moral connection and descent, not a natural relation such as we find described to some extent in the writings of the Jewish Rabbis.—*From the beginning*: i.e. the beginning of the world. His conduct has never been anything different since the world began.—*The works of the devil*: everything that is evil is indirectly a work of the devil.

9. *His* (i.e. God's) *seed*: This in the Johannine writings is the primal creative power of life, the same thing as "the Spirit."—The practical application of this is, that just so far as the birth from God is perfected in any one, the man in whom it is perfected no longer lives in sin.—*Cannot*: That is to say, it is contrary to his nature.

iii. 11—18. *Practise brotherly love.*

11. *From the beginning*: i.e. the beginning of their knowledge of the gospel. That is to say, it is a fundamental commandment.

12. Read, "Not as Cain was of the evil one and murdered his brother; and wherefore murdered he him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous."—*Not as Cain*: i.e. We must not be as Cain.

13. Cain is to the writer a type of the world in its hostility to the children of God. His brother is a type of the men of God suffering from this hostility on the part of the world.

14. [*His brother*: omitted by three out of the four oldest MSS.]—Those who are exposed to murderous hatred have already passed the entrance into the true and inalienable life, while the unloving persecutors remain in death. The proof that they have entered into life is the brotherly love itself.

15. *And ye know, &c.*: Here we have a reference to the Old Testament law, that a murderer must die, but the words of the law are spiritualized and applied to the true, higher life. In a murderer eternal life has no place.

16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God*: "Hereby have we recognized love." [The words "of God" are not found in any of the old MSS. The lit. translation is, "Hereby we know love, because," &c.: i.e. Christ's laying down his life for us enables us to see what the nature of the true and highest love really is.]

17. The highest manifestation of brotherly love, and this is required even of us, is the surrender of life. How much more then must it be required of those who desire to love God that they should not withhold the necessaries of life from their brethren!—[*Bowels of compassion*: better, "heart." Or we may render, "and hardeneth his heart against him." Comp. note on Phil. 7.]

18. *Word . . . tongue*: This is intended to signify the empty

sound of mere words of love. The double phrase is no doubt simply employed for the sake of the antithesis to *deed . . . truth*.

PART III. iii. 19—v. 12.

iii. 19—24. *The blessed possession of open access to God. The imperative double condition attached to it.*

19. *Hereby*: by the practical brotherly love just mentioned.—[*We know*: four of the oldest MSS. read, “we shall know.”]—*And shall assure our hearts*: i.e. since we recognize in ourselves the possession of this brotherly love.

20. This verse shows the reason why it is so necessary that we should be able to assure or pacify our own hearts before Him. If even our own heart, that is to say, our own conscience enfeebled and confused by sin, condemn us, we must surely expect a far severer sentence from God who is greater, God who is a very different judge from our own heart, and from whom nothing whatever is hidden.

21. The thought of ver. 19 is here recurred to again in connection with the expression used in ver. 20.

22. To the release from judgment is added, as a further ground of rejoicing, the confidence that we receive whatever we ask (of course provided it is asked in the manner indicated in v. 14).—The keeping of the divine commandments is the necessary hypothesis of this blessedness in the Christian. Hence this completes the introduction of the third part of the didactic and hortatory appeal of the Epistle. The substance of this third part is stated beforehand in ver. 23.

23. Practical Christianity is the fulfilment of a double commandment that has been communicated to us, the commandment of faith in the name of Jesus Christ and of love one to another.—*As he gave us commandment*: This refers only to the love which we are commanded to show to one another. It points to the nature and strength of Christian love (comp. iii. 16).

24. The reality of close communion between God and man, which is known by the imparting of his spirit, is entirely dependent upon the fulfilment of this two-fold commandment.—[*Hath given*: strictly, “gave.”]

iv. 1—6. *Warning against the spirit of unbelief.*

1. *Are gone out*: i.e. out of the community of Christ, which they have left or been compelled to leave (ii. 19).

2. *Every spirit that confesseth, &c.*: i.e. Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ as him who appeared in the flesh.—A mark is here given whereby we may test the Spirit. It is similar to that given in 1 Cor. xii. 3, but with this difference, that what is here required is not simply the acknowledgment of Jesus, but of a definite doctrine concerning Jesus. As, however, the writer gives in his Epistle such a variety of signs whereby we must manifest the genuineness of our Christianity, his meaning here is, not that this is the sole mark by which the Spirit may be tested, but it is here recommended as the first to be considered in view of the dangers which threaten the church at the hands of the false teachers. They did not regard Jesus as Christ. The divine Redeemer had not, in their view, been made man, but only appeared to be a man, inasmuch as he was only locally united with the person of Jesus. They thus denied an actual appearance in the flesh; so that the death of Jesus could, in their view, have no redeeming power and significance (ii. 2, iv. 10). As this makes the life of the Redeemer, to them, merely an apparent life, the sign of the true spirit required of them is, that they should confess this Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God who has come in the flesh or been made flesh (John i. 14).

3. Read, "And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God," &c.—After the word *Jesus* we must understand "as him who has been made flesh" [which is added in one of the old and many of the later MSS.]; but the shorter expression actually employed is very emphatic, intimating that the long and short of the Gnostic view is, that it is a rejection of Jesus as the one Redeemer. Herein, therefore, every one has a simple test whereby to distinguish that which, according to ver. 3, is an elimination of the essence of Christianity.

4. No doubt this verse refers to a decisive struggle within the Christian communities (probably most violent in Asia Minor, as we should also infer from the so-called "Ignatian Epistles"), the result of which was, that the Gnostics were obliged to withdraw, and which contributed not a little to the supremacy in the church of the doctrine of the person of Christ, which is

represented by the Johannine writings. The Epistle bears plain marks enough of a victory but recently gained over a serious danger, and it is only when we pay due consideration to this fact that we are able to estimate it at its true value (especially in v. 16, 21). The communities have shown themselves victorious; though, indeed, it is not their victory, but is in truth the victory of him who is with them, and who came that he might destroy the works of the devil (comp. iii. 8).

5. They belong to the world. The subjects of their worthless speech are taken from the world. Hence the world receives them.

6. *We*: i.e. the witnesses who proclaim the faith (in the sense of iv. 2, 3). By examining whether they acknowledge or do not acknowledge, whether they hear or do not hear, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error may be known.

iv. 7—v. 18. *Instruction concerning brotherly love and exhortation to practise it.*

iv. 7—11. *Brotherly love as founded in the love of God.*

7. Love, that is to say all true love, has God for its source. Hence he that loveth is a child of God, one who knoweth God.

8. *Knoweth not God* should be "hath not recognized God."—God's very being is entirely love.

9. *Toward us* should be "among us" [or perhaps, as some render it, "in us," the meaning then being that our spiritual nature is the field of the manifestation of God's love].—The fact that God is love is most evident in the highest manifestation of the Divine love in sending his Son to give us life.

10. *To be* should be "as."—This Divine love is not a love that needs to be called forth by our love; it is a spontaneous love which prepares a propitiatory offering for sinners.

11. This Divine love we have been allowed to experience in ourselves in its highest manifestation. This, then, is the foundation of the duty of love one to another.

iv. 12—18. *Explanation of what is meant by the practice of brotherly love.*

12. Between God and the finite sinful creature there is in the nature of things so vast an interval, that the creature cannot so much as see Him. How could we then suppose that God dwelleth

in us, i.e. that He stands in the most intimate communion with us? And yet there is a perfectly simple way of enjoying this communion with God, namely, through love one to another. Hereby we are not only brought into true and lasting union with God, so that His love is our possession, but in addition to this our love to Him is hereby for ever perfected. Perfect brotherly love implies, as its consequent, perfect love of God.

The following verses are an elucidation of this proposition, setting forth its truth, so that ver. 12 is in fact the theme of vv. 13—18.

13. First of all, the idea of the immanence of God in us is completed. In the first place, we, as loving, dwell in Him who is love. But in that case He also dwells in us. As proof of the reality of this mutual relation, we have the communication (limited at first) of His spirit.

14. In this verse the idea that no one has seen God receives its necessary supplement. We (the apostolic witnesses) have seen Him; that is to say, we have seen the true revelation of God, have seen the Son, and therefore have seen the Father who is in the Son whom He himself sent.

15. Whoever acknowledges our testimony to the divine mission of Jesus as the Son, in him that communion with God is permanently realized.

16. But now it may be asked, What connection has brotherly love with all this? This is what ver. 16 is intended to show. Our spiritual possession in faith and knowledge is the love which God has, and which He has manifested in us. To us God is nothing else than the fulness of love. Consequently, if any one finds his own nature and life in the exercise of love, the result is what is described in vv. 17, 18. In him is manifested the perfection of love (i.e. of love generally, including love to God), in the joyful confidence with which we look for the day of judgment. And we are able to do this because we, like Jesus, though we are in the world, are not of the world.

17. *Herein is our love made perfect, &c.*: “Herein is love perfected in us,” &c.

18. *Fear hath torment* should be “Fear brings punishment with it” [lit. “hath punishment”].—If (genuine) love be in us, fear is banished far away, i.e. the fear which trembles before the wrath of God and expects *punishment*.

iv. 19. *Connecting link between the preceding section and that which follows, viz. iv. 20—v. 2.*

From this verse to the end of the Epistle, the writer is engaged in showing how love to God and brotherly love are inseparable, and how the fulfilment of both has its root in belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

19. "Let us love Him, for He first loved us:" an exhortation to return the free love of God.—[The verb is ambiguous in the Greek, and may be rendered either "we love" or "let us love." In addition to this, there is some variation in the MSS. Some of the oldest MSS. omit "him." One reads, "We therefore love (or, "let us love"), for God first loved us."]

iv. 20—v. 2.

20. The argument from the invisibility of God is to be understood as follows. The brother is placed by God close to man, as a tangible object of his love. Man cannot leave his brother unnoticed. God himself, on the other hand (apart from faith in the Son), is hidden from man. If, then, man pays no attention to the nearest and most tangible object of his love, is it to be supposed that he loves God, who is hidden from him? The argument is only intelligible on the supposition that what is meant is man not having yet attained the faith in the love of God in Christ, as is shown by the beginning of the verse.—[Of the three oldest MSS., one reads, "How can he love?" &c.; and the two others, "He cannot love," &c.]

21. The fulfilment of love in both directions is moreover an express divine commandment. Here we have an allusion to the summing up of the Law in Matt. xxii. 37—40.

v. 1. The third ground maintained is, that love to the begetter includes love to the begotten—a matter of experience.

2. Finally, the writer sets forth that there is no other mark of the genuineness of love to the children of God, than love to God himself and the keeping of His commandments, inasmuch as love to Him is necessarily carried into effect in the keeping of His commandments (ver. 3).

v. 3—5.

The fulfilment of the great two-fold commandment of love is

made possible and easy through faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

4. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and our faith is the victory that hath overcome the world."—The seductions and hindrances which obstruct the fulfilment of the Divine commandments and would make them difficult, are all overcome by him who is begotten of God, and who therefore has the divine and truly spiritual life in himself. The means of this victory is faith, the very existence of which proclaims the victory over the world as a completed fact.

5. Putting this verse in the form of a question, is a means to bring more closely home to the reader this fundamental question of life. It is only faith in Jesus as the Son of God (in the sense of iv. 2) that leads to victory over the world. This assertion is the goal of the discussion concerning the Christian life.

v. 6—12. *Faith in Jesus as the Son of God, who has been manifested in the flesh, established by divine testimony in proof of its fundamental significance.*

6. Read, "This is he that came through water and blood, Jesus the Christ [the best MSS. read "Jesus Christ"]; not in the water alone, but in the water and in the blood."—*This*: i.e. Jesus. Here the statement of his having appeared *in the flesh* is not repeated; but, instead, we have pointed out to us that which proclaims him who has appeared as the deliverer of the world. He came—showing who he was—through water and blood; i.e. by founding two mysteries which free the world from sin. This virtue is in the *baptism*, practised by him through his disciples (John iii. 22, iv. 2), and also in his *sacrificial blood*, which completes in the Lord's Supper the purification begun in baptism (John xiii. 8, 10), and is a fountain of perpetual purification (1 John i. 7). After saying "*This* is he," the writer adds the name of Christ for the sake of emphasis, and also for the sake of adding the epithet *the Christ*, in opposition to the Gnostic view. He is *the Christ*, and not simply the unmeaning form and appearance of the Christ. Emphasis is laid upon the two-fold operation of Jesus as the Redeemer, because the writer desires to supply the number of witnesses required by the Scripture (comp. John viii. 17). These two witnesses, water and

blood, which form the boundaries, so to speak, of the life of the Christian community, appear again in connection with the death of Jesus (John xix. 34). The *Spirit*, however, i.e. the Spirit which Jesus sends into the world as his representative, is the one that has properly the official position of witness, and is the source of all testimony; because the Spirit is truth itself, and hence truth itself and the testimony to the truth proceed from the Spirit.

7, 8. Read, "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are at one."—The words from *in heaven* to *on earth* must be removed from the text as an acknowledged interpolation, as even Luther recognized. They are a feeble and unintelligent marginal note, which has been inserted in the text in the interest of the doctrine of the Trinity. Their only effect is to break the context. The purpose of the writer is to adduce three witnesses for Jesus as the Christ. The first and proper witness, who is therefore placed at the head of the three, is the Spirit (of Christ). To this are added, however, the water and the blood, with their purifying power, which is itself indeed communicated by the working of the Spirit (John iii. 5, vi. 54, 63). Hence the three witnesses cannot but agree together.

9. We accept the (two-fold or three-fold) testimony of men, and how much more must we do this with the greater divine testimony! But the testimony of God is itself this three-fold testimony: Spirit, water and blood.

10. *Record* should be "testimony."—The believer has the testimony in himself, inasmuch as he has in himself the Spirit, and therewith the operation of the water and the blood in him. He must therefore feel confident of his cause, having an inner confidence in faith. Not to believe in this testimony is equivalent to being guilty of the senseless offence of desiring to make God a liar.

11, 12. *Record*: "testimony."—The significance of the divine testimony is here explained further. It is testimony to the fact that God has given us eternal life, and that this life is only to be found in the Son. Hence verse 12 contains the culmination of the apostolic appeal which has been tending from i. 1—4 to this point. To have the Son or not to have the Son is life or death.

## CONCLUSION. v. 13—21.

v. 13. *The purpose which the writer has set before himself.*

13. Read, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life as the believers, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." [The words, "that believe on the name of the Son of God," and, "and that ye may believe," are not found in the oldest MSS.]—The writer here declares the purpose that he has in view. He desires to confirm and to preserve in their faith those who already believe in the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This desire to preserve them in their faith leads him to the two-fold concluding exhortation.

v. 14—17. *No prayer for those who sin unto death!*

14, 15. Comp. iii. 21, 22. Repetition of one of the earlier thoughts of the Epistle. Here it has no independent significance, but only serves to introduce what follows. Faith brings joyful confidence (13), which finds its chief expression in relation to prayer, in the certainty that it will be fully heard.

15. *Desired* should be "have asked."

16. *And he shall give, &c.*, should be, "And He will give life to such as sin not unto death" [lit. "give him life to those that," &c., i.e. answer his prayer by giving life to those that sin not unto death].—*I do not say, &c.*: "For this I do not say that he shall pray." [So giving the emphasis on *this*, which is given by the order of words in the Greek.]—Prayer is not to be employed universally. Intercession for brethren, i.e. for the members of the community with which we are here concerned, is not to be offered in all cases. It must not be made in case of *mortal sin*. Commentators have been sorely exercised about this sin. The meaning is remarkably simple. The whole Epistle is a warning against anti-christianity, the denial of Jesus as having been manifested in the flesh, the denial of the Father and of the Son (iv. 1—4, ii. 18 sqq., esp. 22, 23). This, and nothing else, is to the writer a *sin unto death*, inasmuch as it breaks off the connection with the fountain of life. Every kind of communion must be cut off if its deepest expression in intercession for a fallen brother is strictly forbidden, and the intercession itself, otherwise universally effective, is declared fruitless. We see

what a degree of tension there was between the contending parties, in consequence, no doubt, of the violence of the struggle, and how even the most powerful minds were unable to be just to the hated opponent. The opponent is regarded simply as a child of the devil (ver. 19).

17. Two truths the reader must equally cherish. First, the very smallest transgression is sin (in the full sense of iii. 4), and therefore may not be lightly committed. But, secondly, there is a sin which does not end hopelessly in death, and from which a return to salvation is possible.

v. 18—21. *Warning against false gods.*

The intentional three-fold repetition of the words *we know* is intended to emphasize the certainty of the possession of salvation. Many times, in the course of his Epistle, the writer has adduced the certainty of salvation in order to excite his readers to the preservation of this possession. Now, in conclusion, he again does this with peculiar emphasis.

18. *Sinneth not*: His actions do not partake of sin. He is not in the service of sin. His attention is given to the preservation of himself, and in this he cannot fail. The evil one [so, lit., not *that* wicked one] has no power over him. A bold statement of the Christian certainty of victory over sin.

19. The world is in the power of Satan. We, on the other hand, belong to God.—[The Greek here is ambiguous, and may mean either “lieth in wickedness” or “lieth in the evil one,” i. e. in the power of the evil one; but the latter is the more probable, as “the evil one” has just been spoken of in ver. 18, and the contrast here is between the world which is *his*, and the Christian believers who are God’s.]

20. Read, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we know the true God, and that we are in the true God through the mediation of His Son Jesus Christ,” &c.—[The readings of the MSS. vary considerably in this verse. The reading of Tischendorf, for which there is the most MS. evidence, is, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ” (i. e. inasmuch as we are in His Son Jesus Christ; comp. John xvii. 21—23: “Even as thou Father art in me, and

I in thee, that they also may be in us . . . . I in them and thou in me," &c.).]—*This*: i.e. the God who is imparted to us through Christ.—*The true God* (comp. v. 6), in opposition to the false gods (ver. 21). The true God is for us eternal life. What can the false gods give to you? Beware of them!

21. *Idols* should be "false gods." What is meant by "false gods"? The words have a distinct reference to the passage immediately preceding, and indeed to the whole Epistle. Those who deny the Son have not the Father. To them the place of the true God is taken by phantoms, or false gods. It needs no explanation to show how admirably this agrees with the double series of heavenly powers which the Gnostics believed in. It is not likely that there would be any necessity to warn readers in the second century against taking part in heathen idol worship, and at any rate there is nothing to connect such a warning with the rest of the Epistle.

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

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THE ancient church was not certain whether the Second Epistle of John should be included in the canon or not. It is possible that the reason of this doubt was, that the contents of the Epistle did not seem to be of sufficient importance, or because it has the appearance of being merely a private letter. For the most part it was regarded as a production of the apostle, though there were some who considered that it was from the hand of the presbyter John. Strict internal criticism shows us that it stands in a position of dependence upon the First Epistle, of such a nature as to exclude identity of authorship. The style, while departing widely from that of the First Epistle in certain expressions (*the doctrine of Christ*, ver. 9; *to bring this doctrine*, ver. 10; and especially the designation of the confession of Christ as a *commandment*, ver. 6), yet appears to be borrowed, with the thoughts, from the First Epistle. The epistolary form is more carefully retained than in the First Epistle, but artificially and laboriously (vv. 1, 12 sq.; see notes).

The purpose of this short writing is clear. In unmistakable connection with the First Epistle, here and there with verbal imitation of it, the writer desires to impress upon the believers, the children of the community, the necessity of a strict separation from the Gnostic sectaries, in order that the community of the Lord may be kept clean. The apostle John is introduced as the writer of the Epistle at the very beginning, under the name of the *presbyter* (see note). If the person who is known to us under the name of the presbyter John had been intended

here, or had really written the Epistle himself, the name John would not have been omitted. It would have been too presumptuous for him to call himself simply "the presbyter;" and besides, considering the evident imitation of the First Epistle both in form and substance, it would have been ambiguous and liable to be misunderstood. The recipient of the Epistle appears as a lady of the name of Kyria [see note on ver. 1]. That was undoubtedly a woman's name in common use; but the contents of the Epistle are such as would be addressed, not to an individual or to a family, but to a community. Hence some of the early Fathers have instinctively and rightly understood that the recipient is intended to represent a community, or perhaps the whole community of Christendom. The name *Kyria* signifies "lady." It is the feminine form of *Kyrios*, "lord." It stands for the community whose "children" the writer desires to guard against being led astray, those children who have been confided to her by the Lord, with which idea the epithet *elect* (ver. 1) agrees admirably (comp. 1 Pet. v. 13). This supposition explains also the greeting from the "sister's children" (ver. 13), in so far, that is to say, as one may understand the community to be an individual community rather than the whole community of Christendom; not, however, any definite one in particular, but each of the existing communities.

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

### 1—3. *Salutation.*

The resemblance to the First Epistle is sufficient to show that the writer is supposed to be the apostle John. He is represented as an old man, still, like a father, taking upon himself the care of his communities, and even the individual members of them, with glowing love, and as provided with an authority which is unique in its way. That is to say, he is represented just as John appears in the traditions of the post-apostolic age. With these two ideas of his age and his authority, agrees well the epithet *elder* [Gr. *presbyter*], without further explanation. His is so prominent a figure that there is no need to mention his name. The word *elder* is used in the second and third of the Johannine Epistles in a comprehensive sense, so as to include even the apostles. It designates great men of leading and authority in the church.

1. Read, "The elder unto the elect Kyria and her children whom I love in truth," &c.—The epithet *elect* is best understood on the hypothesis that Kyria is a figurative name for the community of the Lord (*Kyrios*). [Comp. Introd. p. 211.]

2. Read, "For the sake of the truth which dwelleth among us; and may it be with us for ever!" [There is no MS. authority for this reading of the second clause. All the MSS. have, "and shall be with us for ever."]—It should be noticed how even in the opening salutation *the truth* is emphasized as having its dwelling fixed in the community, and being for ever firmly established, and also that Jesus Christ is already spoken of here as "the Son of the Father" (ver. 3).

3. [*Grace be with you, mercy and peace, &c.*: The oldest MSS. read, "There shall be with us grace, mercy, peace," &c.]—*Peace* = salvation.—*In truth and love*: These should constitute the element in which you live; peace being placed first.

4—11. *Warning and general directions in regard to the Gnostics who have withdrawn from the Christian community.*

4. *I found*: John is represented as giving the results of a visitation, and as having a fresh visitation in prospect (ver. 12). He gives prominence to the satisfactory side of his visit, simply hinting at the less satisfactory by the little word *of* (i.e. some of) thy children.—*Walking in truth* is erroneously taken to mean Christian conduct, and then the *commandment from the Father* is interpreted as love. What the writer means is, rather, walking in the doctrine of the church as divine truth (comp. ver. 9). To walk thus is called a divine commandment, probably with reference to 1 John iv. 1—6, as ver. 5 refers to 1 John ii. 7, iii. 11. The children of the mother church already stand in the truth (comp. 1 John iv. 4); but they are admonished (as in the First Epistle) unto brotherly love.

5. Read, “And now I beseech thee Kyria (not writing it unto thee as a new commandment, but as one that we had from the beginning) that we love one another.”

6. From the exhortation in ver. 5 the writer passes on, somewhat artificially, to the corresponding exhortation to adhere steadfastly to the truth, i.e. to the ecclesiastical doctrine concerning Christ, for which he finds support in 1 John v. 3. The (true) love (no longer simply brotherly love) is walking according to God’s commandments (an un-Johannine expression). Then a commandment is straightway produced with the words, *This is the commandment*, &c. Then this commandment is described as one that has been impressed upon the Christians from the beginning; in which again there is probably an allusion to the First Epistle (comp. 1 John iii. 23), and perhaps also to the Fourth Gospel (e.g. John vi. 29, 40).

7. Read, “For many deceivers are gone out into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”—Instead of directly saying what the commandment is in which they should walk, the writer calls attention to the deceivers who refuse to acknowledge the coming in the flesh, and who therefore have not the true doctrine concerning Christ, and so have gone out from the Christian community. The readers are warned against them as against the representatives of anti-Christianity (vv. 7, 8).

[8. Two of the oldest MSS. read, "Look to yourselves that you lose not the things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward."]

9. Read, "Whosoever transgresseth (the commandment) and abideth not in the doctrine concerning Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine concerning Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." [Instead of *Whosoever transgresseth*, the three oldest MSS. have "Whosoever goeth forward," or, as some render it, "Whosoever taketh the lead."—The same MSS. omit *of Christ* in the second half of the verse.]—Here the writer speaks of transgression of a commandment, and the context shows incontrovertibly that the ecclesiastical doctrine is regarded as a divine commandment. It is the commandment to which attention is called in ver. 6.—*Hath not God*, is an expression which indicates some other writer than the author of the First Epistle.—*He hath both*, connects this Epistle with 1 John ii. 23.

10, 11. *Neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed, &c.*: "Neither greet him, for he that greeteth him," &c.—On these verses the whole Epistle turns. No manner of fellowship with apostates! No kind of assistance must be offered to those who have departed from the fellowship of the Christian community. This rule is fully explained by the rupture that had followed the serious contests in the church.—The *evil deeds* are probably not so much immoral conduct with which the adversaries are charged, as the wasting of the community by false doctrines. Those who had gone out could not fail to endeavour to draw others after them.

#### 12, 13. *Conclusion.*

12. This indication of the more cordial method of direct interchange of thoughts is intended to give the Epistle a warmer tone. So also is the concluding phrase of the verse, borrowed from 1 John i. 4.

[13. See Introd. p. 211.]

## THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

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IN regard to this short writing, as in the case of the preceding one, the ancient church was in doubt whether it properly belonged to the collection of Scriptures. Probably the grounds of doubt also were the same as in the case of the Second Epistle. For the most part, however, it was acknowledged as Johannine, which was very natural, considering its resemblance to the two other Epistles. Internal criticism shows that the Third Epistle is a somewhat poor and feeble imitation of the Second, and that it is consequently not likely to be by the same writer (comp. 3 John 1 with 2 John 1; 3 John 3 with 2 John 4; and especially 3 John 13, 14, with 2 John 12). An imitation by a later hand is further indicated by the awkward application of John xxi. 24, this testimony in favour of John being here put into his own mouth (ver. 12).

The object of the Epistle is to exhort the communities, and especially the rulers, to assist the evangelists and to support them hospitably. The warning example of Diotrephes indicates insolent ill-treatment on the part of some rulers of communities, who in their self-seeking even went so far as to treat the evangelists themselves, the wandering missionaries, with hostility. For this exhortation the Second Epistle offered itself to the writer, as already suitable in a slightly altered form. The presbyter remains. In place of Kyria we find Gaius, a name of good reputation which appears frequently in the early traditions, so that we may suppose that the name of Demetrius (ver. 12) is also taken from the same source, while Diotrephes (like Alexander

the smith, 2 Tim. iv. 14, comp. 1 Tim. i. 20, 2 Tim. ii. 17) appears to have been a traditional type of avarice. Gaius is represented as the recipient of the Epistle, because the exhortation appeals to the willingness of certain highly-esteemed members of the community to do their duty in regard to the matter of which it treats.

## THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

### 1, 2. *Greeting and good wishes.*

1. *The elder*: see note on 2 John 1.—*In the truth* should be “in truth.”

2. *Above all things*: i.e. most particularly. Not, as some take it, “over (i.e. concerning) all things.”

3—12. *Encouragement to the exercise of hospitality towards evangelists, and warning against harsh and hostile treatment of them.*

3. Borrowed from 2 John 4. Here, however, *walking in the truth* [strictly, “in truth,” as in ver. 1 and 2 John 4] has a different meaning from what it has there, and simply signifies truly Christian conduct.

5, 6. Read, “Beloved, thou actest in true Christian fashion [lit. “doest a faithful thing”] in all thy labours [lit. “that which thou doest”] for the brethren, and especially for strangers. And they have testified to thy love before the community; and thou wilt do well if thou further them in a manner worthy of God.”

6. “Worthy of God:” their work is God’s work, inasmuch as they are exercising the calling of preachers of the gospel to the heathen (comp. ver. 7).

7. *His name’s sake* should be “the name’s sake” [so all the old MSS.]. “The name,” without any distinctive epithet, is the name in which salvation lies contained, i.e. the name of Jesus Christ which they proclaim.

8. Read, “It is our duty, therefore, to support such,” &c.—In this verse the writer states plainly the proper object of his Epistle, viz. to encourage the support of the evangelists, especially by showing them hospitality. This is required as a Christian duty, and it is recommended by the consideration that in so doing we co-operate in the dissemination of the truth.

9. *Diotrephes*, &c.: i.e. Diotrephes, who lays claim to rule among them, pays no attention to us.—Here the writer explains

why he has taken the step of writing a private letter. The epistle which he had addressed to the church, Diotrephes has been guilty of rejecting. This is a literary artifice adopted by the writer in order that, in the person of this ruler of a community (bearing a name of bad reputation in the traditions of the church), who ambitiously carries out his own evil purposes, he may expose abuses of this kind which had crept into the Christian communities.

10. *I will remember his deeds* should be "I will remonstrate with him concerning his deeds."—*Malicious words*: Probably the letters of recommendation with which such evangelists were provided were often rejected with surly, insulting words. Not only did the community itself fail to provide for such guests, but even when individual members of the community desired to take charge of them and assist them, they were discouraged, and obstacles were put in the way of their so doing.—*And casteth them out of the church*: There seem to have been cases in which the evangelists were driven out of the community altogether, perhaps from fear lest their activity should involve the community in danger and persecution. We cannot suppose that those who received such travelling brethren into their houses were themselves expelled from the community, though this is the meaning attached to these words by commentators almost without exception.

11. *Follow not*: i.e. "imitate not."—The example of Diotrephes is held up to Gaius as a warning. Testimony is borne to the brilliant example of Demetrius, on the other hand (ver. 12), in regard to this very duty of Christian hospitality.

12. Read, "Demetrius hath the witness of all, and of the truth itself; and we also bear witness, and thou knowest that our witness is true."—*The truth itself* could not fail to give the best testimony if it were called.

#### 13—15. *Conclusion*:

This is evidently a feeble imitation of the conclusion of the Second Epistle. The want of any actual historical bearing in the Epistle is concealed under the request to greet the friends each by name, as if each had been expressly mentioned in the Epistle.

[13. *Pen*: lit. "reed."]

14. *By name*: i.e. each one by his or her own name.

## THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

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THIS Epistle purports to have been written by Jude (or Judas), the brother of Jesus, and is addressed to Christendom in general. But the contents and the historical allusions of the Epistle indicate a late post-apostolic age as the date of its composition, when the ecclesiastical movement for the exclusion of the Gnostic heretics was on foot.

The Epistle is devoted to the confutation of false teachers, who can only be Gnostics of the free-thinking school. They exalt themselves even above the God and the angels of the Old Testament as subordinate powers (vv. 8, 10), above Jesus as only the human vehicle of the higher Christ (ver. 4), and above the ordinary Christians as simply psychical men (i.e. possessed of a soul only), as though they themselves alone were the spiritual men (ver. 19). They were Gnostics, however, not of the school that was hostile to the flesh, but of the libertine (free-thinking) school (comp. vv. 4, 8, 10, 16, 18). These libertine Gnostics appear still in the Christian community (ver. 12), but as a dissatisfied section (or even faction); at variance to some extent with the governing body, and conscious of being slighted (vv. 12, 16, 19). The author of the Epistle, who is not the brother of Jesus, but a writer of about A.D. 150, probably of the Eastern church, demands a suppression of this heresy, partly by gentle means, and partly with a certain violence, and partly by the middle course of a discriminating forgiveness (vv. 22, 23). Similarly he exhorts his readers to retain the faith that has been delivered to them (vv. 3, 20). The Epistle of Jude is not known

in the ancient church until the end of the second century, and even then it was not universally acknowledged.

In regard to the attitude and position of the writer himself, we can only say that he is a champion of the traditional ecclesiastical faith against the heretical teachers whom he describes, and that he was well acquainted with the extra-biblical Jewish literature, the Book of Enoch, which he quotes as holy Scripture (vv. 14, 15), and the Assumption of Moses, which he makes use of in ver. 9. His zeal against the Gnostic heresy, fiery as it is, is tempered by a certain evangelical mildness (vv. 22, 23).

After the address (1, 2), the occasion of the composition is stated, namely, the dangerous heresy of libertine Gnosticism (3, 4). The mention of divine judgment (5—7) leads the way to a description of these heretics (8—16), and then the orthodox Christians are shown how they must conduct themselves with regard to them (17—23). The short Epistle then closes with a doxology (24, 25).

## THE EPISTLE OF JUDE. 4

### 1, 2. *Salutation.*

1. Read, "Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, unto the called that are beloved in God and preserved in [or "for"] Jesus Christ."—*Brother of James*: i.e. one of the brothers of Jesus (comp. Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3).

### 3, 4. *Occasion of the Epistle.*

3. Read, "Beloved, when I was taking all diligent care to write to you concerning our common salvation," &c.—*Once* = "once for all."

4. *Denying the only Lord God*, &c., should be "denying the only Master, our Lord Jesus Christ."—Here it is already indicated that the opponents of the traditional faith are free-thinking Gnostics, who deny the only God of the universe and Jesus Christ (comp. ver. 25), and turn Christian grace into an abandoned life. The denial of Jesus Christ is not to be understood as if the false teachers refused to recognize Jesus as Christ in any way; in that case they would not be Christian heretics at all. The meaning must be (as in 1 John ii. 22), that they distinguished in Gnostic fashion between the personality of Jesus and the personality of Christ.

### 5—7. *Warning judgments of God from the earliest ages.*

5. Read, "I wish to remind you, as you know all these things, once for all, that the Lord having saved a people out of Egypt, a second time destroyed them that believed not."—The words "a second time" contain an implied back reference to the deluge, when the unbelievers were destroyed for the first time (comp. 1 Pet. i. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5). After the migration from Egypt, God destroyed in the wilderness the people who had been delivered (comp. Num. xiv. 35 sq.).

6. Read, "And the angels which kept not their own dominion,

but left their own habitation, he hath kept unto the judgment of the great day in everlasting chains under darkness."

7. *In like manner*: i.e. like the angels referred to in ver. 6, who formed connections with the daughters of men (Gen. vi. 1 sqq.).—*Strange* (lit. "another") *flesh*: i.e. were guilty of unnatural sins.

8—16. *The false teachers.*

8. Read, "Similarly these also, dreaming, defile the flesh:" a reference to lascivious dreams (comp. Is. lvi. 10).—The despising of *dominion* is the degrading of the "Lord" (i.e. the God of the Old Testament) to the rank of a subordinate divine being.—*And speak evil of dignities* should be "and rail at glories." These "glories" are the high angels of the God of the Old Testament, which the Gnostics judged in a manner corresponding to their judgment of God.

9. *Accusation* should be "judgment."

10. [*Speak evil* should be "blaspheme" or "rail against:" same word as in vv. 8, 9.]—The Gnostic false teachers of the free-thinking school rail against the higher things which they know not (but think they know). In lower material things which they know, however, they perish.

11. Read, "Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain, and surrendered themselves to the error of Balaam for the sake of reward, and perished in the rebellion of Korah."

12. Read, "These are rocks in your love-feasts, feasting with you, pasturing themselves without fear; clouds without water carried away by the wind; autumnal trees without fruit, twice dead and rooted up."—It seems that the false teachers still take part in the Christian love-feasts, but they "pasture themselves," i.e. they separate themselves from the lawful shepherd or bishop.

13. The "wandering stars for which the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever" remind us of the Book of Enoch, in which seven stars of heaven are chained together for punishment (xxi. 2), and fallen stars (lxxxvi. 1 sq., lxxxviii. 1, xc. 21) appear in punishment.

14, 15. *Enoch also the seventh from Adam*: comp. Gen. v. 21.—*[Cometh with ten thousands of his saints*: strictly, "came with (or amid) his holy myriads.]"—The passage here quoted is to be

found in the Ethiopic Book of Enoch i. 9: "And behold he cometh with myriads of his holy ones to pass judgment upon them, and to destroy the wicked, and to punish all flesh for all that the sinners and ungodly have done and committed against him."

16. This discontented grumbling and arrogant speech, with the expression in ver. 12, "pasturing themselves," points to dissatisfaction with their position in the community. The false teachers who gave themselves out to be spiritual men (ver. 19), and uttered great-swalling speeches, found themselves passed over and disregarded.—*Having men's persons in admiration, &c.* "Having respect of persons for the sake of advantage."

17—23. *The attitude of the orthodox Christians towards the false teachers.*

17, 18. These prophetic utterances on the part of the apostles may be found in Rev. ii. iii.; 2 Thess. ii. 3 sq., iv. 3.—*Of the apostles* should be "by the apostles."

19. Read, "These are they who make separations, having a soul, not having a spirit."—The Gnostic teachers exalted themselves, as the spiritual men, over the ordinary Christians, as merely psychic men (animated simply by a soul and not by the spirit). The writer here exactly reverses this.

20. *Holy Ghost*: "Holy Spirit."

22, 23. Read, "And on some have mercy when they are in doubt, and some save snatching them out of the fire. On some, however, have mercy in fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."—The followers of the false teachers are to be treated with gentleness if they are simply in doubt. Others are to be snatched from the fire of destruction; to others again mercy is to be shown "with fear," i.e. with care. The garment spotted by the flesh is explained by ver. 8. The immoral life of the false teachers is to be regarded with the uttermost hatred. [There is a considerable variation in the readings of the MSS., and some difference of opinion as to the proper translation of these two verses. Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford and Tregelles, supported throughout by two of the oldest MSS., and in the greater part by others also, read, "And some convict when they are at variance (i.e. "contending with you," Alf.), and others save,

snatching them out the fire, and on some have mercy with fear," &c.]

24, 25. *Conclusion.*

[24. There is one old MS. that reads "them" instead of *you* in this verse.]

25. Read, "To the only God our Saviour, honour and majesty before all eternity, and now and unto all eternity."—"To the only God" (comp. ver. 4), in opposition to the many divine beings which the Gnostics set forth.—*God* as our *Saviour*: comp. 1 Tim. i. 1, ii. 3; Tit. i. 3, ii. 10, iii. 4.—[Here, again, there is some difference of opinion as to the correct reading. - Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford and Tregelles, supported by the four oldest MSS., read, "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, glory, majesty, dominion and power, before every age, and now and unto all the ages."]

# THE REVELATION OF JOHN.

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## 1. OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.

THE New Testament contains one prophetic book, the Apocalypse. This Greek word signifies a revelation, or uncovering, and was used by the later Jews to denote especially the glorious appearance of the Messiah coming from the right hand of God, which they expected. Hence it came about that the name was applied not only to the appearance of the Messiah, but to any writing that treated of it, and such a writing was called simply an Apocalypse. The earliest composition of this kind is the Old Testament Book of Daniel, which, however, was not written by a prophet of that name living at the Babylonian court, but by an unknown author of the Maccabean age (about 170 B.C.).

That the Revelation of John belongs to the first century after the birth of Christ is beyond all doubt. In that age the whole of Christendom lived in the conviction that Jesus, who had been exalted to heaven, and whom they revered as the Messiah, would return in the immediate future, would raise the dead, hold a judgment over the human race, and then, with his own faithful followers, establish the eternal kingdom of God. With this belief, the roots of which are to be found in Judaism, was connected the idea of the *Messianic woes*, which the Christians likewise appropriated from the Jewish theology. Before the regeneration of all things, which was to begin with the advent of the Messiah, it was expected that there would be great convulsions in heaven and on earth. Then the whole visible creation shall be shaken through and through by the pangs of labour. Sun and moon lose

their brilliancy. The stars fall from heaven. War, tumult, famine and pestilence, fall upon mankind. This period Satan seeks with all his powers to avail himself of, well knowing that now his dominion will speedily come to an end. Not satisfied with stirring up the ungodly world to the persecution of the believers, he even ventures to make himself incarnate in a human personality, even as God became a man in Jesus, and so, as the adversary and caricature of the true Messiah (*antichrist*), to demand divine honours for himself. But in so doing he has reached the summit of his power, for now Christ with his hosts descends from heaven, overcomes the antichrist with all his following, and consigns him to eternal perdition.

A Christian of the second half of the first century, filled with such expectations, watching with attentive eyes the course of the affairs of the world, could not fail to be strengthened in the conviction "that the time was at hand," and "that the Lord would soon come with his reward to give to every man according to his work" (Rev. i. 3, xxii. 12).

The whole of the known world was at that time under the sceptre of the Roman emperor. Two emperors, Tiberius (A.D. 14—37) and Caligula (A.D. 37—41), had already disgraced the throne by unheard-of cruelty and blasphemy; but Nero, who in the year 54 succeeded the feeble Claudius, surpassed in unnatural depravity all his predecessors. During his reign of fourteen years, his mother, his step-brother, two wives and innumerable other persons, fell a sacrifice to his brutality. He excited the detestation of the Christians especially by the terrible persecution to which he subjected them. In the year 64, the greater part of the city of Rome was destroyed by fire. The popular voice boldly declared that the tyrant himself was the originator of the fire, and all his endeavours to prove this rumour false were in vain. At last he declared that the Christians living in Rome were the real authors of the fire, and caused a great number of them to be hunted out and put to a martyr's death. From that time, the name of Rome was as hateful to the Christians as the

name of Babylon had been to the Jews after they had been carried away out of the Holy Land into captivity there. Earnestly did the confessors of Jesus now long for the day when the judgment of the Lord should come upon this infamous and idolatrous city.

That this day could not now be far distant, might be inferred, it was supposed, from another sign of the times. In the year 66, the Jews, unable any longer to endure the tyranny of the Roman governor, armed themselves and began a bloody war against their oppressors. It was impossible, however, for any heroism to succeed in so unequal a struggle, and after many thousand Jews had fallen in a numerous succession of encounters, the Roman general Vespasian advanced against Jerusalem, with the intention of taking the chief city of the enemy and so making an end of the war. It may easily be understood that Jews and Jewish Christians alike watched the siege of Jerusalem with feverish anxiety. The idea that it was possible that God should deliver up to the Gentiles the holy city and the temple dedicated to his honour, was intolerable to them. The Jewish Christians comforted themselves with the hope that perhaps He had only threatened the Israelites with this severe visitation in order to move the hardened people to repentance and faith in the gospel, and that when this purpose was attained He would undoubtedly stretch forth His saving hand, and with the thunders of His judgment dash to pieces the Gentiles who had sought to lay sacrilegious hands upon the sanctuary.

Ere long another rumour spread through the Roman empire, which was peculiarly adapted to dispel the last doubts and to make it plain that the Lord stood already at the door. The armies in Gaul and Spain had rebelled against Nero and proclaimed their well-trying general Galba as emperor. Betrayed in his own palace, and too cowardly to resist, Nero fled from the capital to the country estate of one of his freed-men, and, when his pursuers approached, stabbed himself in the throat with the assistance of one of his servants. Such was the account given

of his death, but as it took place in secret the question soon arose whether this monster of cruelty was really dead; whether he had not simply hidden away in order to gather new strength and then turn again upon his enemies, breathing revenge and slaughter. By-and-by the mound under which he was said to rest was found repeatedly adorned with fresh flowers. His image was set up on the public rostra, with decrees bearing his name and threatening his speedy return and the severest punishment of his enemies. Gradually the vague suspicions as to his actual place of concealment took a definite form. It had before been prophesied that if he should be one day hurled from the imperial throne, he should hold dominion over the East. And after the rebellion arose he still cherished the intention of taking refuge among the Parthians beyond the river Euphrates. Hence the report naturally arose that he had actually carried out this design, and that he would very shortly return with an innumerable host of these hereditary enemies of Rome, and wreak terrible vengeance on the imperial city. It is easy to understand how this report found ready acceptance among the Christians. The horrible cruelties practised by Nero upon the confessors of Jesus were themselves sufficient ground for regarding him as the incarnate antichrist. If he was able to defy death itself, there must without doubt be some superhuman Satanic power at work in him. In addition to all this, during the preceding decades the Messianic woes had become louder and more unmistakable. The Roman empire had been disturbed incessantly with bloody wars, first in one quarter and then in another. A famine had visited Judea. A pestilence had laid Italy waste, and in Rome itself had carried away thirty thousand persons. Terrible devastations had been caused by earthquakes, which had been felt with especial severity in Asia Minor, where out of the seven cities named in the opening of the Revelation (i. 11), only two, viz. Smyrna and Pergamos, had escaped.

Finally, the belief that the return of Jesus would take place in the immediate future was further confirmed by the declarations

of the Book of Daniel, which, dealing as it did almost entirely with the Messianic age, was more industriously read by the ancient Christians than any other book of the Old Testament. According to the prophecies of this book, the oppressions which fell upon the Jewish nation, and the God-forsaken state in which it was left under the tyranny of the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes, were to endure for "a time and times and half a time," that is to say, according to the most simple and natural interpretation, three and a half years (Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7); but this period had long since passed, and yet the affliction of Israel had not come to an end. If, however, the author of the Book of Daniel was a genuine prophet possessed by the spirit of God, then his prophecy must be fulfilled in some way or other. A different explanation was therefore sought. The saying in question was interpreted as applying to the new "people of the covenant," the Christian community, which had taken the place of the old people of the covenant; and the "times" were regarded, not as single years, but as periods of ten years each, just as Daniel elsewhere speaks of "weeks," meaning periods of seven years and not of seven days (Dan. ix. 24 sqq.). In this case the prophecy could only refer to the latter part of the seventh decade of the Christian era, which was just three and a half decades after the crucifixion of Jesus, with which the forsaking and the oppressions of the Christians had begun.

Such, generally speaking, were the ideas of the author of the Revelation; and it was the desire to confer a benefit upon other Christians by communicating to them the result of his own careful consideration of the signs of the time, which led him to write his book. Accordingly, the purpose of the book is to instruct the Christian communities of Asia Minor, and indirectly the whole of Christendom, concerning the return of the Lord and the events which were to precede it, to strengthen them for the impending sufferings and afflictions by calling attention to the glory of the Messianic kingdom, and to admonish them to put away the moral offences which still clung to them, that

the Lord at his coming to receive his own might find them well prepared, and vouchsafe to them participation in his kingdom.

## 2. CONTENTS.

The disclosures which John makes to his readers may be summed up somewhat as follows: We are already living in the last times, and ere long the period assigned by the Book of Daniel will have passed. But there are still many things that must first happen. Terrible plagues will visit the Christ-hating human race, and only the elect will be spared. The defiant pride of the hardened Gentile world these plagues will fail indeed to break down, but surely the Jewish people, after the Romans have conquered all Jerusalem except the Temple itself, will by these judgments of God be terrified out of their false security and yield to the gospel. The Christian community will be sorely oppressed by Satan and his ministers, but it will be marvellously preserved by the Divine protection. On the other hand, the impious imperial capital, the idolatrous Rome, with her hatred of the Christians, must vanish from the face of the earth; and her own former ruler, Nero, who was supposed to be dead, and who shall come hastening with the princes of the Parthians from his concealment beyond the Euphrates, is the very one who is destined to execute this terrible sentence upon her. After this he will manifest himself as the incarnate antichrist by demanding divine honours for himself, slaying with the sword all who refuse to grant them, and drawing after him an innumerable horde of hireling admirers and blasphemers. Lying prophets, both among Jews and Gentiles, with deceitful words and astounding magic arts, will win over a great part of the inhabitants of the earth to the side of the antichrist, excite him to a bloody persecution of the faithful disciples of the true Messiah, and collect around him as his allies the princes of all the nations that are subject to the Romans. Thus prepared, he attacks the holy city of Jerusalem; but in the neighbourhood of the city his destiny overtakes him, for Christ comes with his

hosts from heaven, destroys the hostile army in a bloody battle, and consigns the antichrist, with his lying prophets, to the sulphurous pit which is prepared for all the wicked. Then the victorious Messiah calls to life again those who have been slain for his name's sake, in order that he may rule peacefully with them for a long series of years in Jerusalem. After this, barbarian hordes, stirred up by Satan, will lay siege to the holy city in numberless multitudes; but they will be quickly destroyed by the direct intervention of God. When Satan has been similarly cast into the sulphurous pit, the old order of the world terminates with the resurrection of all the dead and the final judgment. Heaven and earth are marvellously renewed, and in the new Jerusalem, that descends from heaven, the eternal kingdom of God and Christ begins.

These revelations are made by the seer to his readers, however, not in insipid, didactic discourses, but in the form of visions, in which a series of symbolic figures, representing the important powers in the development of the last days, passes before his eyes. As this is the traditional form for all apocalyptic writings, a form which suggested itself irresistibly to John from the very first, the question whether he actually saw all the visions which he describes must be answered in the negative. They are the images, rather, of a powerful imagination. He believed in them only in the same degree in which a dramatist believes in the creations of his own mind. Both alike believe in the reality of the ideas which they present in a symbolic and allegoric, i. e. in a poetic, dress.

The symbolic figures which we meet with in the Revelation are the following :

1. The *Messiah* appears as a high-priest (i. 13 sqq.), and afterwards as a slaughtered lamb, with seven horns and seven eyes (v. 6, after Is. liii. 7); as a new-born man child, who shall pasture all the Gentiles with a rod of iron (xii. 5, after Ps. ii. 7 sqq.); as the son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven (xiv. 14, and comp. also i. 13, after Dan. vii. 13); and, finally, as a general

hastening to victory and arrayed as for a Roman triumph (vi. 2, xix. 11).

2. The *community of God* is represented as a woman adorned with the sun and moon and a crown of twelve stars, from whom the Messiah springs (ch. xii.), but who is also the bride of the Messiah (xix. 7 sq., xxi. 9 sqq., xxii. 17).

3. *Satan* is represented (after Gen. iii. 1 sqq.) as a serpent or dragon with seven heads and ten horns (xii. 3 sqq.).

4. The *power of the world*, i.e. the *Roman empire*, which is in Satan's service, appears (after Dan. vii. 3 sqq.) as a beast having likewise seven heads and ten horns (xiii. 1 sqq.); the *city of Rome*, which rules over this empire, as a meretricious woman enthroned upon the beast.

5. *The antichrist*, Nero, inasmuch as all the godlessness and all the hostility to the Christians that was contained in the Roman empire had been incorporated in him, is represented by the beast above mentioned (xi. 7, xvii. 8, 11), and also, inasmuch as he was the fifth Roman emperor, by the fifth head of this beast (xiii. 3, xvii. 9 sq.).

6. The whole body of *false prophets* of that age, both Jewish and Gentile, appears in the form of a second beast, in league with the first, like to a lamb in appearance, but speaking like a serpent (xiii. 11 sqq.). In other passages the false prophet appears without disguise in the place of this beast (xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10).

As regards its general arrangement, the book may be divided into three parts, the Prologue (i.—iii.), the Apocalypse proper (iv.—xxii. 5), and the Epilogue (xxii. 6—21).

The prologue consists of the title and superscription of the whole (i. 1—3), the dedication to the seven Christian communities of Asia Minor (i. 4—8), the introductory vision (i. 9—20), and seven letters to the seven communities (ii. iii.).

The revelation proper is divided into two parts by the change of scene, which is first in heaven, and then (from ch. x. onwards) on earth. It is gradually developed through a number of stages

within a framework, as it were, of the sacred numbers, three and seven. Seven seals are broken; but this is not the immediate prelude, as might be supposed, to the final judgment, for there then follow seven trumpets, the last of which again introduces, not the final judgment, but the seven vials of wrath. Thus we have three sets of seven scenes each in the development of the Revelation, and each set is arranged strictly after the same pattern. The first four scenes are each time most closely connected with one another (vi. 1—7, viii. 7—12, xvi. 1—9); the fifth and sixth hang more loosely together (vi. 9—17, ix., xvi. 10—12), and are separated by intermediate proceedings from the seventh, which is itself introduced in each set of scenes by a somewhat lengthy preparatory development (vii., x. 1—xi. 14, xvi. 13—16). Where the length of the scene allows of sub-divisions, these are formed by means of threes. This is especially marked in the description of the final contest and the judgment. The seventh trumpet introduces three different things: the description of the enemy, the prophetic prelude, and the decisive conflict. There are three enemies: the devil (xii. 3—17), the Roman imperial power (xiii. 1—10), and the false prophets (xiii. 11—17). Three angels announce in the prelude the fall of the imperial capital (xiv. 6—11, 14—20), and the decisive conflict is divided into three scenes (xvii., xix. 11—21, xx. 7—10). Hence the whole arrangement of the Revelation has evidently been thought out and planned with extraordinary care.

### 3. DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION. AUTHORSHIP.

The *date* of the book now under our consideration may be fixed with a certainty seldom attainable in the case of other ancient writings. Evidently it is between June 9th, 68, and August 10th, 70; the former of these being the day of Nero's death, and the latter the day on which the Temple at Jerusalem, which John had hoped to see spared, was reduced to ashes when the city was destroyed by the Romans. And since the sixth emperor, of whom John says that he "is" (xvii. 10), can be no

other than Nero's successor Galba, who was murdered on the 15th of January, 69, the Revelation must have been written within the reign of that emperor, which lasted for a period of rather less than seven months.

The *place* of composition was somewhere in Asia Minor. According to his own statement, the apocalyptic writer was upon the island of Patmos (i. 9), over against Ephesus, and he dedicates his book to the Ephesian and six other communities of Asia Minor, of the position and circumstances of which he has such accurate knowledge as can only result from personal acquaintance. Accordingly, the probability is altogether in favour of the ecclesiastical tradition which represents the Revelation as springing from Ephesus.

The *personality* of the author, then, is the only matter that remains to be determined. He calls himself John (i. 1, 4, 9, xxii. 8), and there is no indication whatever that he was laying claim to a name that did not belong to him. The earliest tradition uniformly represents him as the apostle John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, concerning whom we have the evidence of unimpeachable witnesses that he spent the latter part of his life in Ephesus. The opposition to this tradition which afterwards arose is of no weight, inasmuch as it does not rest upon any foundation of facts, but sprang from the increasing difficulty which readers found in adapting themselves to the ideas of the book, especially in regard to the stumbling-block which presented itself in the doctrine of the millennium or Messianic reign of a thousand years. In more recent times, the apostolic origin of the book has frequently been disputed on the ground that it is impossible that the Fourth Gospel and the Revelation can both be the work of one and the same author, the character of each of the writings being far too diverse from that of the other. Correct as this statement is, it must not be used, however, against the Revelation, which can produce far stronger evidence in support of its claim to be the work of the apostle John than the Fourth Gospel, which in any case is not from the hand of this apostle.

In the most recent times, however, the apostolic origin of the Revelation has been doubted even by biblical scholars who do not regard the Fourth Gospel as Johannine. Their chief grounds are as follows: The apocalyptic writer never describes himself as an apostle, and indeed he speaks of the twelve immediate disciples of Jesus in a manner in which he would scarcely have spoken of them if he had himself belonged to their circle (xviii. 20, xxi. 14). Then there are no traces whatever in the book of the intimate relation to Jesus occupied by the disciple John, together with Peter and James. The figure of Jesus himself is so little human and individual, that it cannot be drawn by the hand of a disciple who had lived for years never to be forgotten with his Lord and Master. The Revelation, moreover, displays an amount of erudition and literary skill which would be more credible in a trained theological writer than in a simple fisherman of Galilee, such as John was. Finally, there are many who even declare that the very tradition of the apostle John's residence in Ephesus is unhistorical, and has arisen from a confusion between the apostle and a contemporary of the same name, the presbyter John, to whom even in ancient times the Revelation was occasionally ascribed.

But, though several of these objections are well worthy of consideration, none of them is conclusive. The presbyter John, in particular, is a figure of such doubtful historical reality, that any appeal to him is more likely to confuse than to solve the uncertain problem.

In any case, it is significant that the idea of the character of the writer which we cannot fail to derive from the Revelation, is remarkably like the figure of the apostle John as he appears in the writings of Paul, the first three Gospels, and several of the earliest ecclesiastical writers. The most prudent and unassailable answer to the question of the authorship of the Revelation will ever be, that the writer was a Jewish Christian of Asia Minor named John, and that there is neither proof nor disproof of the validity of the tradition which declares him to have been the apostle of that name.

## 4. VALUE OF THE BOOK.

That the expectations of the Revelation have not been fulfilled, requires, now-a-days, no proof. But this fact detracts nothing from our estimation of this enigmatical book, and the effects which have been produced by it. We cannot but regret the misuse which enthusiasts and fanatics have made of it, drawing from it, as they supposed, the whole history of the world and the church to the end of time, and ever with special ingenuity fitting the apocalyptic descriptions of the impious and ungodly powers to their own enemies for the time being; a delusion which should be relegated to a history of human folly, and is now happily dying out. The Revelation, however, has not been without homage of a superior kind to this. In times of bitter persecution, it was a book of consolation for the confessors of Jesus, who were upheld and strengthened by its promises. Some of its most powerful utterances (e.g. ii. 10, iii. 11, 19, xiv. 13, xxi. 4) have always had an awakening and uplifting effect upon religious minds. And, finally, it has supplied both the impulse and the material requisite for the production of lofty poetic figures and scenes, to not a few poets, both mediæval and modern, as, for example, Dante, Milton, Klopstock and Schiller.

While most other writings of this character fall into a number of disconnected scenes, the Revelation of John is distinguished by a strictly preserved unity and a happy combination of the various elements that are worked up in it. As it not only equals but even surpasses its Old Testament model, the Book of Daniel, we may confidently regard it as the most perfect production of the Jewish-Christian apocalyptic school. Its high historical value is due to the fact that it is the oldest document of Jewish Christianity, and, next to the genuine Epistles of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, the oldest book in the canon of the New Testament. Hence this book and the writings just mentioned are the most important of all sources for our knowledge of primitive Christianity as developed in the generation immediately following the departure of Jesus.

## THE REVELATION OF JOHN.

### i.—iii. PROLOGUE.

i. 1—3. *Title and superscription of the book, and commendation of it to the Christian communities.*

1. The thought that Christ received from his Father all that he possesses and gives to his own, occurs also elsewhere in the Revelation (ii. 27, iii. 21, vi. 2, xx. 4). Hence the subordination of the Son to the Father is undoubtedly assumed in this book.—*He* = Jesus Christ.—*Signified it*: i.e. made it clear by signs and words.—*His servant*: John, like Paul (Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 10; Phil. i. 1) and James (James i. 1), calls himself a “servant of Christ.”

2. “Who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ whatsoever things he saw.” [The words *bare record* and *testimony* are similar words in the Greek.]—*Saw*: The revelation was given to him in the form of a vision.

3. *Blessed is he that readeth, &c.*: i.e. the reader and the congregation of those that listen to him. Hence it appears that John intends his book to be read in the gatherings for public worship.

i. 4—8. *Dedication to the seven Christian communities of Asia Minor, and short statement of the theme of the book.*

4. *Asia* = Asia Minor, in accordance with ancient usage. Besides the Christian communities here mentioned, there are also others known to us which existed at that time in Asia Minor, e.g. at Colossæ and Hierapolis (Col. iv. 13). John’s confinement of himself to seven communities is explained by the significance which he attaches to the sacred number of seven.—*From him which is and which was and which is to come*: A paraphrase of the Hebrew divine name “Yahveh” (erroneously pronounced “Jehovah”). The alteration of the usual phrase “which shall be” into *which is to come*, is occasioned by the reference to the approaching advent of the Lord.—*The seven Spirits*: The seven archangels who, according to the later Jewish belief, which had

its origin in the doctrines of Zoroaster, surrounded the throne of God (Tob. xii. 15, comp. Zech. iii. 9, iv. 10). [Zech. iii. 9, "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes," i.e. seven eyes shall watch over it, i.e. seven angels, which, according to Zech. iv. 10, are as the eyes of Yahveh. In the latter verse there is also a reading, "watchers" for "eyes."]

5. *First begotten*: "first born." [*Loved*: The best MSS. read "loves."—*Washed*: The oldest MSS. read "loosed," or, as some render it, "redeemed." We should then have to translate "with" for *in* "his own blood."]

6. *Kings and priests*: comp. v. 10, xx. 6. The expression is taken from Ex. xix. 6; Is. lxi. 6.—[The best MSS. read, "And hath made us a kingdom, priests unto God and his Father" (or, as some render it, "his God and Father"), &c.]

7. *Clouds*: "the clouds."—*Kindreds*: "tribes."—Comp. with this verse Dan. vii. 13.—*They which pierced him*: i.e. his murderers. The expression is taken from a passage in Zechariah (Zech. xii. 10), erroneously interpreted as referring to the Messiah (comp. John xix. 37).

8. Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, i.e. the beginning and the end (comp. xxi. 6; Is. xlv. 6), as is rightly explained. The explanation itself is, however, a later interpolation, and the words *the beginning and the ending* should be omitted here from the text.

#### i. 9—20. *Introductory vision.*

This vision sets forth, after the fashion of the ancient prophets, the commission which the Lord has given to the seer, in order to secure the belief of the readers in his prophecies.

9. *Patmos*: a small island over against Ephesus, the modern name of which is Patmo or Palmosa. All that we can infer from the words that follow is, that John was in Patmos either that he might receive or that he might proclaim to others *the word of God* (i.e. the word that comes from God) *and the testimony of Jesus* (i.e. the testimony which Jesus bears). The ecclesiastical fathers misunderstood the passage, and took it to mean that he was there as a martyr to this *word and testimony*; and hence the tradition became current that he had been banished to this island by a Roman emperor.

10. *In the Spirit* = in a state of prophetic ecstasy.—*The Lord's*

*day* is Sunday, the day of the resurrection. The day was not observed by the church, indeed, in apostolic times, but it was nevertheless felt by the Christian mind to be a sacred day (comp. Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2).—[Some commentators render, "In the spirit I was present at the day of the Lord."]

11. Read, "Saying, What thou seest, write in a book," &c. The intervening words are an interpolation. [There is the same authority of all the oldest MSS. for omitting the words *which are in Asia*.]—The churches addressed in ver. 4 are here enumerated. For remarks on these various cities see below (notes to ch. ii. iii.).

12. "Seven golden lamp-stands" [so properly, and not *candlesticks*] in imitation of the lamp-stands on which were placed the seven lamps in the tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 37, xxxvii. 23). What they signify is explained by ver. 20.

13. *The son of man*: "A son of man," i.e. the Messiah (after Dan. vii. 13). *Clothed with a garment down to the foot*, &c.: a description of the priestly dress (comp. Dan. x. 5). See note on xv. 6.

14. Comp. Dan. vii. 9.

16. For the meaning of the seven stars, see ver. 20.—*A sharp two-edged sword*: comp. Is. xlix. 2.—*As the sun*: comp. Judges v. 31.

17, 18. *Fear not*, &c.: "Fear not; I am the first and the last and the living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever, and have the keys," &c. [So very many translators.]—*Hell* [Gr. Hades, see note on vi. 8], not the abode of the damned, but the under-world, into which, according to the belief of that age, the souls of the departed passed with few exceptions (see note on xx. 4). [The best MSS. read, "the keys of death and of Hades."]

20. *Candlesticks*: "lamp-stands."—*The seven churches*: "seven churches."—*Which thou sawest* should be omitted in the second part of the verse.—The *angels* are not the presidents of the communities, but the guardian angels of the communities (comp. Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii. 15), whom John regarded as their representatives; so that in what follows he says of the angel, as the personified spirit of the community, what really applies to each community.

Ch. ii. iii. *Seven letters, each consisting of an address, letter proper, and conclusion.*

ii. 1—7. *Letter to the community at Ephesus.*

1. *Of Ephesus*: “in Ephesus.”—On Ephesus and the Christian community there, see introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

2. As Paul had many opponents to contend with in Ephesus about the year A.D. 58 (1 Cor. xvi. 9), and after his death a school hostile to him actually became supreme there (Acts xx. 29 sqq.), nothing can be more natural than to suppose that those who “say that they are apostles and are not,” are Paul himself and his fellow-labourers. The apocalyptic writer recognizes no apostle except the twelve (xxi. 14).

3. Read, “And hast patience and didst bear for my name’s sake, and hast not been weary.”

4. *Hast left*: strictly, “didst leave.”

5. *Quickly* should be omitted.—The threat contained in this verse signifies, I will exclude thee from the number of the Christian communities.

6. *Nicolaitans*: This enigmatical name must not be understood as the name of a definite sect, founded, as many ancient commentators have supposed, by Nicolas of Antioch (Acts vi. 5). The Greek name Nicolaos (conqueror of the people) has pretty much the same signification as the Hebrew Bileam (destroyer of the people), and so we should rather regard these Nicolaitans as more or less the same as those who “hold the doctrine of Bileam” (ver. 14). On this see further notes on vv. 14, 20.

7. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*: An exhortation several times used by John to call the attention of his readers to revelations of especial importance (vv. 7, 11, 17, 29, iii. 6, 13, 22, xiii. 9). It is derived from Jesus himself (Matt. xi. 15, xiii. 9, 43).—*The tree of life*: see note on xxii. 1 sqq.—[*In the midst of*: The best MSS. read simply “in.”]

ii. 8—11. *Letter to the community at Smyrna.*

8. *Smyrna*: A famous Ionian commercial city, situated on an arm of the sea, which was called from it the bay of Smyrna, at the mouth of the river Meles, about 36 miles north of Ephesus. Under the earlier Roman emperors it was one of the most

beautiful and populous cities of Asia Minor. In the following century, Polycarp, well known by his martyr's death, was bishop of the Christian community there.

9. *Works and* should be omitted.—According to the primitive Christian view, those who believe in Christ are the true Israel (comp. Gal. vi. 16; Phil. iii. 3). Hence John refuses to reckon the unbelieving Jews as Jews at all. According to him, they are not, as they suppose, a synagogue of God, but of Satan.

10. *The devil*: as the god of this world (2 Cor. iv. 4), whose power culminates immediately before the dawn of the Messianic age.—*Ten days*: a round number to indicate a short time of trial (Dan. i. 12 sqq.). *A crown of life*: strictly, "the crown of life." The victors in the Greek games received as a prize a golden crown (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 25; Jas. i. 12).

11. *The second death*: see xx. 14.

ii. 12—17. *Letter to the community at Pergamos.*

12. *Pergamos*, on the river Caicus, formerly the residence of the kings descended from Attalus, famous for its temple of Æsculapius or Asklepios (the god of healing). The image of the god was placed on a throne encircled by a serpent.

13. Read, "I know where thou dwellest, where Satan's throne is," &c. "Satan's throne:" an allusion to the temple of Æsculapius.—Nothing further is known of Antipas. [*Satan's seat*: The word here rendered *seat* is the Greek "thronos." It is used of the seat of God, of the elders, of the Roman emperors, &c., and is variously translated *throne* or *seat* in A.V. Comp. i. 4, ii. 13, iv. 2, 4, 10, xiii. 2, xvi. 10, 17, &c.]

14. *Balaam*: the Greek form of the Hebrew Bileam. Under the guidance of Bileam, the Moabitish king Balak seduced the Israelites to the worship of Baal Peor and the immoralities connected with his worship (Num. xxv. 1 sqq., xxxi. 8, 16). That the Pauline Gentile Christians did not fear to eat flesh offered to idols, often even at the temple feasts, and that they were not always very particular about the observance of the seventh commandment, is shown by the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 13, viii. x). While Paul declares that there is no harm in the eating of flesh offered to idols in itself, and only wishes it to be avoided for the sake of the weak, John rejects it unconditionally, thus coming into collision with the view ex-

pressed in Acts xv. 20—29. It is possible that fornication ought not to be understood here in the strict sense, but as referring to matrimonial alliances with Gentiles, which were forbidden to the Jews.

15. [*Nicolaitans*: see note on ver. 6.]—*Which thing I hate* should be omitted.

17. *To eat* should be omitted.—*The hidden manna*: There is here an allusion to the belief which arose concerning the pot of manna which, according to Exod. xvi. 32—34, stood before the ark of the covenant as a memorial of the feeding of the people in the wilderness, and which was lost, together with the ark, at the time when the Temple was destroyed by the Chaldeans (B.C. 586). This later belief was, that it had been placed in concealment by Jeremiah, and would be produced again in the Messianic kingdom.—*A white stone*: Votes in favour of an accused person were given by the judges with a white stone. It is here the symbol of the happy lot of the victors.—*A new name*: After Is. lxii. 2, where Jerusalem receives a new name (comp. Rev. xiv. 1). The name meant is Yahveh (Jehovah), which no one might utter.

ii. 18—29. *Letter to the community at Thyatira.*

18. *Thyatira*, a city in Lydia, on the river Lycus, about thirty-two miles north of Sardis, famous for its manufacture of purple dye. (Lydia, the seller of purple, came from Thyatira. Acts xvi. 14.)

[19. *And thy works*, &c.: The best MSS. read, “And thy last works are more than the first.”]

20. [*A few things*: One ancient MS. reads “much;” others simply, “I have against thee that thou sufferest,” &c.]—*That woman* should be “thy wife.” [The MSS. are divided between “the woman” and “thy wife.”—*To teach*, &c.: The best MSS. read, “and she teacheth and seduceth,” &c.]—The name Jezebel, which, like the name Nicolaitans, must be interpreted symbolically, signifies that the bearer of it, like the Phœnician princess Jezebel, the wife of Ahab (1 Kings xvi. 31, xviii. 13, 19, xix. 1 sq.), encouraged and promoted idolatry. Probably we ought not to understand the name to refer to any individual, but to a party existing in the community, the adherents of which are called her children (ver. 23). (We may compare xii. 17, where the true Christians are spoken of as the children of the woman who

represents the community of God.) This party in Thyatira is the same as the Bileamites in Pergamos. The very same reproach is brought against both.—*Prophetess*: The name of prophet is especially dear to the apocalyptic writer, who lives altogether in Old Testament views and ideas (comp. x. 7, xi. 18, xxii. 6, 9). Hence the desecration of it provokes his strongest indignation.

22. *A bed*: i.e. a bed of sickness. I threaten her with sickness.—*Them that commit adultery with her*: In the Old Testament the connection between the people of Israel and God is habitually regarded in the light of a marriage, so that idolatry, which breaks this tie, is regarded as adultery. In this figurative sense the word is to be understood here also.

23. *Searcheth the reins and hearts*: Ps. vii. 9.

24, 25. Read, "But unto you I say, unto the rest that are in Thyatira," &c.—*As they speak*: "as they say."—Probably the opponents of the Law in Thyatira boasted with Paul (1 Cor. ii. 10) that they had known the depths of the Godhead. John, however, reckons what they have known as the depths of Satan.—*I will put upon you none other burden, &c.*: No new yoke of the Law is laid upon the community. They are only called upon faithfully to observe until the return of the Lord those precepts which are still in force among them, which include the prohibition of flesh offered to idols and intermarriage with the Gentiles.

27. After Ps. ii 9, to which a Messianic interpretation was given.—[*Rule*: strictly, "pasture," i.e. tend them as a shepherd tends his sheep. So the Greek version of the psalm reads.]

28. In Daniel xii. 3 it is said that, in the Messianic age, they that direct many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. Here they that overcome are adorned with the *morning star*, so that they now shine with its glory (comp. xii. 1).

iii. 1—6. *Letter to the community at Sardis.*

1. *Sardis* or Sardes, the ancient capital of Lydia, situated at the foot of Mount Tmolus, on a plain through which the river Pactolus flows, about thirty-two miles south of Thyatira. During the reign of Tiberius the city was destroyed by an earthquake, but was rebuilt with the assistance of the emperor. The village of Sart now stands on the site of the ancient city.

2. Works, if they are to suffice for the salvation of him who does them, must complete the measure appointed by God, which

was not yet the case with the works of the community in Sardis.—[*Before God*: The best MSS. read, “before my God.”]

3. *As a thief*, &c.: comp. Matt. xxiv. 43; 1 Thess. v. 2.

4. “But thou hast a few names in Sardis,” &c.—Purity of garments is a symbol of inner purity.

5. *And I will not blot out his name*, &c.: As the Hebrews were enrolled in lists by the authorities, and no one whose name was missing could claim membership in the Israelitish community, so the names of those who are destined for eternal life are written down in a book in heaven, which is therefore called the Book of Life (xiii. 8, xvii. 8, xx. 12, 15, xxi. 27. See also Exod. xxxii. 32 sq.; Ps. lxix. 28, cxxxix. 16; Is. iv. 3; Dan. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 3). Whoever is blotted out of this book is doomed to eternal destruction.—*I will confess his name*: comp. Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8.

iii. 7—13. *Letter to the community at Philadelphia.*

7. *Philadelphia* was situated about twenty-five miles south-east of Sardis. Its modern name is Allah-shehr.—*He that hath the key of David*, &c.: an allusion to Is. xxii. 22. The Messiah has authority to admit into his kingdom or to exclude from it whom he will.

8. *An open door*: opportunity for the spread of the gospel (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 9).

9. Comp. ii. 9.—The promise is after Is. xlv. 14.

10. *The word of my patience*: so called inasmuch as it preaches patience as the best means for obtaining victory.—*The hour of temptation*: i.e. of trial. What is here meant is the Messianic woes. See Introd. pp. 225 sq.

11. *Hold that fast which thou hast*: observe the commandments given to thee.—*Thy crown*: which is laid up ready for thee in heaven.

12. *A pillar in the temple*: as the apostles James, Peter and John, were regarded as pillars or supports of the spiritual temple, the Christian community (Gal. ii. 9).—*New Jerusalem*: see xxi. 10.—*My new name*: the same that is meant in xix. 12.

iii. 14—22. *Letter to the community at Laodicea.*

14. *Of the Laodiceans*: “In Laodicea” [so all the old MSS.].—Laodicea was a wealthy commercial city on the Lycus, in

Phrygia. In the year 62 it was destroyed, together with the neighbouring cities of Colossæ and Hierapolis, by an earthquake. Its own resources, however, sufficed for its speedy restoration.—*The Amen*: i.e. the true, the trustworthy.—*The beginning of the creation of God*: comp. John i. 1 sqq.; Col. i. 16.

15. The community is suffering from want of religious earnestness. It has not sufficient zeal either for a decided acceptance or a decided rejection of the gospel.

16. That which is lukewarm provokes nausea. Hence one cannot keep it long in one's mouth. The community is here threatened with exclusion from the roll of the Christian communities.

18. *White raiment*: see note on ver. 4.—*And anoint, &c.*, should be, "and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes," &c.

19. Comp. Heb. xii. 6.

20. *I stand at the door*: comp. Luke xii. 36.—*Will sup with him*: a sign of the most intimate fellowship. Compare the habitual representation of the kingdom of heaven, under the figure of a meal to which guests are invited, in the gospel parables.

21. Comp. Matt. xix. 28.—The dominion of Jesus still appears as the reward of his victory, and not as anything that belongs to him as his own from the beginning.

#### iv. *The throne of God.*

1. The beginning of the revelation. The seer, who has hitherto been upon earth, is now removed to heaven, and there sees in pictures what is to happen on earth.—*A door was opened* should be "a door had been opened" [or, as some translate, "behold, an opened door in heaven"].

2. The seer purposely abstains from uttering the name of God, and leaves it to be understood from the context (comp. Ezek. i. 26 sq.).

4. [*Throne . . . seats*: the same word in the Greek; see note on ii. 13.]—In Dan. vii. 9, thrones are mentioned in the last judgment, and hence assessors with God are assumed. The later Judaism fixed their number at twenty-four. Here we must understand the twenty-four to be the representatives of the old and new people of the covenant, the twelve patriarchs of the Israelitish nation, and the twelve apostles.

5. *The seven Spirits*: comp. i. 4.

6. *A sea of glass*: comp. Exod. xxiv. 10; Ezek. i. 22.—*Four beasts*: The Greek word denotes living creatures generally, so that it may also include men.

7, 8. *And the four beasts, &c.*, should be, “And the four beasts have each of them six wings, and are full of eyes round about,” &c.—The seer has in his mind the description of the cherubim (Ezek. i. 10), the figures of which were composed of a man, a lion, a steer and an eagle. He chooses, however, not four, but six wings, in imitation of Is. vi. 2, from which passage he also borrows the song of praise which the four beings sing as the representatives of the visible creation.

9—11. Read, “And whenever the beasts shall give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, then the four-and-twenty elders will fall down before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and will worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, our Lord and God, to receive,” &c.

10, 11. Comp. v. 12 sq., x. 6.

#### v. *The Book of Fate.*

1. The book contains the fate of the world. We must understand it, like all the books of the ancients, to be written in the form of a roll; and to show the abundance of its contents, it is stated that even the back is written upon, whereas the usual rolls were only written within.

3. *Under the earth*: in the under-world, which was peopled by the departed.

4. John weeps because he fears that he will not receive the revelation.—*And to read* should be omitted.

5. *The lion of the tribe of Juda*: So Christ is called, after Gen. xlix. 9, and again *the root of David*, after Is. xi. 1, 10.—*Hath prevailed*: “hath overcome.”

6. Christ is represented under the figure of a lamb, after Is. liii. 7. The *seven horns* are a symbol of power. On the *seven Spirits*, see note on i. 4.

8. The incense of the priests offering sacrifice was the symbol of the prayers offered up to God.

9. *A new song*: comp. Ps. xxxiii. 3, xl. 3.—*Us* should be omitted.

10. *Us . . . . we* should be “them . . . . they.”—[*Kings*: Two of the best MSS. read, “a kingdom.”]

11. The number of the heavenly hosts is given after Dan. vii. 10.—[*Ten thousand times ten thousand*: Gr. “myriads of myriads,” i.e. strictly, “ten-thousands of ten-thousands.”]

14. Read, “And the four beasts (or “living creatures”) said Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.” The other words of this verse should be omitted.

vi. 1—8. *The first four seals.*

1. The Book of Fate is now opened, and it should be noticed that its contents are not read, but appear in visible form before the eye of the beholder as the seals are opened.—[*The seals*: The best MSS. read, “the seven seals.”]—*Come*: The words *and see* should be omitted here and in the corresponding passages (vv. 3, 5, 7) as not genuine. The word *Come* must then be taken as addressed, not to the seer, but to the rider who appears directly after it is uttered.

2. The rider, who appears arrayed as a Roman general in his triumph, is indisputably the Messiah (see xix. 11 sqq.). He bears *a bow* because (according to xvii. 14) he is to overcome the Parthians, who are famous as archers. He receives *a crown* as the prize of his certain victory (see note on xviii. 2).

3. *And see* should be omitted; see note on ver. 1.

4. *Red*: the colour of blood (comp. ver. 12, xii. 3, xvii. 3 sq.). The second rider is the symbol of war and bloodshed.

5, 6. *Come and see*: see note on ver. 1.—The third rider is the symbol of dearth and famine. The balance in his hand signifies that men are compelled scrupulously to weigh out all the necessities of life. The measure of wheat shall cost a penny. (Gr. “a denarius,” i.e. about sevenpence-halfpenny). Three measures of barley shall cost the same. A denarius was a labourer’s daily wage (comp. Matt. xx. 2). It was also a soldier’s pay. Hence these must give their whole earnings to purchase bread. That the oil and the wine remain uninjured only increases the misery of the situation, as the poor derive no benefit from this.—[*Measure*: Gr. “choenix,” which was one day’s allowance of corn or meal.]

7. *And see*: see note on ver. 1.

8. *Pale*: i.e. in appearance like death.—*Hell* [Gr. Hades], i.e. the under-world as the residence of the dead, is here personified,

and follows after death in order to seize upon those who have been slaughtered by him. [Hades of the Greek mythology was properly a person, not a place. The genitive case of the name was properly used for his kingdom. Afterwards the name itself was used as the name of a place. Both usages are found in the New Testament.]

vi. 9—11. *The fifth seal.*

9. The martyrs whose souls John sees are the Christians who had been slain by Nero (see Introd. p. 226). They are *under the altar* because they have been sacrificed, the blood of the beasts for sacrifice being poured out at the foot of the altar. Hence they are already in heaven, not in the under-world; but they have not yet entered upon the full enjoyment of heavenly bliss. See note on xx. 4.

11. "And a white robe was given to each one of them." [So all the best MSS.]. The white robe is an acknowledgment of the right of the martyrs to partake in the Messianic kingdom. Comp. iii. 4 sq., vii. 9, xix. 8.

vi. 12—17. *The sixth seal.*

The description that now follows is formed of extracts from the Old Testament. With the picture here given of the convulsions of the last times, we may compare Matt. xxiv. 29 and the parallel passages.

12—14. Comp. Is. xxxiv. 4.

12. *And the moon, &c.*, should be, "and the moon became all as blood."

14. *A scroll*: i.e. a book in the form of a roll such as the ancients used. See note on v. 1.

16. Comp. Hos. x. 8; Luke xxiii. 30.

vii. 1—8. *The sealing of those who are chosen out of Israel.*

1. The stillness here secured by the angels is fitting for the solemnity of the proceeding which is described in the following verses.

2, 3. It was customary among the ancients to brand slaves with the name of their master. So, here, those who are marked with the seal of God are declared to be God's possession, upon whom, therefore, no power may lay hands. Comp. Exod. xii. 13; Ezek. ix. 4 sqq. In this sealing there is an allusion to baptism,

which the Fathers called the "seal of the Lord;" just as circumcision, the place of which was taken by baptism, is similarly regarded by Paul as a seal (Rom. iv. 11).

4—8. The reckoning adopted here is unusual. Elsewhere we usually find that the tribe of Levi, which had no territorial possessions, is omitted, and the tribe of Joseph is divided into the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Here, however, in addition to Joseph, which includes these two tribes, Manasseh is mentioned separately, and so is counted twice over, the omission of Dan making room for it among the twelve. It is possible that Dan may have originally followed after Naphthali in ver. 6, and that the name may have been mistaken by a copyist for Man. (as an abbreviation of Manasseh). The twelve times twelve thousand (144,000) Israelites make up the full number of the citizens of the Messianic kingdom.—The words *were sealed* should not be repeated after the name of each tribe. In the old MSS. they only occur at the beginning and end, after Judah and Benjamin.

vii. 9—17. *The redeemed from among the Gentiles.*

14. Their claim to participate in the Messianic kingdom rests upon the steadfastness which they have manifested during the great tribulation, and upon the sacrificial death of Jesus, the merit of which they have appropriated.

16. Comp. Is. xlix. 10; Ps. cxxi. 6.

17. Comp. xxi. 4; Is. xxv. 8.

viii. 1. *The seventh seal.*

1. When the seventh seal is opened, which contains that which is most important of all, the final judgment, there is a pause, in order to raise expectation to its highest degree. The contents are not revealed all at once to the eye of the seer, but are divided into seven occurrences, which are introduced by the trumpets of seven angels.

viii. 2—6. *The action in heaven preparatory to the sounding of the seven trumpets.*

2. *Stood* should be "stand."—On the seven angels, see note on i. 4. They stand before God to serve Him. Comp. 1 Kings xvii. 1; Luke i. 19.

3. *That he should offer it with, &c.*: lit. "that he should give

it to the prayers of all saints," &c., i.e. that he should make their prayers of good savour, or, to drop the metaphor, pleasing to God.

4. Read, "And the smoke of the incense went up to (i.e. in assistance of) the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel before God."

5. *Into*: "upon."

viii. 7—13. *The first four trumpets.*

The plagues here described are described mainly after the plagues which Moses brought upon Egypt. Comp. Exod. vii.—x. It should be noticed that whereas the occurrences which take place after the opening of the first six seals affect the whole of mankind, and destroy the fourth part of it (vi. 8), these plagues fall only upon Gentiles and Jews and upon the third part of the earth.

7. After the word *earth* should be added, "and the third part of the earth was burnt up."

8. Comp. Jer. li. 25.

10. Comp. Is. xiv. 12.—*Lamp*: "torch."

11. The fulfilment of the threat uttered by Jeremiah (Jer. ix. 15, xxiii. 15), that God would feed the disobedient people with wormwood.

12. The partial darkening of the sun deprives a third part of the day of its usual light, and the partial darkening of the moon and stars has the same effect upon a third part of the night.

13. *An angel* should be "an eagle." The eagle is chosen as a majestic, swift and unwearied bird. Comp. iv. 7, xii. 14; Is. xl. 31. He flies in "mid-heaven," i.e. where the sun stands at mid-day. His cry announces three separate plagues (woes), of which the first is described in ix. 1—12, the second in ix. 13—21, xi. 13, 14, and the third in ch. xvi. [the actual sounding of the seventh trumpet being mentioned in xi. 15, after which comes a long interlude before the woes which follow in ch. xvi.].

ix. 1—12. *The fifth trumpet. The first woe.*

1. *Fall*: "fallen."—*The bottomless pit*: "the well of the abyss" [so lit.].—The angels who rebelled against God are regarded as stars fallen from heaven. Comp. Luke x. 18, after Is. xiv. 12. Such an angel we must understand here also.—"Abyss," in its more comprehensive sense = the under-world; in its narrower

sense, a definite portion of the under-world, which was the abode of evil spirits and the damned. The meaning is the same in xi. 7, xx. 1, 3; Luke viii. 31.

2. [*The bottomless pit*: the same here as in ver. 1.]—*The smoke of a great furnace*: comp. Gen. xix. 28. For the darkening of the sun and air by smoke containing a swarm of locusts (see ver. 3), compare Joel ii. 10.

3—11. The description of the locusts is partly borrowed from Joel ii. 1—11, but the apocalyptic writer surpasses him by the addition of some further features of terror.

3. *Power, as the scorpions of the earth have power*: i.e. they are to injure men only, and not vegetation.

4. *Those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads*: i.e. all who are not Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles. Comp. vii. 3.

5. Five months is the period of summer and of the locusts.

6. Comp. Job iii. 21.

10, 11. Read, "And they have tails like unto scorpions and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. And they have a king over them, the angel of the abyss," &c.

11. *Abaddon* means "destruction;" *Apollyon* signifies "destroyer." The former word is used in the Old Testament to signify the kingdom of destruction [and is translated "destruction" in A.V.] (Job xxvi. 6, xxviii. 22). Among the Rabbis it was used more specifically to denote the lowest chamber of hell. The personification here is similar to that of death and the under-world (vi. 8, xx. 14). A tendency to this personification may be found as early as the Book of Job (Job xxviii. 22).

12. Read, "The one woe is past, and behold there come two more woes after these things."

ix. 13—21. *The sixth trumpet. The beginning of the second woe.*

14. The river Euphrates was the boundary between the Roman and the Parthian dominions. The innumerable hordes of the Parthian cavalry had often been dangerous to Rome. They appear here as the second woe.

15. *An hour* should be "the hour."

16. *Two hundred thousand thousand*: lit. "twice ten thousand times ten thousand."—John hears the number because it is impossible to count them.

17. *In the vision*: John is still in the spirit (iv. 1).—*Of jacinth* should be “dark red.” [The three epithets of the breastplates are usually understood to refer to the colour of them.]

18. Read, “By these three plagues was the third part of men killed,” &c.

19. Read, “For the power of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails, for their tails are like unto serpents and have heads, and with them they do hurt.”

20. Read, “And the rest of men which were not killed,” &c.—It appears from this verse that the object of the plagues was to bring non-Christian humanity to repentance.—*Works of their hands*: i.e. not their doings, but the things which their hands had made, their idols (comp. Deut. iv. 28; Ps. cxxxv. 15; Acts vii. 41).—*That they should not worship devils*, &c.: John holds the belief, which was common to the later Judaism and the ancient Fathers, that evil spirits seduced the Gentiles to idolatry, and appropriated to themselves the worship and sacrifices which the latter thought to offer to their gods (comp. 1 Cor. x. 20).—For expressions concerning idols similar to those we find here, see Ps. cxv. 4 sq.; Is. xli. 21—24; Baruch vi. 3 sqq.

21. Sorcery was rife at this time both among Gentiles and Jews (comp. Acts xix. 13—19).—That even Jews were not free from theft and adultery is shown by Rom. ii. 21 sq.

#### x. *John's consecration as a prophet.*

1. Ere the last woe comes, there is again a pause which is filled by two symbolic proceedings. In the first place the seer is consecrated, like Ezekiel of old, to the prophetic calling (comp. Ezek. ii. 8—iii. 3).—*Down from heaven*: From this it appears that John is again upon earth, whereas hitherto he has been in heaven (v. 1, 5 sq., vii. 9—17, viii. 1 sq., ix. 13). From this point to the end of the book he retains his position upon the earth (x. 4, 8 sq., xiv. 2, 13, xix. 10 sq., xx. 1, xxi. 2, 10) and sees all from there.

2. *A little book*: This is the remainder of the Book of Fate (v. 1), containing the most important part of all, viz. the final judgment.

3. *Seven thunders* should be “the seven thunders.” The phrase is derived from Ps. xxix. 3—9, where the voice of the Lord is mentioned seven times as like the rolling thunder.

4. The sealing up is secured by not writing these things.

5. Comp. Dan. xii. 7.

6. *That there should be time no longer*: “that there should be no more time” [which very many commentators understand to mean “no further delay”].

7. Read, “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall sound, is fulfilled [lit. was finished] the mystery of God,” &c.—*As he hath declared*, &c.: comp. Amos iii. 7.

8 sqq. The meaning of the symbolic act here described is, that John must receive into the inmost depths of his being the substance of the revelation. It is first a joy to him, but is bitter to him within his soul, and leaves him no peace until he proclaims it to others, as is commanded him in ver. 11.

11. *Before* should be “concerning.”

xi. 1—14. *The fate of Jerusalem. The end of the second woe.*

1. Second symbolic action, after Ezek. xl. 3.—The scene is here in Jerusalem, as is indisputably evident from ver. 1 (*the temple of God*), ver. 2 (*the holy city*), and ver. 8 (*the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our (or, according to the correct reading, “their”) Lord was crucified*).—We should read here, “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod (i.e. a measuring rod), saying, Rise,” &c. Grammatically, the word “saying” in the original text is made by an oversight of the writer to refer to the word “reed.” The speaker is the giver of the reed, understood, and not further defined.—The measuring, as we see from ver. 2, signifies that that which is measured is declared to be inviolable [comp. Mark xiii. 2; Luke xix. 44]. The altar is the altar of incense adjacent to the Temple itself.

2. By the *Gentiles* we can only understand the Romans, who were at this time (A.D. 68) undertaking an expedition against Jerusalem.—*The holy city shall they tread under foot*: comp. Luke xxi. 24.—*Forty and two months*: the period during which, according to Daniel (Dan. vii. 25, viii. 13 sq., ix. 27, xii. 7), the oppression of the Jewish people was to last.

3. *My two witnesses*: i.e. two well-known men resident at the time in Jerusalem. According to ver. 8 [“their Lord”], we must understand them to be disciples of Jesus, perhaps the last of the apostolic circle. The 1260 days are equal to the 42 months.

Hence the witnesses are to prophesy during the whole period of oppression.—*In sackcloth*: i.e. in clothing of coarse material, worn as a sign of grief and repentance (Matt. xi. 21).

4. The two witnesses are described in the words which Zechariah uses of Zerubbabel and the high-priest Joshua (Zech. iv. 3, 11, 14).—[*The God*: the best MSS. read “the Lord.”]

5, 6. In miraculous powers the two witnesses are equal to the two men of God, Moses and Elijah, who performed signs similar to those which are here mentioned (Exod. vii. 19; 1 Kings xvii. 1; 2 Kings i. 10 sqq.).

7. “The beast that ascendeth out of the abyss:” see note on xvii. 8.—The word “abyss” must be understood here as in ix. 1.

8. *Sodom and Egypt*: Jerusalem is so called because of its godlessness, in which it rivalled the inhabitants of Sodom in the days of Lot, and the Egyptians of the time of Moses. Comp. Is. i. 10, iii. 9; Jer. xxiii. 14; Ezek. xvi. 48.—*Our Lord* should be “their Lord.”

9. Read, “And some of the peoples and tribes and tongues and Gentiles,” &c.—To lie unburied was regarded by the Hebrews as a grievous disgrace.

10. It was a custom of the ancients, on the occasion of any joyful occurrence, to send gifts to friends and relatives.—The prophets *tormented them that dwelt on the earth*, both by their preaching of repentance and also by the miracles they performed in punishment of the people.

11. *Entered into them*: Here the writer speaks of the past. Immediately before this he spoke of the future (vv. 7—10). The reason of this change of tense is, that what is not actually to happen until some future time, is seen by the seer in his vision as already completed; and so he often passes from the future to the past, and, conversely, from the past to the future. Compare, further, iv. 2 sq. 9 sq., ix. 1 sq. 6 sq., xiii. 7 sq. 12, xviii. 9 sq. 17, xx. 7 sq. 9 sq., xxi. 9 sq. 14 sq., xxii. 1 sq.—The restoration of the witnesses to life is after Ezek. xxxvii. 10.

12. *In a cloud*: comp. Acts i. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 17. Their enemies see the ascension of the two witnesses, so that they can have no doubt that they have been carried away to God.

13. *Of men seven thousand* (lit. “names of men seven thousand”): This would not be a tenth part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

the population of which at that time amounted to far more than 70,000. Seven thousand is simply a round number, probably suggested to the apocalyptic writer by the history of Elijah (vv. 5 sq.). As at that time Yahveh would only spare 7000 true worshippers (1 Kings xix. 18), so here he slays only 7000 unbelievers.—*Gave glory to the God of heaven*: in their conversion to Him (comp. xiv. 7, xvi. 9, xix. 7). A comparatively light visitation is sufficient to turn the people of Israel to the gospel, whereas the defiance and obstinacy of the Gentiles cannot be overcome even by the severest judgments (see xvi. 9, 11, 21).

14. *The second woe* embraces the visitation by the troops of horsemen (ix. 14—21) and the visitation of Jerusalem (ver. 13). *The third woe* consists of the plagues described in ch. xvi.

xi. 15—19. *The seventh trumpet.*

15. *The kingdoms of this world, &c.*, should be, "The kingdom of this world is become (the kingdom) of our Lord and of His Christ," &c.

[16. *Seats*: see note on ii. 13.]

17. *And art to come* should be omitted.

19. *Ark of his testament* should be "ark of his covenant."—The earthly ark of the covenant, like the pot of manna, was lost when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Chaldeans. According to the rabbinical belief, the ark, like the pot of manna [see note on ii. 17], was to appear again in the Messianic kingdom. Its appearance now denotes, therefore, that this kingdom is in course of being realized.—*And an earthquake* should be omitted.

xii. *The woman with the child, and the dragon.*

1. *Wonder*: "sign."—The woman (as appears from ver. 5) is the mother of the Messiah. Since, however, all those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (ver. 17) are her children, she is not the physical but the spiritual mother, the community of God from which the Messiah proceeded. As this community of God is identical with the true Israel (see note on ii. 9), she appears with a crown adorned with twelve stars, which signify the twelve tribes of Israel (comp. Gen. xxxvii. 9).

2. Comp. Micah iv. 10.

3. *Wonder*: "sign."—*Crowns* should be "diadems."—Accord-

ing to ver. 9, the dragon is the devil. He appears with the insignia of the great power of this world, which is in his service (see xiii. 1).—*Red*: the colour of blood (comp. vi. 4, xvii. 3 sq.).

4. Comp. Dan. viii. 10, which is here carried out into further detail.

5. *Who was to rule, &c.*, should be, “who shall rule (lit. tend as a shepherd) all nations,” &c.—The seer applies to the son of the woman words of the second Psalm (ver. 9), which was interpreted Messianically, and so undoubtedly shows that the child is the Messiah.—*And her child was caught up unto God, &c.*: This evidently refers to the ascension of Jesus.

6. See note on ver. 14, where this verse is repeated.

7. *Michael* (i.e. “Who is like God?”) is one of the chief of the angel princes. See Dan. x. 13, 21, xii. 1; Jude 9.

9. The dragon is called the *old serpent* because, in the primitive age of the world in Paradise, he seduced man under the form of a serpent (Gen. iii. 1 sqq.). The Greek word *diabolos* (from which the word *Devil* is derived) signifies “slanderer.” The Hebrew *Satan* signifies “adversary.” Satan appears as a slanderer in Job i. 6 sqq., ii. 1 sqq.; as an adversary in Zech. iii. 1.

10. Read, “And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come the salvation and the strength and the kingdom to our God [lit. “of our God”], and the power to His Christ” [lit. “of his Christ”].

11. The martyrs have an important share in the victory over Satan.

12. *Woe to the inhabitants, &c.*, should be, “Woe to the earth and to the sea.”—*A short time*: because “the time is at hand” (i. 3), Christ cometh quickly (xxii. 20). [Comp. also x. 6.]

14. See note on viii. 13.—Read, “And to the woman were given the two wings of the great eagle,” &c.—The arid *wilderness*, with its thousand dangers, is a symbol of forsaking and misery (comp. xvii. 3).—The three-and-a-half times are the 1260 days (ver. 6), after Dan. vii. 25. By *a time*, however, we must here understand, not a single year, but a period of ten years. The community of God has passed three-and-a-half decades in the *wilderness* (i.e. in retirement and oppression) since Jesus was carried up to the throne of God.

17 sq. As the dragon cannot slay the mother of the Messiah

any more than he can slay the Messiah himself, he sets forth to fight against her children, the Christian communities scattered throughout the world.

xiii. 1—10. *The first beast.*

1. Read, "And he stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy."—The dragon goes down to the sea to summon one of his allies, who immediately appears. The beast comes up out of the sea, because it was the Hebrew belief that the sea was connected with under-world, the abyss (see xi. 7). The meaning of the figure of the beast must be sought in ch. xvii., where it is described in no ambiguous terms as the figure of the Roman empire.—On the *seven heads* and the *ten horns*, see xvii. 7 sqq.—"Names of blasphemy:" after Dan. vii. 8, xi. 36. The Roman emperors claimed the presumptuous titles of "Augustus," Gr. "Sebastos," i.e. worthy of worship, and "Divus," i.e. divine, and they frequently had divine honours paid to them.

2. In the Book of Daniel (ch. vii.), the four successive great monarchies of the world are represented under the forms of a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a fourth beast with ten horns. As the Roman empire had absorbed all preceding monarchies, its symbol is here compounded of these four forms.—*And the dragon gave him his power, &c.*: The Roman empire appears to the seer as a creation of the devil.—[*Seat*: see note on ii. 13.]

3. The head that is fatally wounded and then healed again is Nero. See note on ver. 18, and *Introd.* pp. 227 sq.

5. *To continue* should be "to act" or "to work."—Forty-two months = three-and-a-half times, i.e. the period borrowed from Daniel (Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7), and so frequently mentioned in the Revelation as the appointed period.

6. The *tabernacle* of God is heaven. *Comp.* xxi. 3.

7. *Saints* = Christians.—[*And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them*: Two of the best MSS. omit this.]—*All kindreds* should be "all tribes and peoples."

8. Read, "And all that dwell upon the earth will worship him, whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain."—*The book*

*of life*: see note on iii. 5. Those whose names are entered in this book have been enrolled in it from the beginning of the world, i.e. they have from the beginning been appointed (predestined) to salvation.

9. The usual formula when the seer desires to call attention to anything of special importance. See note on ii. 7.

10. As the Roman authorities have dealt with the Christians (see ii. 10, 13), so shall it be with themselves.—*Here* (i.e. in the persecution which has been pointed out in ver. 7) what is required of the Christians is *patience* and *faith*. And what the writer of the Revelation means by *patience* and *faith* is faithful and steadfast adherence to Christianity.—[There is some uncertainty about the reading of the Greek here. Alford adopts the reading, “If any one is for captivity, into captivity he goeth; if any one is to be slain with the sword, with the sword he is to be slain.” This would make the meaning of the verse to be, that the sufferings of the Christians are appointed for them, and what they have to do is to be patient and faithful.]

xiii. 11—18. *The second beast.*

11. The second of Satan’s allies resembles in outward appearance a harmless lamb (comp. Matt. vii. 15), but speaks as seductively as the serpent of paradise. In xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10, the false prophet appears in the place of this second beast. We must not, however, suppose that this false prophet, any more than the first beast, represents an individual person. We must regard him (and therefore the second beast also) as an embodiment of the pretended prophets in the pay of the Romans. The Roman emperors delighted in surrounding themselves with soothsayers and astrologers, who flattered their vanity and promised them the fulfilment of their most audacious desires. Even Jews lent themselves to such services; and not long ere this time, Josephus, himself the descendant of a priestly and royal family, had declared the Roman general Vespasian to be the expected Messiah.

12. The activity of the false prophets is devoted to the subjection of humanity to Nero on his return.

13. They rival, in their miracles, Elijah and the most eminent of the disciples of Jesus (comp. xi. 5 sq.).

14. The emperors encouraged the erection of images of them-

selves, which were worshipped with divine honours by their subjects as representing the person of the rulers themselves. Caligula even attempted to set up his statue in the Temple at Jerusalem.—*He had power*: “it was given to him” [so lit. both in this and the next verse].

15. *He had power*: “it was given to him.”—Stories of weeping, laughing and speaking images were very numerous among the ancients. The seer expects such a miracle from the statues of Nero, into which the false prophets will breathe a spirit.—*And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed*: In the persecutions of the Christians, those who acknowledged themselves to be Christians were required by the Roman authorities to worship the image of the emperor, or to offer sacrifice to it. Refusal to do this was punished by death.

16, 17. The antichrist appears in everything as the caricature of the Christ, and a mocking imitator of him in all he does. So here he apes Christ's marking of his adherents (comp. vii. 3 sqq.). Even now no man can buy or sell without being compelled to handle the image of the emperor stamped upon the coins. Much less will it be possible to do so when the antichrist has claimed all the human race as his own.—*To receive* should be “that one should give them.”—*The mark or the name of the beast* should be “the mark, the name of the beast.”

18. The reader is directed to the indication in reference to the beast which follows, and for the understanding of which wisdom is necessary. The number of the beast is the number of a man, i. e. it represents a man (and not any abstraction, as, for example, the Roman empire). For a right understanding of this, it is necessary to bear in mind that, both among the Greeks and the Hebrews, the letters of the alphabet were used to denote numbers. Hence we must take such letters as will, when used as numbers, make up 666 (either in the Greek or the Hebrew alphabet) as the letters of the name in question. The solution of the riddle is “Neron Kesar,” the Hebrew form of the Latin “Nero Caesar” (= emperor Nero). The vowels *e* and *a* are not expressed in the ancient Hebrew writing. The number represented by NeRON KeSaR would be 666, thus:

$$\begin{array}{cccccc} \text{N} & \text{R} & \text{O} & \text{N} & \text{K} & \text{S} & \text{R} \\ 50 & + 200 & + 6 & + 50 & + 100 & + 60 & + 200 = 666. \end{array}$$

xiv. 1—5. *The Lamb, and they that are his.*

The Messiah appears upon Mount Zion with those that are his, viz. the 144,000 Israelites, the sealing of whom is recounted in vii. 3 sqq., while the innumerable multitude of the Gentiles is omitted here altogether. In opposition to the ungodly, who bear the mark of the beast, they are marked with the name of God, which has been imprinted upon them when they were sealed.

1. Read, "And I saw, and behold the Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads."

2. *And I heard the voice of harpers, &c.*: "And the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers playing [lit. harping] upon their harps."

3. Read, "And they sing a new song," &c.—*A new song*: comp. v. 9.—In connection with the thought that only those who had been sealed could learn the song, comp. i. 17.—[*The four beasts*: see note on iv. 6.]

4. Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 1.—*Being the first-fruits*: "to be the first-fruits."

5. Comp. Zeph. iii. 13.—[*No guile*: The best MSS. have "no lie."]—*Before the throne of God* should be omitted.

xiv. 6—13. *The announcement of the judgment.*

6. *In the midst of heaven*: see note on viii. 13.—*Kindred*: "tribe."

8. [Read, "And there followed another angel, a second," &c.] *Babylon*: see note on xvi. 19.—The song of triumph here is from Is. xxi. 9.—*The wine of the wrath* should be "the fiery wine."—*Fornication*: According to the usage of the Old Testament, this means idolatry; see note on ii. 22. On account of its intoxicating and infatuating effect, it is also spoken of here as wine, or fiery wine. Comp. Is. li. 17.

9, 10. Read, "And another angel, a third, followed them," &c.—*Wine* should be "fiery wine."—*Holy* should be omitted.—As their punishment, the worshippers of the beast shall be made to drink a very different fiery wine from that of Babylon, viz. the wine of the wrath of God, which brings not pleasure but pain. Comp. Ps. lxxv. 8. This wine is unmixed, i.e. in its full strength and intoxicating power. The ancients usually drank their wine

mixed with water. The place of torment is the burning lake of sulphur.

11. Comp. Is. xxxiv. 9 sq.

12. Comp. xiii. 10.—*Here are* should be omitted.

13. Read, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Yea, saith the spirit, they shall rest from their labours, but their works do follow them."—*From henceforth*: since it is only now that those who could disturb the blessedness of those who had fallen asleep in the Lord, have been brought to nought. The works *follow* the dead, i.e. they are a possession for eternity.

xiv. 14—20. *The harvest of the judgment.*

14. The appearance of the Messiah is described after Dan. vii. 13. He bears a sickle because he is coming to the harvest.—*The Son of man*: "a son of man."

15. *Is ripe*: "is become dry" [so lit.].—The meaning of the cry of the angel appears from ver. 20. We have already found in the Old Testament the destruction of an army on the field of battle spoken of under the figure of reaping the harvest, or treading out grapes (Is. xvii. 5, lxiii. 1 sqq.; Joel iii. 13).

20. Outside the city, the wine-press was trodden when the harvest was gathered in. The figure and the thing represented by it here coalesce. The mention of the blood and of the horses shows plainly that what is meant is a battle.—The Greek *stadion* measured 202½ yards [fairly rendered by the English *furlong* = 220 yards]. The distance here given would accordingly be about 184 English miles. This, or more exactly 1664 stadia [= 191 miles], was the length of Palestine, according to the ancient reckoning. Consequently the decisive battle is to take place in Palestine and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; for "the city," without further designation, especially when preceded by the mention of Mount Sion (ver. 1), can be no other than Jerusalem.

xv. 1—4. *The seven angels, and the song of praise sung by the victors.*

2. *And over his mark* should be omitted.—*The harps*: "harps."

3, 4. *The song of Moses* is the thanksgiving for deliverance from the hand of the Egyptians (Exod. xv. 1—21). It is not quite so clear what the seer means by the song of the Lamb. Perhaps it may have been some song of thanksgiving to Jesus, known

to the seer's readers, but unknown to us.—*Great and marvellous*, &c.: This adoration is compiled from Ps. cxi. 2, cxix. 75, cxlv. 17; Jer. x. 7; Ps. lxxxvi. 9.—*Saints* should be “the Gentiles” [i.e. “the nations.” Two ancient MSS. read “the ages”].

xv. 5—xvi. 1. *The seven vials of wrath.*

5. *The tabernacle of the testimony*: “the tent of testimony;” i.e. the tabernacle, which was believed to be hidden in heaven [comp. ii. 17].

6. The dress of the angels is that of priests (comp. Exod. xxviii. 39 sqq.; Levit. vi. 10).

[7. *Beasts*: see note on iv. 6.]

8. Comp. Exod. xl. 34; Is. vi. 4.

xvi. 1. *Out of the temple* should be omitted. [The authority of the MSS. is in favour of retaining these words.]

xvi. 2—9. *The first four vials.*

2. The plagues described in this and the following verses (as far as ver. 21) are in imitation of the Egyptian plagues (Exod. vii.—x.).

5. [Read, “And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, thou who art and wast, the Holy One, because thou didst judge thus.”]—*The angel of the waters* is the guardian angel of the waters. The later Jews supposed that there were guardian angels of water, fire (comp. xiv. 18), hail, light, &c.

6. The blood of the saints and prophets was shed in the great Roman persecution of the Christians. This verse alone would make it probable that the seven plagues concern the Gentiles only, and not the Jews; and ver. 9. raises this probability to a certainty.

7. Read, “And I heard the altar say,” &c.

[8. *Unto him*: Most translators render, “unto it,” i.e. the sun.]

9. *Men*: i.e. Gentile humanity, for the Jews have already repented (xi. 13) and given glory to God.

xvi. 10, 11. *The fifth vial.*

10. *The seat* [or “throne;” see note on ii. 13] *of the beast* (i.e. of Nero) is the city of Rome.—*Was*: “became.”

xvi. 12—21. *The sixth vial.*

12. *The kings of the east*: “the kings from the east.”—The

boundary river Euphrates (see note on ix. 14) points to the Parthians, whose princes we must understand by the phrase, "the kings from the east." We find a drying up of water for a similar purpose in Is. xi. 15 sq.

13. The false prophet appeared above under the figure of the second beast (xiii. 11 sqq.).

14, 15. On the spirits of the demons, and what is here said about them, comp. 1 Kings xxii. 21—23.—[*Of the earth and: omitted in the best MSS.*].—*The great day of God Almighty:* The day of the decisive battle, when all hostile powers shall be annihilated (comp. Mal. iv. 5). The mention of the last day reminds John of a saying of Jesus concerning its coming (Luke xii. 39), and gives him occasion to warn his readers.

16. Read, "And they gathered them together into the place called Harmagedon."—Harmagedon means Mountain of Magedon, Magedon being the Greek form of the Hebrew Megiddo. At Megiddo the Midianites were defeated by the Israelites under Barak and Deborah (Judges v. 19). At a later date, the Israelites under king Josiah, who received his death-wound there, were defeated by the Egyptians in the same place (2 Kings xxiii. 29 sq.; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20 sqq.). John's meaning, however, is not that the decisive battle will actually take place at Megiddo. On the contrary, he expects it before Jerusalem (see note on xiv. 20). What he here means is, that the slaughter of the enemy will be as terrible as that of the Israelites was on that memorable battle-field. Zechariah shows us what an impression that slaughter had made, when he compares the lamentations at the last judgment to the lamentations in the valley of Megiddo (Zech. xii. 11). In connection with this passage we may also compare the allegorical application of the names Bileam and Jezebel, which we have already had (ii. 14, 20).

17. *Of heaven* should be omitted.—*It is done:* i.e. all that had to be done immediately before the last judgment.

19. *The great city:* i.e. Rome, which immediately afterwards is called Babylon, inasmuch as it has rivalled the ancient Babylon in idolatry and hostility to the people of God.—*The wine of the fierceness of his wrath* should be "the fiery wine of his wrath." Comp. Is. li. 22.

21. The Gentiles persist to the last in their refusal to repent,

whereas the Jews were converted immediately after the earthquake that was sent as a visitation upon them (xi. 13)

xvii. *The woman upon the beast with seven heads.*

1. *Upon many waters*: comp. Jer. li. 13.

2. Comp. xiv. 8.

3, 4. *In the spirit*: comp. i. 10, iv. 2, xxi. 10.—*The wilderness* should be “a wilderness.”—*Scarlet* is the colour of blood.—*Purple*, the colour worn by princes and persons of high rank, indicates despotism.—*A golden cup*: comp. Jer. li. 7.—*Her fornication* should be “the fornication of the earth.” [The MS. authority is in favour of the reading of A.V., and Tischendorf, who adopted the reading here given, afterwards relinquished it again.]

5. Read, “And upon her forehead was a name written, a mystery, BABYLON,” &c.—Roman ladies of high rank frequently had their names worked in gold upon a frontlet, a custom which they adopted in imitation of courtezans.—*A mystery*: i.e. unintelligible to any except those to whom the meaning of the name of Babylon is disclosed by a revelation from on high.

6. The *saints* and the *martyrs* (i.e. “witnesses”) of *Jesus* are the Christians who were murdered in Rome in the year 64.—[*Wondered . . . admiration*: similar words in the Greek.]

[7. *Marvel*: same word as *wondered* in ver. 6.]

8. *The beast that thou sawest was and is not, &c.*: A description that exactly fits Nero, who was emperor, and then disappeared, leaving no trace behind, but will return from the kingdom of the dead in order that he may thereupon be delivered up to perdition by Christ. It must of course be admitted that in an earlier passage *the beast* denoted the Roman imperial power; and again, below (in ver. 10), Nero is represented by the fifth horn of the beast. Since, however, the godlessness and hatred of the Christians which was shown by the Roman empire culminates in Nero, and is incorporated, as it were, in him, he as an individual person might also be represented by the whole beast.—*And yet is* should be “and shall be present.”

9. Read, “And here is the intellect which has wisdom,” &c.: i.e. intelligence is necessary for the proper understanding of the explanation which follows.

10. Read, “And they are seven kings,” &c.—The seven heads

have, according to the seer, a double meaning. They signify, first, the seven hills on which stands the city of Rome (hence called by the later Romans "septicollis," or "the seven-hilled"); and, secondly, the seven kings (or, as we call them, "emperors") who rule over Rome until the time of the great judgment. John's expectation of *seven* is connected with the importance which he attached to the sacred number seven.—*Five are fallen*: viz. Augustus (B.C. 34—A.D. 14), Tiberius (A.D. 14—37), Caligula (A.D. 37—41), Claudius (A.D. 41—54), Nero (A.D. 54—68). *One is*: i.e. Galba (ob. Jan. 15th, 69). *The other* must come, in order to complete the sacred number, but can only remain a *short space*, since the final judgment is already near, and before that comes Nero is to ascend the throne again.

11. Nero is one of the seven (ver. 10), but he may also be regarded as the eighth, inasmuch as he once more succeeds to dominion after the seventh. [*Even he*: lit. "he himself also."]

12. The ten horns (after Dan. vii. 24) are ten kings, viz. the kings from the east (xvi. 12).—*One hour*: i.e. a short time. Comp. Gal. ii. 5.

13. The Parthian princes will ally themselves with Nero.

14. *Lord of lords*, &c.: comp. xix. 16. The Messiah is the true *King of kings*, in opposition to the Parthian princes who used to appropriate to themselves this proud title.—[*And they that are with him*, &c.: lit. "And they that are with him called chosen and faithful," i.e. They that are with him called, chosen and faithful, will overcome with the Lamb.]

15. Comp. Is. viii. 7 sq.

16. Read, "And the ten horns which thou hast seen and the beast," &c.—Nero and the Parthian princes allied with him will destroy Rome. Metaphor and the actual matter here, as elsewhere, are mixed up together (comp. xiv. 20, xix. 17 sq.). The stripping naked and devouring refer to the woman; the making desolate and burning, to the city.

17. *And give their kingdom unto the beast*: as Nero expected, in pursuance of a prophecy. See Introd. p. 228.

18. At the time of the composition of the Apocalypse, the great city of Rome alone had dominion over the kings of the earth, so that this description and the mark given in ver. 9 made it perfectly recognizable by every reader of the Revelation.

xviii. *Song of rejoicing over the fall of the imperial city.*

2. The fall of the imperial city is so unalterably determined by God, that the angel can begin a song of triumph at the outset. It echoes Is. xiii. 19 sqq., comp. also Is. xxxiv. 11 sqq.—“A habitation of devils,” &c.: Desert and waste places were regarded by the Hebrews as the favourite dwelling-places of evil spirits (comp. Is. xiii. 21, xxxiv. 14; Tobit viii. 3; Baruch iv. 35). Birds that inhabited such regions were unclean according to the Mosaic law (see Levit. xi. 13 sqq.).

4. Comp. Jer. li. 6, 45; Is. xlvi. 20, lii. 11.—From this passage we may infer that at the time of the composition of the Revelation there was still (or perhaps we should rather say, there was again) a Christian community in Rome, notwithstanding the bloody persecution of the year 64.

5. Comp. Jer. li. 9.—*Have reached* should be “reached” [lit. “clave”].

6. Comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 8.

7. Comp. Is. xlvii. 7—9.

8. *Who judgeth her* should be “who hath judged her.”

9 sqq. For the lamentation which here follows, comp. Ezek. xxvi. 16—18, xxvii. 5—7, 28—36.

10. *That great city*, &c.: “The great city Babylon, the strong city!” &c.

12. *Thyine wood*: some kind of wood having a sweet scent, probably white cedar.

13. Read, “And cinnamon and amomum and incense and ointments . . . and horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.”—“Amomum:” a costly pomade, prepared from an Asiatic plant.—“Bodies:” In the ancient world, slaves were not regarded as persons, but as chattels; the objection here expressed to a trade in souls could only arise on Christian ground.

14. *Dainty*: properly, “complete, faultless” [lit. fat].

17. *And every shipmaster*, &c., should be, “And all pilots, and all travelling merchants, and all sailors, and all that trade by sea, stood afar off.”—*Stood afar off*, while in ver. 15 we have *shall stand afar off*: On this change of tense, see note on xi. 11.

18. *What city*, &c., should be, “Who was like unto the great city?”

19. Comp. Ezek. xxvii. 30.

20. Read, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints and apostles and prophets, for God hath judged your judgment upon her."—Comp. Is. xlv. 23.—"Your judgment:" i.e. the sentence which she passed upon you, and which has been executed upon you. From this verse it is probable that several apostles had been put to death by the Gentile imperial power.

21. The symbolic act here described is in imitation of Is. li. 63 sq.

22 sq. Comp. Jer. xvi. 9, xxv. 10; Ezek. xxvi. 13; Is. xxiv. 8.

23. [*Candle* should be "lamp."]—*Thy merchants were the great men of the earth*: comp. Is. xxiii. 8.—*Deceived* = "led astray."

24. *Of prophets and of saints*: as in xvi. 6, xvii. 6.

xix. 1—8. *The song of triumph of the community in heaven.*

1. [Read, "After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; salvation and glory and power belong to our God."]—"Hallelujah:" i.e. praise ye Yahveh (Jehovah), a common form of praise, especially in the Psalms (Ps. cvi. 48, cxii. 1, cxiii. 1, &c.). [In A.V. it is translated by the words, Praise ye the LORD.]

2. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 43.

3. [*Allcluvia*: only the Greek form of Hallelujah, as in ver. 1, and so elsewhere where it occurs.]—*Rose up*: "riseth up" [so lit.].—With this verse comp. xiv. 11; Is. xxxiv. 10.

5. Comp. Ps. cxxxiv. 1, cxv. 13.—[*Came out of the throne*: Some ancient MSS. read, "came forth from the throne."]

6. Comp. Ezek. i. 24.—*Reigneth*: "hath taken possession of the kingdom."

7. Comp. Ps. cxviii. 24.—In the Gospels also the union between the Messiah and the community of the believers is set forth under the figure of a marriage (Matt. xxii. 2 sqq., xxv. 1 sqq.).

8. Read, "And it was given to her to array herself in fine linen bright and clean. For the righteous acts of the saints are the fine linen."—The righteous acts of the saints appear here as the adornment of the community. This is similar to the Catholic doctrine that good works form a treasure of the church.

9, 10. A parenthetical address of the angel to the seer. John stands upon an equality with the angel inasmuch as he also has the testimony of Jesus (see note on i. 9). This testimony cou-

sists in the spirit of prophecy which he possesses as a prophet (x. 11, xxii. 9), and by virtue of which he feels himself commissioned to compose his Revelation.

xix. 11—16. *The appearance of the Messiah.*

11. Comp. vi. 2.—[*Was called*: better, “is called.”]

12. Comp. i. 14 sq., ii. 17.—[Read, “His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he hath a name written that no man knoweth but he himself.”—One ancient MS. reads, “names written;” and one reads, “and he hath names written, and a name written that no man knoweth but he himself.”]

13. Comp. Is. lxiii. 1 sq.—[*Was clothed*: better, “is clothed.”]—*Dipped in*: “sprinkled with” [so one old MS.].—*The Word of God*: Christ is so called because God has spoken to the world through him.

[14. *Were*: better, “are.”]

15. Comp. xiv. 19; Ps. ii. 9; Is. lxiii. 3. [*He shall rule them*: see note on ii. 27. In the Greek there is special emphasis on the pronoun *he*.]—*And he treadeth, &c.*, should be, “And he treadeth the wine-press of the fiery wine of the wrath of Almighty God.” [*He* is emphatic here also.]

16. The name (comp. xvii. 14) is written upon the part of the vesture which covers the thigh.

xix. 17—xx. 3. *The victory over Satan and the powers which are in his service.*

17, 18. Comp. Ezek. xxxix. 17—20.—*In the midst of heaven*: see note on viii. 13.—[*The supper of the great God*: The best MSS. read, “the great supper of God.”]—*And the flesh of all men, &c.*, should be, “and the flesh of all men, both free and bond and small and great.”

19. On the place of gathering together, see xvi. 16.

20. Nero and the lying prophets, who were in his pay, receive their reward.—*Into a lake of fire* should be “into the lake of fire.” John speaks of it as *the lake*, though he has not mentioned it before, inasmuch as the idea of this lake was familiar to him and his readers (comp. xiv. 10; Is. xxx. 33, xxxiv. 9 sq.; Dan. vii. 11).

xx. 1. Comp. ix. 1.

2. Comp. xii. 9.

xx. 4—6. *The first resurrection and the kingdom of a thousand years [Millennium].*

4. Comp. Dan. vii. 9, 22, 27.—“And they seated themselves upon them:” i.e. Christ and his hosts (xix. 14).—A belief in the martyrs taking precedence of other Christians, such as John here professes, was very common in the primitive Christian age. Especially it was supposed that they did not, like the rest of the dead, descend first into the under-world, but that after death they passed directly to heaven. The reign of Christ and those who are his begins immediately after the decisive battle, i.e. on the great day of God (xvi. 14); but, according to Ps. xc. 4, one day of God is equivalent to a thousand years of man, and John therefore fixes the duration of this reign at a thousand years. Whether he intends this to be taken literally or not, must remain undecided.—*Lived* should be “came to life.”

5. *Lived not again*: “came not to life again.”—The idea of a two-fold resurrection originates in the later Judaism.

6. *The second death*: see ver. 14, and comp. also ii. 11, xxi. 8.—*Priests of God, &c.*: comp. i. 6, v. 10; Is. lxi. 6.

xx. 7—10. *The final contests.*

8. [*Quarters*: strictly, “corners.”]—Ezekiel had prophesied that, in the last days, Gog, the prince of the land Magog, would make war against the Israelites, and in so doing would meet with his own ruin (Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix.). In the later Jewish theology, the two names Gog and Magog were used for the Scythian tribes which dwelt in the far north, on the very edge, as it was supposed, of the earth. [Comp. “the four corners” with the going up *on the breadth of the earth* in the next verse.]

9. *The beloved city* is Jerusalem, where the saints, mentioned in ver. 4, reign. God shows how dear it is to Him by His direct intervention:

10. *And shall be*: “and they shall be.”

xx. 11—15. *The judgment of the world.*

11. Comp. Dan. vii. 9.—John only ventures by a circumlocution to mention the Highest, whose gaze heaven and earth cannot bear.

12. Comp. Dan. vii. 10.—In these books the works of men

are written, whereas in the Book of Life are the names of those who from the beginning have been destined to salvation.

13. *Hell* [Gr. Hades]: the under-world, as in i. 18, vi. 8.

14. *Death and hell* [Hades] are personified, as in vi. 8.—Dying is excluded from the new order of the world, so that no place of residence for the dead is any longer required. Paul also speaks of death as the last enemy that is to be overcome (1 Cor. xv. 26).

15. The relation of the books (ver. 12) to the Book of Life is not quite clear. In ver. 12, the dead are judged according to their works (which are written in the books). Here, however, all whose names are not found in the Book of Life, i. e. who have not been predestined by God to salvation, are doomed to perdition.

xxi. 1—xxii. 5. *The new order of the world. The eternal kingdom of God and of Christ in the new Jerusalem.*

1. A renovation of the world had been foretold by the ancient prophets (Is. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; comp. 2 Pet. iii. 13).

2. *John* should be omitted.—The earthly Jerusalem was regarded as simply a copy of the higher, heavenly Jerusalem (comp. Gal. iv. 26; Heb. xii. 22). The latter, not having appeared upon earth before, is called the *new Jerusalem* (comp. iii. 12).

3. Comp. Ezek. xxxvii. 27; 2 Cor. vi. 16. The expression *tabernacle* was suggested by the tabernacle of the covenant (comp. xiii. 6).—*Out of heaven*: “out of the throne” [so two of the best MSS.].—*And be their God*: better, “as their God” [some ancient MSS. omit these words entirely].

4. Comp. Is. xxv. 8.

5. Comp. Is. xliii. 19; 2 Cor. v. 17.

6. Comp. Is. lv. 1.

7. *All things* should be “these things.”

8. *The fearful*: These appear as the opposite to those that “overcome” (ver. 7). They are such as did not dare to undertake the fight against the powers that are hostile to God.—*The abominable*: those who have defiled themselves with the abominations of idolatry.

10. Comp. Ezek. xl. 2.

11. *The glory of God*: the brilliant light which surrounded

God, and which in the new Jerusalem make sun and moon superfluous (ver. 23).—[*Her light*: i.e. that which gives light to the city, not light proceeding from it.]

12. The seer attaches somewhat the same importance to the number twelve (the number of the tribes of Israel) as he does to the number seven.—The angels are the guardian angels of the gates (comp. i. 20, xiv. 18, xvi. 5). [Lachmann, following one of the best MSS., omits the words *and at the gates twelve angels*.]

13. Comp. Ezek. xlvi. 31—34.

14. *Foundations*: i.e. foundation-stones.—*The names* should be “twelve names.”—On the distinction here assigned to the apostles, comp. Matt. xix. 28. It refers only to the immediate disciples of Jesus. Paul is not acknowledged in the Book of Revelation as an apostle.

15. Read, “And he that talked with me had a measure, a golden reed to measure the city, &c.”—Comp. Ezek. xl. 3.

16. Comp. Ezek. xlvi. 16.—*Twelve thousand furlongs*: 12,000 stadia (see note on xiv. 20) = 1379 English miles. There is, however, no means of determining whether this is the total circumference or the length of one side of the city. In the latter case the circumference would be 48,000 stadia = 5516 miles. The city, being of the same extent in all three directions, appears as a monstrous cube.

17. The number 12 underlies the measurement of the wall also ( $144 = 12 \times 12$ ). The wall is disproportionately low, as it is no longer required as a protection against hostile attacks.—On the measuring angel, comp. Zech. ii. 1, 2.—Read, “According to the measure of a man, which is that of the angel,” i.e. the inhabitants of heaven use the same scale of measures as men.

19, 20. Comp. Is. liv. 11 sq.—The precious stones are the same that the Jewish high-priest wore upon his breast-plate (Exod. xxviii. 17—20).

21. Comp. Is. liv. 12.

23. Comp. Is. lx. 19 sq.—*Had no need* should be “hath no need.”—*Light*: “lamp.”

24. Read, “And the Gentiles shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it.”—With this and the following verse, comp. Is. lx. 3—7.

27. Read, “And there shall in nowise enter into it anything

common [i.e. unclean], nor that doeth abomination and a lie." [The words here rendered "doeth abomination and a lie," may perhaps be better rendered "maketh an abomination and a lie," i.e. an idol.]—Comp. Is. lii. 1.

xxii. 1, 2. The new Jerusalem contains a stream and the tree of life, which were the distinguishing characteristics of Paradise (Gen. ii. 8 sqq. Comp. Exek. xlvii. 1, 7, 12).—*The tree of life*: "a tree of life."—*Twelve manner of fruits* should be "twelve crops of fruit" [lit. "twelve fruits."—"For the healing of the Gentiles:" Hence it appears that even in the new order of things the Gentiles are not yet completely healed.

3. Comp. Zech. xiv. 11.—[*And there shall be no more curse*: "there shall be no accursed thing any more." De Wette.—*But* should be "and."]

5. Comp. Dan. vii. 27.—Read, "And there shall be no night any more, and they have no need of the light of a lamp, nor of the light of the sun, for the Lord God shineth upon them, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

#### xxii. 6—21. EPILOGUE.

6. *And he said unto me*: i.e. the angel, speaking in the name of Jesus, said.—*And the Lord God, &c.*, should be, "and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel," &c.

8, 9. Comp. xix. 10.

10. The prophecy must be made as widely known as possible, since the time of its fulfilment is near. The reverse of this is found in Dan. xii. 4.

11. Read, "He that is unrighteous, let him continue to do unrighteousness; and he that is filthy, let him continue to do filthily; and he that is righteous, let him continue to do righteousness; and he that is holy, let him continue to be holy."—Every one may as well continue to live as he has hitherto done. The time is so short, that any change he may make in his conduct will be of no account. Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 29 sqq.; Dan. xii. 10.

12. [*And*: the best MSS. omit.]—*Shall be* should be "is."

14. Read, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have," &c.: see notes on iii. 4, and comp. also vii. 14.—*That they may have right to the tree of life*: i.e. that they may receive authority to enjoy its fruits.

15. Read, "Out with the dogs," &c.—Dogs were regarded by the Hebrews as unclean beasts (Is. lxvi. 3). Here the word is used as a general term for moral uncleanness (comp. Matt. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2).

16. Comp. ii. 28; Is. xi. 1.—*To testify*, &c., should be "to testify these things to you, the churches." [This was Tischendorf's reading, but he afterwards relinquished it for the reading, "to testify these things to you concerning the churches."]

17. *The bride*: i.e. the believing community, which forms the population of the new Jerusalem (comp. xix. 7 sqq., xxi. 2, 9 sqq., and 2 Cor. xi. 2).—[*And let him that is athirst*, &c.: better, "And he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (i.e. without payment. Comp. Is. lv. 1.)]

18, 19. Read, "I testify unto every man," &c.: viz. that it will happen to him as is said immediately after. The threat which follows is directed especially against copyists, who often dealt very arbitrarily with the books that they were occupied in copying, falsifying them by omissions or additions (comp. Deut. iv. 2).—*For* should be omitted.—[*Out of the book of life*: The best MSS. read, "from the tree of life."—*And from the things* should be omitted [so that the words *which are written in this book* refer to the tree of life and the holy city].

20. Read, "He that testifieth these things saith, Yea, I come quickly. Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

21. Apostolic farewell, as in Paul's Epistles (Rom. xvi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 23; Gal. vi. 18).—*Amen* should be omitted. [The best MSS. vary between "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints," and "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all."]



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