

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, from the birth of Christ to the 18th Century: including the very interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses

By William Jones (1762-1843)

First Edition 1812
Fourth Edition 1819
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Catholic authorities burning a separatist Christian in the fifteenth century

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THE LIFE OF WILLIAM JONES (1762-1846)

Rev. William Jones was born in the county of Denbigh, in Wales, June 17, 1762. When young he removed to Poulton, in Cheshire, where he received a classical education. In October, 1786, he was baptized by the Rev. Archibald McLean, of Edinburgh, then on a visit to Chester, in the river Dee.

In 1793 he established himself in Liverpool as a wholesale bookseller and publisher. In that city he began to hold meetings in his own spacious drawing-room, at first for his own family, for prayer, praise, reading the Scriptures, exhortation, and

exposition. These assemblies were speedily frequented by neighbors and others, and soon they were transferred to a chapel, when a church was formed, and Mr. D.S. Wylie and Mr. Jones were appointed pastors.

Mr. Jones left Liverpool for London, and in 1812, soon after he went to the metropolis, he began his "History of the Waldenses and Albigenses."

In 1815 he started the *New Evangelical Magazine*, in London; this periodical, subsequently called the *New Baptist Magazine*, was conducted by Mr. Jones with great success for eleven years.

He spent three years in preparing a "Dictionary of the Sacred Writings," the first edition of which, consisting of 2000 copies, was quickly sold.

His Church History, of which his "History of the Waldenses and Albigenses" is not quite a half, is a work highly creditable to the research and candor of its author and worthy of a conspicuous place in every Baptist library.

Mr. Jones was the author of biographies of Rowland Hill, Edward Irving, Adam Clark, and of several other works.

He was a writer of great industry and conscientiousness; and in the latter part of his life his works were very popular among Baptists.

In 1843, when his means were very limited, the queen offered him a place in the Charterhouse, where all his wants would be cared for during the rest of his life; but, as the acceptance of it required him to become an Episcopalian, he declined the royal offer. The queen on learning the fact ordered £60 to be paid Mr. Jones in three annual installments. He died in January, 1846.

In his classic *The History of Romanism* (1853), John Dowling gave the following testimony to Jones' church history: "This valuable work is very full on the subject of the Waldenses. It was originally written as a 'History of the Waldenses,' and afterward enlarged, and republished under the title of a 'History of the Church'" (Dowling, p. 585, f. 2).

IS WILLIAM JONES' HISTORY OF THE WALDENSES ACCURATE?

The following extract from *The Western Baptist Review* (Vol. IV. No. 5, Frankfort, Ky., January, 1849) examines the charge which has been made by pedobaptists that William Jones' history is inaccurate in its portrayal of the Waldenses --

Jean Paul Perrin was a Pedeo-baptist--a French Presbyterian--who flourished about the beginning of the seventeenth century. He was anxious to make it appear that the Waldenses were Pedeo-baptists and Presbyterians. He admits that they were charged with being opposed to infant baptism; that this accusation was brought against them at the very beginning of their career, and was reiterated all the time of their persecutions. He denies its truth, and pronounces the charge a calumny. He remarks:

"The fourth calumny was concerning baptism, which it is said they denied to infants. From this imputation they quit themselves as follows: 'Neither is the time or place appointed for those who must be baptized; but charity, and the edification of the Church and Congregation, ought to be the rule in this matter;-- yet, notwithstanding, we bring our children to be baptized; which they ought to do to whom they are nearest related; as are their parents, or those whom God hath inspired with such a charity'" [Ut Supra].

If the charge that the Waldenses denied infant baptism be a "calumny," it was one of the full six hundred years standing when Perrin wrote his history; and during that time was repeated and published in every generation, as we shall show hereafter. Why then did not our author show from some accredited document that it was untrue? He quotes here from a work called the "Spiritual Almanac," of very questionable authority, to say the best of it--of which no one knows either the date or author! There are abundance of their writings put forth when they were persecuted in consequence of this charge--writings of undoubted antiquity and genuineness--which do not deny this charge, as will be fully shown in due time. These are the documents that should be appealed to. If the charge was false and injurious, in these documents it would have been so declared. But they contain no denial and make no complaint of misrepresentation on this point. Besides, this "Spiritual Almanac" is no ecclesiastical document. It bears the name of no author, and is without date. Who the writer or writers were, and by what right he or they spoke in the name of the Waldenses, Perrin has not told us, nor does any one know. The denial, therefore, was wholly unauthorized so far as any evidence in the case appears. And our historian felt that his proof was insufficient, and hence sets up another distinct defense in the very next paragraph. He there says:

"True it is, that being for some hundreds of years constrained to suffer their children to be baptized by the Romish priests, they deferred the doing of it as long as possible, because they detested the human inventions annexed to the institution of that holy sacrament, which they looked upon as pollutions of it. Their pastors, whom they called Barbs, being often in travels abroad for the service of their churches, they could not have baptism administered to their children by their own ministry. They therefore sometimes kept them long without baptism, upon which delay the priests charged them with that

reproach. To which not only their adversaries have given credit, but many of those also who have approved of their lives and faith in all other points" [Perrin, p. 3].

These are Baptist facts and Pedo-baptist reasons. The facts are, that for "some hundreds of years," the children of the Waldenses were not baptized, either by the Romish priests or their own Barbs or pastors: and by consequence, as their infants were not baptized, the Papists and many Pedo-baptist Protestants, ("who have approved of their lives and faith in all other respects,") have supposed them to be Baptists. Those, we say, are the facts as stated by our author. They were too stubborn to be removed by the "Spiritual Almanac." Whatever they might be in theory, it was too palpable to deny that for "some hundreds of years" they were Baptists in practice--their infants were not baptized either by priests or barbs. Our author, we repeat, felt that here was a knot that an Almanac without a known author or date could not enable him to untie. Hence he was constrained to cut it by offering the singular and startling reason, that they would not let the priests baptize them, and that their own ministers being from home "some hundreds of years," could not of course baptize them!! If it is sinful to doubt the reason here assigned, the Lord help our unbelief! Besides, how did Perrin know that this was their reason for neglecting infant baptism? He refers to no authority. He quotes no book or record of any kind. By what light he was guided to this conclusion, he gives no intimation. He was evidently in great difficulty. He felt that the quotation of so doubtful a document as the "Spiritual Almanac" did not move, nor meet even, the fact well known to Papists and Protestants, that for "some hundreds of years," the Waldenses did not practice infant baptism. This was too notorious to be denied. Hence his desperate effort to explain it away. Hence the monstrous supposition that during 'some hundreds of years' they were without ministers to attend to the administration of the ordinances! Now this may be proof "perfectly plain" to Dr. Miller's eyes, that the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists; but if so, we insist that it is equally plain, that he has more respect for Perrin's logic than for Perrin's facts.

We do not mean to impeach Perrin or to endeavor to discredit his history. When he wrote, the Baptists were under the ban of every state in Christendom, and abhorred and anathematized by the Papal and Protestant churches. Then it was esteemed to be doing God service to put them to death. Perrin was, therefore, anxious to remove this reproach from the Waldenses. He felt, no doubt, that it would be a benefit conferred upon the cause of religion in general if this injurious impression could be effaced. And then who would attempt to vindicate the cause of a people every where pursued and persecuted? Who would stand up on the side of the Baptists, oppressed and trodden upon by the iron heel of church and state? And perhaps too, like the great mass of his contemporaries, he could not see how pure Christianity and the baptism of only believers, could be associated. He might have supposed that it would shock the common sense of the men of his generation, to affirm, in one breath, that

the Waldenses were holy and orthodox; and then to announce in the very next, that they were Baptists. In fine, it must have been in some such way--either misled by a mistaken benevolence or blinded by prejudice--that he failed to draw correct conclusions from premises which he admitted and from facts which he could not deny.

Some discrepancies between Jones and Perrin, in their histories of the Waldenses, have been pointed out by the Pedo-baptists, and the former has been severely denounced, criticized and censured in consequence. Dr. Miller, in a note to his "Recommendatory Letter" of Perrin, says: "William Jones, an eminent Baptist, in his 'History of the Waldenses,' has so mutilated and perverted the plainest documents of those pious witnesses of the truth, in order to make them speak the language of anti-pedobaptists, as to place his character as an honest historian in a most undesirable position" [Perrin, p. 36]. It is a matter seriously to be regretted that the venerable doctor did not esteem it worth while to mention a few examples of the mutilations and perversions, or at least the "documents" alluded to.

His charge is most emphatically denied. We challenge the production of a solitary instance to justify this unmeasured condemnation. The only instance of perversion and mutilation that the most diligent have been able to allege, was of Perrin, but not of any Waldensian document. Revelation N.L. Rice, in his Debate with Revelation A. Campbell in Lexington, charged Jones with a most "glaring falsification of history?;" and we step aside to notice and refute this charge because it has been often used to the prejudice of truth, and because it is the only one which has ever been adduced calculated in the least to sustain the remarks of Dr. Miller just quoted. The case is this. Perrin says:

"King Louis XII of France, having received information from the enemies of the Waldenses dwelling in Provence, of several heinous crimes which they fathered upon them, sent to the place Adam Fumee, master of requests, and a Sarbonist doctor, called Parui, who was his confessor, to make inquiry into the matter. They visited all their parishes and temples, and neither found there any images, or sign of the ornaments belonging to the mass, or ceremonies of the Romish church; much less could they discover any of those crimes which they were charged. But rather that they kept the Sabbath duly, caused their children to be baptized according to the primitive church, taught them the articles of the Christian faith, and The commandments of God. The king having heard the report of said commissioners, said, with an oath, that they were better men then himself or his people" [Jones, p. 348].

Jones narrates the same circumstance, substantially as Perrin, except in reference to infant baptism, He represents the report of the messengers as of the following effect:

"They kept the Sabbath-day, observed the ordinance of baptism, according to the primitive church, instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandments of God" [Debate, p. 405].

Upon this discrepancy, Mr. Rice, in his Lexington Debate, says: "Here Mr. Jones, when he came to infant baptism, wholly omitted it; and instead of saying, as did the author he quoted--'causing their children to be baptized,'--he says, 'observe the ordinance of baptism according to the primitive church'!! Thus the Waldenses were proved to be anti-Pedo-baptists, by concealing their testimony. A more glaring falsification of history I never saw!" [As quoted in Pope and McGuire's Debate, p. 209.]

Mr. Rice was not remarkable for scrupulous accuracy in his statement of facts in this Debate. Nor are his feelings, at any time, characterized by leniency towards persons whose religious sentiments come in contact with his own. But we must pardon the grossness of the assault upon Mr. Jones, by remembering that it was made in the hurry and excitement of an oral discussion. Mr. Jones does not quote Perrin, as charged by Mr. Rice. The authority referred to by Perrin for the anecdote is, "'Vesembecius' Oration respecting the Waldenses." Jones refers to the same authority, 'Vesembecius' Oration on the Waldenses, in Perrin, ch. 5." He does not say, "as quoted by Perrin." He evidently looks beyond Perrin, and draws his authority from the same source. To impeach Jones, therefore, and to discredit him as a historian, appeal must be made to the original authority--the authority upon which he and Perrin both rely--to the Oration of Vesembecius. This Mr. Rice did not do. He has consequently made his charge at random, and affirmed concerning that of which he knew nothing. Had he gone to the proper source for information, he would have found that Jones was right and Perrin wrong. The language of Vesembecius is:

"Illi ad regem referunt, illis in locis homines baptizari, articulos fidei et decalogum doceri, dominicos dies religiose coli, Dei verbum exponi, veneficia et stupra apud eos nulla esse. Ceterum se in ipsorum templis neque imagines, neque ornamento missae ulla reperisse. His auditis, rex, jurejurando addito; me, inquit, et cetero populo meo Catholico meliores illi viri sunt." That is:--"They report to the king, that the men were baptized, the articles of faith and the ten commandments were taught, the Lord's day observed, the word of God preached, and no show of wickedness of fornication to be perceived amongst them; but that they found not any images in their churches, nor ornaments belonging to the mass. The king hearing this, said, and he bound it with an oath, They are better men than myself and the rest of my Catholic people" [Perrin, pp. 83,84].

The charge against Jones falls to the earth! He has perverted no documents nor falsified any history. The report to the king was, that "homines," men, adults, and not infants, were baptized. Jones' account of the matter is amply sustained by the original authority. The blows at his reputation recoil. We trust that Mr. Rice and Dr.

Miller will reconsider their statements, and retract their charges against Mr. Jones; as it is thus proved that he was right and Perrin wrong.

The history of Perrin was originally written in the French language, and strong suspicions have been expressed respecting the fidelity of the English translation. We are not of those who entertain such suspicions. As we have already remarked, **Perrin no doubt thought it would subserve the interests of religion to remove from the Waldenses the reproach of their being Baptists; and in his zeal to accomplish this, he was betrayed into inaccuracy of reasoning as well as of statement,** as we have already proved beyond all question. And here is another instance of the same sort; and we refer to it because it has often been quoted to prove that the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists. Perrin says:

"The president with his assessor took their journey to Perouse, and caused public proclamation to be made in the name of the king, that every one of the inhabitants should go to mass upon pain of death. Afterwards they came to Pignerol, where they summoned several to appear before them. Among others, there appeared a poor simple laboring man, whom the president ordered to have baptism again administered to his child, who had been lately baptized by the Waldensian minister, near Angrogne. The poor man desired so much respite as to offer up his prayers to God, before he answered him. Which, with some laughter, being granted, he fell down upon his knees before all the standers by, and having concluded his prayer, he said to the president, that he would cause his child to be re-baptized, provided he would oblige himself by a bond, signed with his own hand, to discharge and clean him of the sin that he should commit in so doing, and suffer himself the punishment and condemnation, which God would one day inflict upon him for it, taking this iniquity upon him and his. Which the president understanding, commanded him to depart out of his presence, without pressing him any further" [Letter of Ecclampadius, Jones, p. 445].

Our author does not tell us to whom he is indebted for this anecdote. It strikes us as extremely improbable. The Papists are not wont to administer baptism anew, no matter how heretical the minister by whose hands it is given. They not only recognize the baptism of heretics, but have authorized, in cases of necessity, the rite to be administered by a midwife, a degraded priest, a Jew or Turk. They have ever esteemed anabaptism a damnable heresy. Could this 'president,' then, demand the re-baptism of the Waldensian infant, without incurring the anathemas of his church? Did he not know, that by so doing he was walking in the paths of heresy, and setting at nought the canons of councils and the decisions of the fathers? If such a thing did occur, it is without parallel in papal history--it is a single and solitary instance of anabaptism being urged by any Romish dignitary. But we suspect that he simply demanded the child to be baptized. Instances of this sort abound in the conduct of both Papists and Protestants toward the Baptists. They are of very recent occurrence

in Europe. On this supposition, the conduct of the peasant and the 'president' was natural and consistent. The president wished the salvation of the infant, and hence demanded its baptism for the regeneration of its soul and the purgation of its original sin. These the doctrine of his church led him to believe would ensue. The peasant, on the other hand, being a Baptist, and esteeming such an act as unauthorized by the Scriptures, as worshipping the host or bowing before an image, would not give his consent in the matter. He acted as full many a Baptist, in ancient and in modern times, has acted. Papists have made such requisitions of Baptists, but never of Pedo-baptists, so far as any other recorded fact bears testimony. The severe anathemas of Rome against the Novatians, Donatists, and even the Waldenses, for anabaptism, make it very questionable that the event narrated above ever transpired--that any minister of papal vengeance ever so glaringly and wantonly outraged the doctrines of his church. The incident, however, is of no intrinsic importance, as doubtless at the time of its reputed occurrence, 1555, Presbyterianism had found its way into some places, where the Waldensian doctrines and practices had prevailed; and this thing happened, according to our author, in a district adjacent to Geneva. We have alluded to the matter simply to show the bias of our author's mind--as an instance where a story, bearing a strong impress of the apocryphal, is gravely narrated to prove that the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists.

Sims, Perrin and others have pointed with great confidence to the creed drawn up and adopted at Angrogne, September 12, 1535, in which the baptism of infants is set forth. But this creed is so unlike any document of the sort preceding it, put forth by any portion of the Waldenses, that an explanation of the circumstances in which it originated is necessary to its proper interpretation. The persecutions of the Waldenses had been unusually severe in parts of Piedmont and in the adjoining portions of France. Not only the Inquisition, but large armies had been active in their suppression. Their churches were broken up and their ministers put to death. Hunted like wild beasts, their prominent men nearly all destroyed, the poor Waldenses of these regions were almost sunk into despair. 'Persecution caused them to dissemble and conceal their faith. They attended the Romish masses, and in other respects conformed outwardly to the mummeries of papal superstition' [Perrin, p. 80]. But they could not be at ease while thus to escape the displeasure of men, they brought upon themselves the displeasure of God. They had heard much respecting the boldness of the Reformers in Germany and Switzerland; and in their distress, they determined to seek their counsel and advice. Accordingly they sent two of their ministers, George Morel and Peter Masson, to confer with Ecolampadius and Bucer, and others of the Reformers. [Jones, p. 446.]

Masson, returning home, was taken and put to death by the Papists. [Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, Vol. 2, p. 1-6.]

Morel returned in safety with the letters and papers, assembled his brethren, and

reported. Fox says, that Morel "declared to his brethren all the points of his commission; and opened unto them, how many and great errors they were in, into which their old ministers, whom they called barbs, that is to say, uncles, had brought them, leading them from the right way of true religion" [Murdock's Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 184, note 57]. Thus it is evident that Morel had learned something new of the Reformers, differing from the doctrine of the Waldensian fathers, and which he proposed to introduce into the creed of the brethren in his region.

And so Dr. Murdock, the translator of Mosheim, in a note upon that author, represents the case. He says:

"In their council in Angrogne, A.D. 1532, [1535], they adopted a short confession of faith, professedly embracing the doctrine they had firmly believed for four hundred years, yet manifestly a departure in some particulars from the principles stated by their deputies to Ecolampadius; and conformed to the new views he had communicated to them, especially in relation to free-will, grace, predestination, and several points of practical religion" [Ib. 470].

And Mosheim, speaking of the Waldenses of that time, says: "The descendants of the Waldenses who lived shut up in the valleys of Piedmont, were led by their proximity to the French and Genevans to embrace their doctrines and worship" [Perrin, p. 81].

But the very face of the creed puts its paternity above all dispute. We will quote a few articles:

"II. All that have been, or shall be saved, were elected by God before all worlds." "III. They who are saved cannot miss of salvation." "IV. Whosoever maintaineth free-will, wholly denieth predestination." "XVII. As to the sacraments, it hath been determined by the holy scriptures, that we have but two sacramental signs or symbols, which Christ Jesus hath left unto us: the one is baptism, the other the eucharist or Lord's Supper, which we receive to demonstrate our perseverance in the faith, according to the promise we made in our baptism in our infancy; as also in remembrance of that great benefit which Jesus Christ hath conferred upon us, when he laid down his life for our redemption, cleansing us with his most precious blood" [p. 481].

Can any one be so blind as not to perceive in these articles, the handiwork of the Reformers? Who can fail to recognize one or more of the phrases and tenets peculiar to that age, and unknown to the Waldenses? The baptismal article, especially, partakes largely of "the new views" learned in Germany. The expression "the promise we made in our baptism in our infancy," can only have meaning by admitting allusion to be made to godfathers and godmothers--to sponsorial promises; and yet Dr. Baird, Dr. Miller, and all Presbyterians vehemently insist that the Waldenses never tolerated such sponsion! Dr. Gill maintains that the article must not be

understood in a literal sense. The true rendering is, "The promise we made in baptism, being little children," So by Sims in Peyran. [*Divine Right of Infant Baptism*, pp. 37, 38.] "This phrase, being little children," says Dr. Gill, "as I think, means their being little children in knowledge and experience, when they were baptized; since they speak of receiving the eucharist, to show their perseverance in the faith they then had promised to persevere in: besides, if this be understood of them as infants in a literal sense, what promise were they capable of making when such? Should it be said, that they promised by their sureties, it should be observed that the Waldenses did not admit of godfathers and godmothers in baptism; this is one of the abuses their ancient barbs complained of in baptism, as administered by the Papists" [*Eccl. History*, vol. 3, p. 184].

Let the matter of this creed be viewed from whatever point it may, it can never prove that the Waldenses were Pede-baptists. It is too modern to enter into the merits of the discussion now in progress. It was got up and adopted by a few of the Waldenses only; and these few confess that they had lapsed from the stern faith of their ancestors. They admit too, that they had learned many new things of the Reformers, under whose advice and instruction they acted; and by whom they had been taught to reject much of the teaching and many of the practices of their barbs. We may reasonably suppose, that their rejection of infant baptism was one of the "many and great errors" in which the Reformers believed them to be involved--one of the paths "leading them from the right way of true religion," into which "their old ministers" had directed them. The Reformers were the bitter enemies and persecutors of the Baptists. They pursued them with as unrelenting and as merciless severity as ever did the Papists. They would not of course countenance these deputies from the Waldenses until they gave up their opposition to infant baptism. The fact, then, that no creed of the Waldenses, that no book or document of theirs, makes the slightest commendatory allusion to infant baptism, until at this time, in this creed, drawn up and adopted at the suggestion of the enemies and persecutors of the Baptists, by an assembly who reproach their fathers and their old ministers with "many and great errors"--these things, we say, furnish to our mind strong presumptive proof that infant baptism was then first introduced among any who could pretend at all to belong to the Waldenses proper.

And here appropriately we may notice the fact, so often and so triumphantly referred to--by Dr. Miller, Mr. Sims, and others--that the Waldenses readily united with the Reformed churches, and received ministers from them. This is true of the Waldenses in Piedmont, and we have shown above how this, in part, was brought about--by leading the Waldenses to reject the practices of their fathers. In their persecuted and depressed condition, they sought and obtained the sympathy of their neighbors in Switzerland; and as they had considerably fallen from their former boldness and purity of faith and practice, they were readily induced, in order to secure the favor and fellowship of their new acquaintances, to conform to such customs and opinions

as they might dictate. Mosheim says, "They retained not a few of their ancient rules of discipline, so late as they year 1630. But in this year, the greatest part of the Waldenses [in Piedmont] were swept off by pestilence; and their new teachers, whom they obtained from France, [Geneva], regulated all their affairs according to the pattern of the French Reformed [Presbyterian] Church" [Perrin, p. 231].

Thus it is plain how the inhabitants of Piedmont became Presbyterians--just as the inhabitants of Geneva and other places became so--by the influence of John Calvin and co-laborers. Until they came under the influence of the Reformers, we find no traces of infant baptism among the pure Waldenses. Not a line of theirs, prior to the Reformation, has been adduced by any one of the authors before us--Perrin, Peyran, and their editors--to show that the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists--not a line or syllable. That some of them since should embrace that practice, we have shown to be natural enough, and we have fully explained the means by which they were induced to adopt a custom unknown to their "old ministers" and churches.

True, Perrin or his editors have introduced into the volume before us, mixed with the ancient writings of the Waldenses, certain extracts from the "Spiritual Alamanc," and which is done, too, without informing the reader of the source from which they were derived! Of course, this was done to serve a purpose, whether honorable or not, the reader must determine. It looks very much like a pious fraud! It is certainly calculated to impose a falsehood, as the extracts stand among Waldensian writings confessedly of great antiquity, without the slightest intimation that these are quotations from the "Spiritual Alamanc," a work of doubtful date and certainly of no authority! This fraud may be found on pp. 230-232. It is strange, after such a flourish against Mr. Jones' integrity in the beginning of this volume, that an act of such doubtful morality, to say the least, should be perpetrated before the volume was half completed! But no one can see notes in others' eyes so clearly and so readily as those who have beams in their own! In one of the extracts from this "Spiritual Almanac," is the following language, so often quoted by Pedo-baptist controversialists:

"And whereas baptism is administered in a full congregation of the faithful, it is to the end, that he that is received into the church, should be reputed and held of all, for a Christian brother, and that all the congregation might pray for him that he may be a Christian in heart, as he is outwardly esteemed to be a Christian. And for this cause it is, that we present our children in baptism, which they ought to do, to whom the children are nearest, as their parents, and they to whom God hath given this charity."

These look like Presbyterian, but not like Waldensian practices. The whole clause taken together, would seem to teach that infants were presented in baptism that they should be 'reputed and held by all as Christian brethren'! The reason and the rite are

alike absurd.

But the argument most relied on to prove that the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists is derived from the practice of the Vaudois, or the Protestant churches now in Piedmont. This is often repeated in great triumph; and very recently we saw it stated in the newspapers, that Dr. Sawtell had made quite a display of this matter in Indianapolis! We have already exposed, in part, this miserable refuge. Admitting that it proved any thing, it could only establish what was the custom of the Waldenses who formerly dwelt in Piedmont. It could not go further. But the great majority of the Waldenses dwelt in other countries. They were to be found almost in every state and kingdom of Europe. What then can the Vaudois custom prove in relation to these? Besides, the old Waldensian churches were utterly broken up in Piedmont in 1686. Not a vestige of them was left. They and their friends were put to death, or else driven into exile. True, several years after, a company of some eight hundred armed men returned, and by force of arms established themselves upon their farms and in their villages again. These or their descendants embraced Presbyterianism, and to a considerable extent maintain that form of worship to this day. Before any thing respecting the Waldenses can be concluded from the Vaudois, it must be shown that the latter maintain the doctrines and conform to the customs of the former. It is the sublimity of nonsense to infer, from the simple fact that the Vaudois are the descendants of the Waldenses according to the flesh and because they dwell in Piedmont, that therefore they hold the sentiments and customs of the Waldenses! But it is unnecessary to expose this absurdity further. To mention it is to call upon it universal contempt.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, from the birth of Christ to the 18th Century: including the very interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses
By William Jones

First Edition 1812
Fourth Edition 1819
Fifth Edition 1826

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The history of the Christian Church, when prosecuted in minute detail, and in all its ramifications, is an ample theme, and has occupied the pens of many learned men, both of our own and other countries. The elaborate treatises of Eusebius, Du Pin, Fleury, Mosheim, Priestley, Milner, and others of inferior consideration, have most of them been long before the public, and are all well known. To discuss the subject at large, or to enter into any competition with those works, as it is not to be expected in the compass of a single volume [the first edition of Jones' history was comprised of one volume], so it must not be considered as having at all entered into the views of the present writer. The following pages, whatever may be their merits or defects, were not designed to instruct persons of general reading; for the author is fully aware that they contain little which is not familiar to that class of men. They were compiled with the view of communicating some interesting information to a few friends whose views of the gospel of Christ, and of the nature of his kingdom in this world, happen to coincide pretty much with his own, but who have been debarred the opportunity of exploring the voluminous productions in which that information lay scattered.

Those who have bestowed any considerable degree of attention upon the article of Ecclesiastical History, will readily admit, that no period of it stands so much in need of elucidation, as that which intervened from the beginning of the ninth century to the days of Luther. The original sources of our information are, almost exclusively, the Catholic writers--a race of men who, while they had an interest in disguising the truth, appear to have delighted themselves in calumniating all that dissented from their communion. And even since the time of the Reformation, while the light of

divine truth has been shining around us with increasing splendor, and thus contributing to expose in all its deformity that "mystery of iniquity," the Roman hierarchy, our Protestant historians have been but too implicitly led by those false guides. There is scarcely any History of the Christian Church extant in our language from which it would not be easy to exemplify the truth of this representation; but in no case could it more strikingly be done, than in that which respects the leading object of the present work. Not to multiply proof of this, where proofs are so abundant, an instance in point may be adduced from a contemporary writer of our own country, who, a few years ago, published, in our own language, the "History of France," in five vols. 4to. The following is the account there given of the Albigenses, a class of Christians who, as the reader will see from the subsequent part of this volume, were only a branch of the Waldenses, inhabiting a particular district in France.

"The Albigenses," says this historian, "believed in two Gods; one a beneficent being, author of the New Testament, who had two wives, Collant and Collibant, and was father of several Children, and among others, of Christ and the devil. The other God was a malevolent being, a liar, and a destroyer of men, author of the ancient law, who, not content with having persecuted the patriarchs during their lives, had consigned them all to damnation after death. They also acknowledge two Christs; one wicked, who was born at Bethlehem and crucified at Jerusalem, and who kept as his concubine Mary Magdalene, the woman so well known for having been caught in the act of adultery; the other Christ, all virtuous and invisible, who never inhabited the world, but spiritually in the body of Paul. They represented the Church of Rome as the scarlet whore mentioned in the Revelation. They regarded the sacraments as frivolous things; considered marriage as a state of prostitution; the Lord's supper as a chimera; the resurrection of the flesh as a ridiculous fable; and the worship of images as detestable idolatry. Had all their tenets been equally rational with the last, they would not have been obnoxious to much censure. They were divided into two classes; the perfects and the believers. They all openly professed great purity of manners, and secretly practiced the most infamous voluptuousness, on the principle, that from the waist downwards, man is incapable of sin." [*History of France*, Vol. 1, p. 412, London, 1791. I am not insensible that there is a grossness in this quotation which renders it almost unfit to be transplanted into any other soil; and I am anxious to apologize to my readers for laying it before them; but the truth is, that it is not worse than may be found on the same subject in many other writers; while the recency of its publication, and the high ground which its author has lately taken among us, seemed to entitle him to the right of preference. As to the statement itself, it cannot but remind us of the words of Jesus, "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake."]

Such is the disgusting caricature which this writer has exhibited to the world of the Albigenses. But that any man with his eyes open, and capable of exercising two

grains of discrimination, should have first of all permitted himself to be so far imposed upon by the Catholic writers, as to give credit to such a tissue of absurd and ridiculous fooleries, and then gravely to detail them to his readers for the truth of history, is at once a striking instance of weakness in the author, and of the necessity of exercising continual vigilance on the part of the reader, if he would neither become the dupe of Papal slander, nor of Protestant credulity. The reader cannot fail to be surprised when he is told that the author of this wretched ribaldry is no other than John Gifford, Esq. the biographer of the late Right Honourable William Pitt, whose work, recently published in 3 vols. 4to. and 6 vols. 8vo. is held up as a kind of national undertaking! Of the merits of this last publication it would, no doubt, be presumptuous in the present writer to offer any opinion; but if the biographer of our great statesman have been as regardless of the truth of history in the latter instance as in the former, posterity will owe him but few obligations for his labors.

Mr. Hume had a much more correct view of the character of the Albigenses; and it is singular that Mr. Gifford should have overlooked it. The following is the passage to which I refer. "The Pope (Innocent III) published a crusade against the Albigenses, a species of enthusiasts in the south of France, whom he denominated heretics, because, like other enthusiasts, they neglected the rights of the [Catholic] church, and opposed the power and influence of the clergy. The people from all parts of Europe, moved by their superstition and their passion for wars and adventures, flocked to his standard. Simon de Montfort, the general of the crusade, acquired to himself a sovereignty in these provinces. The Count of Toulouse, who protected, or perhaps only tolerated the Albigenses, was stripped of his dominions. And these sectaries themselves, though THE MOST INNOCENT AND INOFFENSIVE OF MANKIND, were exterminated with all the circumstances of extreme violence and barbarity." *History of England*, Vol. 2. ch. 11. Nothing can be more just than this account of the Albigenses, provided we allow Mr. Hume his own definition of the term "enthusiasts"--a term which he uniformly employs to denote all those who believe the Bible to be the word of God, and who receive it as the rule of their faith and practice. I may further add, that the reader will find his account of the Albigenses to be perfectly consonant to all that is related of them in the following pages.

I shall here take the liberty to introduce, as expressive of my own sentiments, the language of an author, who more than a century ago, was engaged in the same pursuit with myself, and to whose learned pen the following pages are much indebted. "I conceived that it was well becoming a Christian to undertake the defense of innocence, oppressed and overborne by the blackest calumnies the devil could ever invent. That we should be ungrateful towards those whose sufferings for Christ have been so beneficial to his church, should we not take care to justify their memory, when we see it so maliciously bespattered and torn. That to justify the Waldenses and Albigenses, is indeed to defend the Reformation and Reformers, they having so long before us, with an exemplary courage, labored to preserve the Christian religion

in its ancient purity, which the Church of Rome all this while has endeavored to abolish, by substituting an illegitimate and supposititious Christianity in its stead. So long as the ministers of the Church of Rome think fit to follow his conduct who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, innocence should not be deprived of the privilege of defending herself against their calumnies, while she willingly resigns to God the exercise of vengeance for the injustice and violence of those who have oppressed her." [Dr. Allix's *Remarks on the Churches of Piedmont*, preface, p. 6]

It may possibly occur to some of my readers that "the Portraiture of Popery," would have been a title every way as appropriate to the ensuing pages as that which I have given it. And it certainly must be admitted, that the odious features of superstition and intolerance do but too prominently obtrude upon us, wherever the proceedings of that apostate church interpose themselves. The picture which invariably presents itself to the mind, is that of a power "speaking great words against the Most High, and wearing out the saints of the Most High," [*History of the Council of Trent*, translated by Brent, p. 2] or, of a woman "drunken with the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus." It should, however, be remarked, that if the outlines of this hideous picture have been sketched in the following work, and in colors more sombre than may be pleasing to its friends, the circumstance is wholly accidental, since it is an object that was entirely foreign to the intention of the writer, further than a faithful record of well-authenticated facts might necessarily lead him to it. In sketching the History of the Christian Church previous to the times of the Waldenses, I have gone considerably more into detail than was my original intention; but in that particular I have been actuated solely by the desire of rendering the work more generally useful to that class of readers for whom it was principally designed. After all, it pretends to nothing more than a sketch of a vast subject, and no one can be more sensible than the writer himself is of its numerous deficiencies. Whether he may hereafter be induced to resume the subject, and fill up the outline more correctly, must depend partly upon the reception which the present attempt meets with from his contemporaries, and partly upon other circumstances which are beyond the reach of human control. For the rest he would gladly offer his apology in the words of Father Paul the Venetian. "He that shall observe that I speak more of some times, and more sparingly of others, let him remember, that all fields are not equally fruitful, nor all grains deserve to be kept; and that of those which the reaper would preserve, some ears escape the hand, or the edge of the sickle: it being the condition of every harvest, that some part remains to be afterwards gleaned."

It may possibly strike some readers with surprise that no notice is taken, in the following pages, of a multiplicity of sects which arose, from time to time, in what is called the Christian world, and whose history occupies so very large a space in the volumes of most of our modern writers on this subject. But to speak the truth, my opinion of these in general is, that they have nothing to do with the history of the church or kingdom of Christ; and that to connect them with it, as Dr. Mosheim and

others have done, is scarcely more unwise than the conduct of Mr. Hume would have been, had he incorporated the Tyburn Chronicle into his valuable History of England.

In tracing the kingdom of Christ in the world, I have paid no regard whatever to the long disputed subject of apostolical succession. I have, indeed, read much that has been written upon it by the Catholic writers on one side, and by Dr. Allix, Sir Samuel Morland, and several Protestants on the other; and I regret the labor that has been so fruitlessly expended by the latter, persuaded as I am that the *postulatum* is a mere fiction, and that the ground on which the Protestant writers have proceeded in contending for it, is altogether untenable. **It is admitted, that the Most High has had his churches and people in every age, since the decease of the Apostles; but to attempt to trace a regular succession of ordained bishops in the Vallies of Piedmont, or any other country, is "laboring in the fire for very vanity," and seems to me to proceed upon mistaken views of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and of the sovereignty of God, in his operations in the earth, as they have respect unto it.** Jesus himself, in reply to an inquiry put to him by the Pharisees, (Luke 17:20-24) compares his kingdom to the lightning, darting its rays in the most sovereign and uncontrolled manner from one extremity of the heavens to the other. And this view of it corresponds with matter of fact. Wherever the blessed God has his elect, there, in his own proper time, he sends his gospel to save them. One while we see it diffusing its heavenly light on a particular region, and leaving another in darkness. Then it takes up its residence in the latter, and forsakes the former. Thus, when Paul and his companions attempted to go into Bithynia, the Spirit permitted them not; but they were instructed by a vision to proceed to Macedonia, where the word of the Lord had free course and was glorified. When Paul first came to Corinth, he met with great opposition, but he was encouraged to persevere by Him who said, "I have much people in this city." When the first churches began to swerve from the form of sound words, to corrupt the discipline of the house of God, and to commit fornication with the kings of the earth, by forming an alliance with the state, we cease to trace the kingdom of Christ among them, but we shall find it successively among the churches of the Novatians, the followers of Aerius, the Paulicians, the Cathari, or Puritans in Germany, the Patetines, and the Waldenses, until the times of reformation.

If the present work contain any thing of sufficient interest to give it a temporary buoyancy upon the ocean of public opinion, and prevent its rapid transition into the gulf of oblivion--that insatiable vortex which has already swallowed up myriads of much more important publications, the author would persuade himself it must be those excellent letters of our great poet Milton, which, in the capacity of Latin Secretary to Cromwell, he wrote to the Protestant princes upon the Continent, pleaded the cause of the poor, afflicted, and grossly injured Waldenses. It is a mortifying reflection, that these interesting letters should now be almost forgotten as the compositions of our great poet. Whence comes it to pass, that while Milton's

Defence of the People of England is so generally known, no one ever speaks of his Defence of the Waldenses? It will be difficult to assign a more plausible reason for this, than the unpopularity of the subject. The Waldenses were "a poor and afflicted people," the subjects of a kingdom that is not of this world, and they were treated by their adversaries as "the filth of the world and offscouring of all things." But Milton understood their character, and duly appreciated it. He recognized in them his Christian brethren; their distress not only reached his ears, but roused all the sensibilities of his soul; he participated in their sorrows, and his letters in their behalf do as much honor to the benevolence of his heart as his immortal poem of *Paradise Lost* does to the sublimity of his genius. It has been too much the fashion amongst a certain class of writers to inveigh against the malignity and moral character of Milton; but surely we have a right to ask his revilers, before they take such freedoms with his fair fame, at least not to be unjust to his virtues.

William Jones
Islington, July 1812

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

An interval of somewhat more than a dozen years has now elapsed, since I first called the attention of my friends and the public to the interesting history of "The meek confessors of Piedmont, and of the south of France." To detail the circumstances which originally prompted me to prosecute the study of their history, would have so much the appearance of vanity and parade that I decline entering upon it; but I may be allowed to say that, after having possessed myself of such materials as the leadings of Providence had thrown in my way, I was chiefly determined to pursue the subject and lay the result before the world, by finding, that in whatever circle the mention of these extraordinary people was introduced, scarcely an individual could be met with who knew anything more about them than the name. Whether it were owing to the political state of Europe during the greater part of the past century, and of the last thirty years in particular; or to whatever other cause it is to be attributed, the fact is undeniable, that the memory of this noble army of martyrs was rapidly sinking into oblivion, and in a fair way of speedily becoming extinct.

Concise, and consequently imperfect, however, as was the narrative of the Waldenses comprised in the first edition of this work, the author was gratified on perceiving that it had excited an unusual degree of interest among the friends of Primitive Christianity, who expressed themselves anxious to know whatever more could be told them concerning this remarkable people. He therefore kept the subject constantly in view, and in the beginning of the year 1816, presented them with a greatly enlarged edition of the work, comprised in 2 vols. 8vo. Two years afterwards a third edition was called for, and since then a fourth, all of which the public have been pleased to receive with marked testimonies of approbation. Though additions and improvements

were introduced into each succeeding impression of the work, the author was far from supposing that he had brought it to any thing like a perfect state. He was, nevertheless, disposed to take credit to himself for having embodied into one succinct narrative a more copious and digested history of the Waldenses, and of those who maintained the same faith and order with them, than had hitherto appeared in our language, or indeed in any other, and he had the satisfaction to find the public voice unequivocally admitting this fact. It cannot reasonably, therefore, as he thinks, be expected from him that he should sit down quiet and unmoved while he sees others rising up, and by means that are scarcely compatible with the strict rules of literary warfare, endeavoring to push him to the wall. Of this unfair mode of proceeding, he has witnessed many attempts since he first brought the subject of this history before the public, but of which he did not think it worth his while to take any particular notice.

That a topic which has every year been rising in popularity, should find writers ready to take it up, was so naturally to be expected, that it could not reasonably excite surprise in any one. Since the first edition of this work made its appearance, several of our countrymen have been induced to visit the regions of Piedmont; and two of them, clergymen of the Church of England, who on their return laid before the public the result of their observations and enquiries, have shewn no little zeal to identify the ancient Waldenses with our national establishment. This is no way wonderful--there is scarcely a sect in Christendom, which, during the last dozen years has not laid claim to them as their rightful kindred, in one way or other; but as this is a case of fact which involves in it the truth of history, it deserves more than a bare mention in this place.

Before we enter on the discussion of it, however, and indeed to lay a proper foundation for the remarks which I have to offer, I must be permitted to premise, that I have now before me a "Narrative of an Excursion to the Mountains of Piedmont, in the year 1823, and Researches among the Vaudois or Waldenses, Protestant inhabitants of the Cottian Alps, etc. etc. By William Stephen Gilly, M.A. Rector of North Fambridge, Essex. Second edition, with considerable additions and corrections, 1825."

In an Appendix to the volume, Mr. Gilly presents his readers with a "Notice of Publications relating to the Vaudois (Waldenses) during the three last centuries;" and having given the titles of several, and remarked upon most of them with some degree of minuteness, he at last announces my book in the following terms, which I quote verbatim.

8. "History of the Waldenses, connected with a Sketch of the Christian Church, from the birth of Christ to the eighteenth century. By William Jones, London, 1812. Octavo. pp. 676." "This volume does not enter upon the subject of the Vaudois till the

319th page, and carries their history no farther than the year, 1686."

This is the only mention that is made of my publication, so far as I can perceive, in all Mr. Gilly's book; and there are two or three circumstances connected with it of sufficient moment to entitle them to regard. Some may probably think that I ought to be well satisfied, and consider it an act of condescension in a clergyman of the Church of England, that he had noticed, even thus briefly, a publication issuing from the pen of a dissenter! Be this as it may, I cannot help remarking it as somewhat singular, that he should refer his readers to the first edition of my book, which, at the time of his writing, had been ten years sold off, and consequently must have cost him no little pains to procure. In the year 1828, when he commenced his excursion to Piedmont, there had been a second, third, and fourth edition published, in an enlarged and improved state; but probably it better suited his purpose to refer to the first and most imperfect edition of the work than to any other.

Leaving the reader, however, to indulge his own reflections on the correctness of this probability, I proceed to notice the complaint which Mr. Gilly makes, and which, in fact, is applicable to every edition of my work, namely, that "it carries their history no farther than the year 1686." This is certainly true; but my defense is an easy one--my Narrative stops where the Story ends. I professed to give the History of the Churches of Piedmont and other places, commonly designated Waldenses and Albigenses, not of individuals; and as I consider those churches to have been utterly dispersed and scattered by a series of persecutions which terminated in the year 1686, I consider myself to have brought the subject to its legitimate close.

If we are to credit a host of writers belonging to the Church of England, the two witnesses of the Apocalypse, (Revelation 11:3,4, etc.) were the two churches, or to speak more properly, the two classes of churches, which passed under the names of the Waldenses and Albigenses. This was the opinion of Bishops Lloyd, Newton, Hurd, etc. Messrs. Whiston, Faber, Gauntlett and others, and even Mr. Gilly himself admits it (p. 146). Now these two witnesses, after prophesying twelve hundred and sixty years in sackcloth, according to the prophetic testimony, were to be finally overcome and killed by the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit. (Revelation 11:7) This event I consider to have been consummated in the year 1686, and consequently as terminating the history of the Waldenses. Where, then, is the propriety of complaining of me, as Mr. Gilly and others would seem to do that I have not pursued the subject further? But, it may be asked, does not the page of history record, that in the year 1689 about eight or nine hundred men proceeded from the neighborhood of Geneva, equipped with arms and ammunition, re-entered their own country, drove away the new inhabitants, and after many contests with their enemies, obtained a reinstatement in their former possessions?" Certainly; there is no disposition to deny the fact; but I beg leave to ask Mr. Gilly, and those who dwell upon it, of what description of persons did this new race of the Waldenses consist--and are they

prepared to shew us a number of new churches formed by them bearing any resemblance to those of the ancient Waldenses which were dispersed by the armies of Louis XIV and the Duke of Savoy? We are quite content to rest the issue of this enquiry on the testimony which is borne to the present state of the Vaudois, by our author and the other members of the Established Church, compared with the accounts which have been transmitted us by friends and foes concerning their ancestors. Let us try the subject on one or two points; and I begin with their doctrinal sentiments.

"I ventured to ask Mr. Peyrani (says Mr. Gilly) if the Vaudois Clergy urged the doctrine of absolute predestination and election. He replied that these nice points of controversy were not often discussed in their pulpits, and: that for his own part, he had never given his assent to the belief in absolute predestination." "If God infallibly saves some, and as infallibly rejects others, (said Mr. P.) I do not see what is the use of his laws?" He admitted that Calvin was a good man, he desired to be thought a faithful servant of God, "but many of his tenets convey a strange notion of the Almighty's attributes."

I now request the reader to turn to Vol. 2. of my History, and compare the preceding extract with the numerous testimonies given, pp. 90, et seq. to the doctrinal sentiments of the ancient Waldenses. But what shall we think of Mr. Gilly, who in the face of all this evidence to the contrary, can stand up and tell us, "that the peculiar doctrinal sentiments maintained by Calvin never found any warm advocates in these Vallies," p. 245? This is to falsify the truth of history.

But I proceed to notice the account which Mr. Gilly gives us of the constitution, discipline and worship of the present Vaudois churches. He informs us they are partial to the Episcopal form of church government; and though particular circumstances have induced them to drop the title of bishop in its generally received sense, yet the episcopal functions are retained, p. 75.

"At present," says he, "either the liturgy of Geneva, or Neufchatel is read in the churches, according to the discretion of the pastor; but that of Geneva, which is a beautiful production, is principally followed. The rituals which are adopted, in conformity to their intercourse with Switzerland, have a service for the Communion, and different forms for certain days and seasons." So much for the present race of churches in Piedmont! Let the reader carefully examine the Confessions of Faith, published by their ancestors, and given in my History, vol. 2. ch. 5. sect. 8. and try if he can find any thing that bears a resemblance to this order of things. As regards Episcopacy, we find them saying, "We must not obey the pope and bishops, because they are the wolves of the church of Christ."-"So many orders of the clergy, so many marks of the beast."

In the "beautiful" liturgy of Geneva, as Mr. Gilly terms it, we have stated prayers for Sundays--morning and evening prayers for Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays; others for Wednesdays and Saturdays--prayers also for particular solemnities, Easter, Ascension-day, and Whitsunday Christmas-day--New-year's-day--the first of June. etc. etc. Had the ancient churches of the Waldenses anything of this trumpery among them? Far otherwise; for, in alluding to these things, we find them strongly inveighing against them, as marks of Antichrist, and quoting the very words of the apostle Paul to the Galatians, "Ye observe days and months, and times and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labor in vain" See pp. 85-90. Vol 2. of this work.

Once more: let us compare the ancient and modern Vaudois on the article of Baptism. On this subject Mr. Gilly thus writes:

"From infant instruction, we came to the discussion of infant baptism, and nothing can be more false than the calumny, that the Vaudois object to infant baptism. One of the arguments used by the petitioners of the commune of San Giovanni, when they implored permission to re-open their new church, was, that in the winter time their poor infants suffered dreadfully from the severity of the cold, in being carried to such a distance as Angrogne to be publicly baptized. They have even a formulary of baptism, very much like that in the Church of England, and the service begins thus: "You present this infant to be baptised;"

This may be done, it seems, either by sprinkling or immersion, at the discretion of the parties!

"In some articles of faith," says Mr. Gilly, "subsequently drawn up by the Waldensian clergy, there are many such strong declarations as these: 'We maintain that infants must be baptized under salvation, [pray what is meant by that?] and consecrated to Jesus Christ, according to Christ's command;' 'Suffer little children to come unto me.'" pp. 168, 169.

Let us now compare with this, the doctrine of their forefathers, as handed down to us in their Confessions of Faith and other writings.

"We believe that in the ordinance of baptism," say they, "the water is the visible and external sign which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing our faith and change of life." And with regard to the baptism of infants, they insist upon it to be one of the leading features of Antichrist. Their words are; "He teaches to baptize children into the faith,

and attributes to this, the work of regeneration; thus confounding the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, with the external rite of baptism, and on this foundation bestows orders, and indeed grounds all his Christianity." See pp. 51 and 56

But here I stop--it is needless to pursue the subject farther.

Enough has surely been said, to shew that the present race of Protestant churches in Piedmont, bears little or no affinity to the ancient Waldenses, either in their doctrinal sentiments, their discipline and external order, or their religious practices; and it is an act of justice to the memory of those excellent people to rescue them from this unnatural alliance. Mr. Gilly's "Narrative" is not destitute of amusement and information, but it is a perfect melange, in which topographical description, biographical anecdote, ecclesiastical history, the ancient and the modern, fact and fiction are strangely jumbled together. So far as his efforts have been exerted to plead the cause of the distressed inhabitants of those Vallies, whose privations and sufferings arising from the invasion of their country by the French armies during the late war, we can easily imagine to be great, he is entitled to our respect and gratitude. But in his attempt to identify the present race of the Vaudois with their predecessors "the meek confessors of Piedmont," he has totally failed. In fact, had he properly understood the character of the ancient Waldensian churches, we can have no conception that he would have entertained any wish to become their advocate. And as it may probably save others from falling into similar blunders, I shall close this Preface with laying before the reader a brief sketch of what they were.

In the first place, they were dissenters--protestant dissenters--dissenters upon principle, not only from the church of Rome, but also from all national establishments of religion,--they existed by mere toleration from the civil government,--they acknowledged no earthly potentate as head of the church; they absolutely protested against every thing of the kind. They had no Book of Common Prayer--no Liturgy, no thirty-nine articles to guard them from error, heresy, or schism. They had no reverend gentlemen--no privileged order of clergymen, paid or pensioned for discharging the duties of the pastoral office among them. They paid particular respect to their Lord's words; "Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren: And call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven: Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master even Christ: but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." They brought up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but they neither sprinkled nor immersed them, under the notion of administering Christian baptism -- they were, in a word, so many distinct churches of ANTIPAEDOBAPTISTS.

William Jones
Islington, Sept. 25th, 1825

See also "[Were the Waldenses Baptists or Pedo-baptists?](#)" by John L. Waller. This is available in the *Electronic Baptist History Library* at the Way of Life Literature web site [<http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud>] and in the *Fundamental Baptist CD-ROM Library*, which can be obtained from Way of Life, 1701 Harns Rd., Oak Harbor, WA 98277. 360-675-8311 (voice), fbns@wayoflife.org (e-mail).

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, from the birth of Christ to the 18th Century: including the very interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses

By William Jones

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The rise and progress of the Christian religion,--its influence on every state and kingdom by which it has been embraced,--and the amelioration of the condition of the human race, through its means, by the conversion of rude barbarians to a degree of improvement unknown to classic ages, all concur to render an impartial account of it, almost as interesting to the philosopher and the politician as it is to the sincere disciple of the Savior. The history now offered to the public, has, however, been compiled with a more direct and special view to the information of the latter class of readers than of either of the former; and it may not be without its use, before we enter immediately on the subject itself, to pause, and take a cursory view of the actual state of the world in the age in which the gospel dispensation had its commencement. Christianity claims an heavenly origin, and professes to have conferred, and indeed still to confer, blessings on mankind to which no other religion has any pretensions. What, from age to age, it is doing for ourselves, few of us need to be told: but without reverting to the condition of our species at the time of its first promulgation, and distinctly marking its progress in the subversion of the idolatrous rites and absurd superstitions of Paganism, we can never appreciate, as we ought to do, the extent of those benefits which have resulted from the introduction and establishment of this divine institution in the world. It appears highly desirable therefore, by way of introduction to the following work, that the reader be presented with a sketch of the general state of the world at the time of the Savior's birth; and that his attention be also particularly called to the state of the Jewish nation at the same interesting period.

A VIEW OF THE STATE OF THE WORLD IN GENERAL, AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.

The inspired historians, who have narrated the life and actions of the Lord Jesus

Christ, have particularly specified the time of his birth, as being under the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus, and when Herod the Great was king of Judea (Luke 2:1; Matthew 2:1). At this period the Roman empire was in the zenith of its extent and power; that military people having reduced the greatest part of the habitable earth under the dominion of its arms; and even the land of Judea, once so renowned as the kingdom over which David and Solomon had swayed the royal scepter, had sunk into a province of this mighty empire.

The ancient Roman empire was at this epoch of the world a most magnificent object. It extended from the river Euphrates in the east, to the Atlantic or western ocean; that is, in length more than three thousand miles. In breadth too, it was more than two thousand; and the whole included above sixteen hundred thousand square miles. This vast extent of territory was divided into provinces; and they comprised the countries called Spain, Gaul, (since France) the greater part of Britain, Italy, Rhoetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia, Dacia, Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Egypt, Africa, and the Mediterranean Sea, with its islands and colonies. This extended territory lay between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude, which was certainly the most eligible part of the temperate zone, and it produced in general all the conveniences and luxuries of life. [Rollin's *Roman History*; Hook's ditto; and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*]

From the days of Ninus, who lived about three hundred years after the flood, to those of Augustus Caesar, was a period of two thousand years; in which interval, various empires, kingdoms, and states, had gradually arisen and succeeded each other. The Assyrian or Babylonian empire may be said to have taken the lead. It not only had the precedence in point of time, but it was the cradle of Asiatic elegance and arts, and exhibited the first examples of that refinement and luxury which have distinguished every subsequent age in the annals of the east. But that gigantic power gave place to the empire of the Medes and Persians, which itself, in process of time yielded to the valor of the Greeks; while the empire of Greece, so renowned for splendor in arts and in arms, had sunk under the dominion of Imperial Rome, who thus became mistress of all the civilized world.

ROME is said to have owed her dominion as much to the manners as to the arms of her citizens. Whenever the latter had subdued a particular territory, they prepared to civilize it. They transferred into each of the conquered countries their laws, manners, arts, sciences. and literature. The advantages that resulted from the bringing of so many different nations into subjection under one people, or to speak more properly, under one man, were no doubt, in many respects, considerable. For by this means the people of various countries, alike strangers to each other's language, manners, and laws, became associated together in amity and enjoyed reciprocal intercourse. By Roman magnificence, which spared no expense to render the public roads

commodious to travelers, an easy access was given to parts the most distant and remote. Literature and the arts became generally diffused, and the euhivation of them extended even to countries that had previously formed no other scale by which to estimate the dignity of man, than that of corporeal vigor, or muscular strength. In short, men that had hitherto known no other rules of action, or modes of life, than those of savage and uncultivated nature, had now before them the example of a polished nation, and were gradually instructed by their conquerors to form themselves after it. These things deserve mention, because, as they contributed in some measure to facilitate the propagation of the gospel by the labors of the apostles, they may consequently be entitled to rank among those concurring events which constituted the period of our Lord's advent, "the fullness of time."

The subjects of the Roman empire, at this period, have been estimated at about one hundred and twenty millions of persons, and divided into three classes, namely, Citizens, Provincials, and Slaves. The first class enjoyed ample liberty and were entitled to peculiar immunities; the second had only the shadow of liberty without any constitutional freedom; while the last were entirely dependant on the arbitrary will of their masters, who, as best suited their purpose, either enfranchised, or oppressed, or barbarously punished and destroyed them. Enthusiastic in the cause of liberty themselves, the Romans studied the most prudent methods of rendering the provinces of the empire insensible to the yoke that was imposed on them. They treated willing captives with commendable liberality; and used the conquered countries with that moderation which evinced that their leading object was, not the destruction of mankind, but the increase of the empire. They colonized foreign countries with Romans, who introduced agriculture, arts, sciences, learning, and commerce. Having made the art of governing a particular branch of study, they excelled in it above all the inhabitants of the globe. Their history, indeed, exhibits wise councils, prudent measures, equitable laws; and all classes of men are represented to us as conducting themselves so as to command the admiration of posterity.

Having thus briefly glanced at the state of civilization which prevailed in the Roman empire at the date of the Christian era we shall dismiss the subject, in order to examine more particularly its condition with regard to morals and religion; for it is with these that the history of the Christian church is more especially concerned. And that we may have a more enlarged and distinct view of the matter, it may be profitable for us to go back in our enquiries, and take a rapid glance of the state of the Gentile world from a much earlier period. The prophet Isaiah, rapt in prophetic vision, and transported to that distant age when God should perform the mercy promised to the fathers, breaks out into the following sublime strains: "Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:2,3).

Much has been said of late respecting the sufficiency of reason to direct the human mind in its pursuit of the chief good, or of the knowledge of the true character of God and of obedience to his will: the enquiry on which we are entering may possibly serve to evince how far such representations are entitled to regard, and perhaps tend to prove the truth of the apostle's assertion that "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Our knowledge of the state of any of those nations which were situated beyond the confines of the Roman empire, is necessarily very imperfect and obscure, arising from the paucity of their historical monuments and writers. We have sufficient light, however, to perceive that the eastern nations were distinguished by a low and servile spirit, prone to slavery and every species of abject humiliation; whilst those towards the north, prided themselves in cherishing a warlike and savage disposition, that scorned even the restraint of a fixed habitation, and placed its chief gratification in the liberty of roaming at large through scenes of devastation, blood, and slaughter. A soft and feeble constitution both of body and mind, with powers barely adequate to the cultivation of the arts of peace, and chiefly exercised in ministering at the shrine of voluptuous gratification, may be considered as the characteristic trait of the former: a robust and vigorous corporeal frame, animated with a glowing spirit that looked with contempt on life, and every thing by which its cares are soothed, that of the latter.

The minds of the people inhabiting these various countries, were fettered by superstitions of the most degrading nature, though the sense of a Supreme Being, from whom all things had their origin, and whose decrees regulate the universe, had not become wholly extinct; yet in every nation a general belief prevailed, that all things were subordinate to an association of powerful spirits, who were called gods, [hence the apostle's expression, "there are, that are called, lords many and gods many," 1 Corinthians 8:5] and whom it was incumbent on every one, who wished for a happy and prosperous course of life, to worship and conciliate. One of these deities was supposed to excel the rest in dignity, and to possess a supereminent authority, by which the tasks or offices of the inferior ones were allotted, and the whole of the assembly, in a certain degree, directed and governed. His rule, however, was not conceived to be by any means arbitrary; neither was it supposed that he could so far invade the provinces of the others, as to interfere with their particular functions; and hence it was deemed necessary for those who would secure the favor of heaven, religiously to cultivate the patronage of every separate deity, and assiduously to pay that homage to each of them which was respectively his due.

Every nation, however, did not worship the same gods, but each had its peculiar deities, differing from those of other countries, not only in their names, but in their nature, their attributes, their actions, and other respects: nor is there any just foundation for the supposition which some have adopted, that the gods of Greece and

Rome were the same with those worshipped by the Germans, the Syrians, the Arabians, the Persians, the Egyptians, and others. The Greeks and Romans, indeed, pretended that the deities which they acknowledged were equally revered in every other part of the world; and it might probably be the case with most nations, that the gods of other countries were held in a sort of secondary reverence, and perhaps, in some instances, privately worshipped; but it is certain that each country had its appropriate deities, and that to neglect or disparage the established worship of the state was always considered as an offense of the most atrocious kind. [See Bishop Warburton's *Divine Legation*, Book 2. Sect 6. 473.]

This diversity of deities and religious worship seldom generated animosity: for each nation readily conceded to others the right of forming their own opinions, and of judging for themselves in religious matters; and they left them, both in the choice of their deities and mode of worshipping them, to be guided by whatever principles they might think proper to adopt. Those who were accustomed to regard this world in the light of a commonwealth, divided into several districts, over each of which a certain order of deities presided, could with an ill-grace assume the liberty of forcing other nations to discard their own favorite deities, and receive in their stead the same objects of adoration with themselves. It is certain that the Romans were extremely jealous of introducing any new divinities, or of making the least change in the public religion; yet the citizens were never denied the privilege of individually conforming to any foreign mode of worship, or of manifesting, by the most solemn acts of devotion, their veneration for the gods of other countries. [See *Divine Legation of Moses*, Warburton's *Works*, Vol. 2. Edit. 8vo. 1811.]

The principal deities of most nations consisted of heroes renowned in antiquity, emperors, kings, founders of cities, and other illustrious persons, whose eminent exploits, and the benefits they had conferred on mankind, were treasured up and embalmed in the breasts of posterity, by whose gratitude they were crowned with divine honors and raised to the rank of gods. And in no other respects were the heathen deities supposed to be distinguished beyond the human species, than by the enjoyment of power and an immortal existence. And to the worship of divinities of this description was joined in many countries, that of some of the noblest and most excellent parts of the creation; the luminaries of heaven in particular, the sun, the moon, and the stars, in whom, as the effects of their influence was always perceptible, an intelligent mind was supposed to reside. The superstitious practices of some countries were carried to an almost endless extreme: mountains, rivers, trees, the earth, the sea and the winds, even the diseases of the body, the virtues and the vices (or rather certain tutelary genii, to whom the guardianship and care of all these things was conceived to belong) were made the object of adoration, and had divine honors regularly paid to them.

Buildings of the most superb and magnificent kind, under the names of temples,

fanés, etc. were raised and dedicated by the people of almost every country to their gods, with the expectation that the divinities would condescend to make these sumptuous edifices the places of their own immediate residence. They were not all open to the public, for some of them were confined to the exercise of private devotion; but those of either description were internally ornamented with images of their deities, and furnished with altars and the requisite apparatus for offering sacrifice. The statues were supposed to be animated by the deities whom they represented: for though the worshippers of gods, such as have now been described, must, in a great measure, have relinquished every dictate of reason, they were not willing to appear by any means so destitute of every principle of common sense, as to pay their adoration to a mere idol of metal, or wood, or stone; they always maintained that their statues, when properly consecrated, were filled with the presence of those divinities whose impress they bare. [Arnobius adv. Gentes, lib. 6. Augustin de Civitate, lib. 8.]

The religious homage paid to these deities, consisted chiefly in the frequent performance of various rites; such as the offering up of victims and sacrifices, accompanied by prayers and other ceremonies. The sacrifices and offerings were different, according to the nature and attributes of the gods to whom they were addressed. Brute animals were commonly devoted to this purpose; but in some nations of a more savage and ferocious character, the horrible practice of sacrificing human victims prevailed. And it has been remarked by the learned Bishop Warburton, that the attributes and qualities assigned to their gods, always corresponded with the nature and genius of the government of the country. If this was gentle, benign, compassionate and forgiving, goodness and mercy were considered as most essential to the deity; but if severe, inexorable, captious or unequal, the very gods were supposed to be tyrants; and expiations, atonements, lustrations, and bloody sacrifices, then composed the system of religious worship. In the words of the Poet,

"Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge or lust;
Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe."

[Pope's *Essay on Man*. See Warburton's *Works*, Vol. 1. p. 309.]

Of the prayers of Pagan worshippers, whether we regard the matter or the mode of expression, it is impossible to speak favorably: they were not only destitute, in general, of every thing allied to the spirit of piety, but were sometimes framed expressly for the purpose of obtaining the countenance of heaven to the vilest undertakings. Indeed the greater part of their religious observances were of an absurd and ridiculous kind, and in many instances strongly tinged with the most disgraceful barbarism and obscenity. Their festivals and other solemn days were

polluted by a licentious indulgence in every species of libidinous excess; and on these occasions, they were not prohibited even from making their consecrated places, the supposed mansions of their gods, the scenes of vile and beastly gratification. [See the Treatise of Philo--Judaeus de Cherubim, p. 155.]

The care of the temples, together with the superintendence and direction of all religious ordinances, was committed to a class of men bearing the title of priests or *flamens*. It belonged to the province of these ministers to see that the ancient and customary honors were paid to the publicly acknowledged deities, and that a due regard was manifested in every other respect for the religion of the state. These were their ordinary duties; but superstition ascribed to them functions of a far more exalted nature. It considered them rather in the light of intimate and familiar friends of the gods, than in that of officiating ministers of their altar; and consequently attributed to them the highest degree of sanctity, influence, and power. With the minds of the people thus prepossessed in their favor, it could not be very difficult for an artful and designing set of men, possessed of a competent share of knowledge, to maintain a system of spiritual dominion of the most absolute and tyrannical kind.

Besides the public worship of the Pagan deities, several nations, such, for instance, as the Persians, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Indians, and some others, had recourse to a dark and concealed species of worship, under the name of MYSTERIES. None were admitted to see or participate of these mysteries, but such as had approved themselves worthy of that distinction by their fidelity and perseverance in the practice of a long course of initiatory forms. The votaries were enjoined, on peril of instant death, to observe the most profound secrecy respecting every thing that passed [Clarkson's *Discourses on the Liturgies*, Sect. 4. Meursius de *Mysteriis Eleusiniis*, and Warburton's *Divine Legation*, Book I1. Sect. IV]; a circumstance which alone sufficiently accounts for the difficulty that we find in obtaining any information respecting the nature of these recluse practices, and for the discordant and contradictory opinions concerning them, that are to be found in the writings of various authors both ancient and modern. According to the learned Warburton, each of the Heathen deities, besides the worship paid to him in public, had a secret worship, which was termed the mysteries of the god. These, however, were not performed in every place where he was publicly worshipped, but only where his chief residence was supposed to be. We learn from Herodotus, Diodorus, and Plutarch, that these mysteries were first invented in Egypt, from whence they spread into most countries of Europe and Asia. In Egypt they were celebrated to the honor of Isis and Osiris; in Asia to Mythras; in Samothrace to the mother of the gods; in Boeotia to Bacchus; in the isle of Cyprus to Venus; in Crete to Jupiter; in Athens to Ceres and Proserpine; and in other places to other deities of an incredible number. The most noted of these mysteries were the Orphic, those in honor of Bacchus, the Eleusinian, the Samothracian, the Cabiri, and the Mythraic. But the Eleusinian mysteries, which were stately celebrated by the people of Athens, at Eleusis, a town of Attica, in

honor of Ceres and her daughter Proserpine, in process of time supplanted all the rest, for according to the testimony of Zosimus, "These most holy rites were then so extensive, as to take in the whole race of mankind." This sufficiently accounts for the fact, that ancient writers have spoken more of the Eleusinian mysteries than of any other. They all, nevertheless, proceeded from one fountain, consisted of similar rites, and are supposed to have had the same object in view.

We are informed by the same learned prelate, Warburton, that the general object of these mysteries was, by means of certain shews and representations, accompanied with hymns, to impress the senses and imaginations of the initiated with the belief of the doctrines of religion, according to the views of them which the inventors of the mysteries entertained. And in order that the mystic exhibitions might make the deeper impressions on the initiated, they were always performed in the darkness of night. The mysteries were divided into two classes, the lesser and the greater: the former were intended for the common people--the latter for those in higher stations and of more cultivated understandings. But if the design of these mysteries really was, as some have conjectured, to impress the minds of the initiated with just notions of God, of providence, and of a future state, it is demonstrable that they must have been grossly perverted from their original intent. Bishop Warburton, who stiffly contends for this high honor in their primary institutions, is obliged to admit that the orgies of Bacchus, and the mysteries of the mother of the gods, and of Venus, and of Cupid, being celebrated in honor of deities who were supposed to inspire and to preside over the sensual appetites, it was natural for the initiated to believe that they honored these divinities when they committed the vicious actions of which they were the patrons. He further acknowledges, that the mysteries of these deities being performed during nocturnal darkness, or in gloomy recesses, and under the seal of the greatest secrecy, the initiated indulged themselves on these occasions, in all the abominations with which the object of their worship was supposed to be delighted. In fact, the enormities committed in celebrating the mysteries of these impure deities ultimately became so intolerable, that their rites were proscribed in various countries, as those of Bacchus were at Rome. [Livy's *Roman History*, Book 39.] And from this short account of the matter, we may learn how properly the apostle Paul denominated the boasted Heathen mysteries, "the unfruitful works of darkness," Ephesians 5:11. Works unproductive of any good either to those who performed them, or to society: and how very properly he prohibited Christians from joining in or "having any fellowship with them;" because the things that were done in them, under the seal of secrecy, were such as it was even base to mention, ver. 12. Warburton assures us, that while all the other mysteries became exceedingly corrupt, through the fully or wickedness of those who presided at their celebration, and gave occasion to many abominable impurities, by means of which the manners of the Heathens were entirely vitiated, the Eleusinian mysteries long preserved their original purity. But at last they also, yielding to the fate of all human institutions, partook of the common depravity, and had a very pernicious influence on the morals of mankind. In

proportion therefore as the gospel made its progress in the world, the Eleusinian mysteries themselves fell into disrepute; and, together with all the other Pagan solemnities, were at length suppressed. [Rollin's *Ancient History*. Vol. 5.]

THE RELIGION OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS

At the time of the birth of Christ, the religion of Rome, or to speak more properly, the established superstition of the empire, had been received, together with its government and laws, by a great part of the then known world. Much of this system of superstition had been borrowed from the Greeks; and hence the propriety of classing the religion of the two people under one head. There was, however, a difference between the two, and in some points rather material. The framers of the Grecian system seem to have admitted the existence of one supreme, intelligent, great first cause, the author of every thing, visible and invisible, mid the supreme governor of the world; but they did not think it either necessary or proper to impart this idea to the multitude, whose gross conceptions they thought might be amused by a variety of fabulous tales, and whose hopes and fears would be more excited by a plurality of deities than by the unity of an overruling power. The divinities first introduced in consequence of this opinion, were the sun, and the principal planets, to which were soon added the elements of fire, air, earth, and water. These fictitious deities were invested with the human form, and all the passions incident to human nature were attributed to them. The fabricated tales of their adventures, comprehended an indulgence of the most vicious propensities and the perpetration of enormous crimes. The Greeks adored Jupiter as at the head of the celestial association, the protector of mankind, and the governor of the universe; while their philosophers, who appear in general to have been atheists, by this personage typified the higher region of the air; and by his wife (Juno) the lower atmosphere diffused between the heavens and the sea. And whilst the common people paid homage to Cybele, as the mother of the gods, the more, refined part of the nation intended nothing more than the earth by that object of worship. Fire was deified, and the great body of water had also its divine representative. Apollo was the sun, and the moon was his sister, Artemis, or Diana. Thus by the fertile imagination of the Greeks, their deities were gradually multiplied to a remarkable excess; indeed the poet Hesiod, swells the amount to THIRTY THOUSAND! According to their mythology, all parts of nature teemed with divine agents, and a system which it must be owned was in some respects elegantly fanciful, was characterised, under other views, by features of the grossest absurdity.

Worship was originally offered to their deities in the open air, in groves, or upon eminences; but the Greeks, in the progress of their superstition, were led to believe that their deities would be better pleased with the erection of buildings peculiarly devoted to their service; and temples, at first simple and unadorned, afterwards magnificent and sumptuous, were the fruits of their opinion. Of the extent to which

this point was ultimately carried, we have indeed a striking instance in the case of the temple of Diana, at Ephesus, the length of which, Pliny tells us, was 425 feet, and in breadth 220. It was supported by 107 pillars, each of them 60 feet high. This magnificent structure was erected at the expense of all Asia, and 250 years were spent in finishing it. At first these temples were without images; but in process of time wooden figures of their gods were exhibited for public reverence. Stone or marble was soon deemed preferable for this use; metals of various kinds were also adopted; and the rudeness of early fabrication was succeeded by elegant workmanship.

Sacrifices formed an essential part of the superstitious worship of the Greeks, as well as of the Romans. Grateful respect for the favors conferred on them by their imaginary deities,--the desire of averting their anger after the commission of any offense,--and an eagerness to secure their blessing on a projected enterprise, were the inducements to these oblations. Herbs were the earliest offerings, and it was usual to burn them that the smoke might ascend towards heaven. Barley, and cakes made of that grain, were afterwards substituted for ordinary herbs; and ultimately some of the most useful animals were immolated at their altars, (see Acts 14:11-13) upon which also milk, oil, and wine were poured. Those who served at the altar were required to prepare themselves by abstaining even from lawful pleasures for one or more preceding days; and all who entered the temples, on the occasions, dipped their hands into consecrated water. When the people were assembled about the altar, the priest sprinkled them with holy water, and offered up a short prayer for them: he next examined the victim, to ascertain its freedom from defects or blemishes; prayer was then resumed; frankincense was strewed upon the altar; hymns were sung; the animal was killed with ceremonious precision; pieces of its flesh were offered and burnt as first-fruits, and the principal devotees carried off the rest.

The religious system which Romulus planted on the banks of the Tiber, corresponded pretty much with that of Greece as above described. A multiplicity of divine beings, graciously superintending human affairs, formed the prevailing creed. All the deities had priests and ministers, sacrifices and oblations. The augurs, or soothsayers, in whose art or imposture the founder of Rome excelled, were considered as an important and necessary part of the establishment. Each tribe had one of these pretended prophets, who announced the will of the gods with regard to any future enterprise, from an observance of the flight or the noise of birds, from the feeding of poultry, the movement of beasts, and other appearances. The high priest and his associates not only regulated the public worship, but acted as judges in all cases which had any reference to religion, and exercised a censorial and authoritative jurisdiction over inferior ministers.

The sacrifices in which the different priests officiated did not agree in every particular; but the following usages and ceremonies were the most prevalent. When a

sacrifice was intended, a solemn procession was made to the temple of some deity. In the first place a preeco, or public cryer, called the attention of the people to the pious work: then appeared the flute-players and harpers, performing in their best manner. The victims followed, wearing white fillets, with their horns gilt, As soon as the priest reached the altar, he prayed to the gods, imploring pardon for his sins, and a blessing upon his country. Having commanded all impure and vicious persons to withdraw, he threw grain, meal, and frankincense upon the heads of the animals, and poured wine between the horns of each; and, having first scored them on the back, he gave orders to his attendants to slay them. The entrails were closely inspected, and from their particular appearance, omens were deduced, or inferred, supposing the gods to intimate their will by such minutiae to sagacious and devout observers. Some portions of the flesh were then placed upon the altar, for the gratification of that deity to whose honor the temple had been reared--the remainder was divided among the attendant rotaries.

What has been now said of the superstition of the ancient Romans, refers particularly to the manner of conducting their worship in the city of Rome, but similar arrangements prevailed in the provinces; and in our own country there were twenty-eight flamins, or Pagan priests, according to the number of the cities, and three arch-flamins; namely, one at London, a second at York, and a third at Caerleon. But to enter into a more particular detail of these things would carry me beyond the limits of this prefatory discourse; suffice it therefore to say, that the whole originated in the vulgar superstitions of the most remote ages of Paganism, and it would be difficult to say, which part was Trojan, which Egyptian, or which Chaldean. The Romans in general knew the whole to be an imposition, and many of them ridiculed the pretense that the institution was divine; and perhaps the subject cannot be more fitly and aptly expressed than it has been by Mr. Gibbon, in the following words: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord." [*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1. ch. ii.]

THE RELIGION OF THE INDIANS, EGYPTIANS, PERSIANS, AND CELTS

In reviewing the various systems of Polytheism which prevailed at that time, those which were cultivated by the Indians, the Persians, the Egyptians, and the Celts, are entitled to distinguished notice. Of these the Indians and Celts are chiefly remarkable for having selected for the object of their adoration a set of ancient heroes and leaders, whose memory so far from being rendered illustrious by their virtues, had descended to posterity disgraced and loaded with vice and infamy. Both these classes of men believed that the souls of men survived the dissolution of their bodies; the former conceiving that all of them, without distinction, entered at death into other bodies on this earth; while the latter, on the contrary, considering immortality to be

the reward which heaven bestows on valor alone, supposed that the bodies of the brave, after being purified by fire, again became the receptacles of their souls, and that the heroes thus renewed were received into the council and society of the gods. Authority of the most despotic kind was committed to their priests by the people of either country. Their official duties were not restricted to the administration of the concerns of religion, but extended to the enacting of laws, and the various other departments of civil government.

In describing the religion of the Egyptians, we must distinguish between the general religion of the country, and the practice of particular provinces or districts. The liberty which every city and province enjoyed of adopting what deities it preferred, and of worshipping them under any forms which the inhabitants might think proper to institute, necessarily gave rise to a great variety of private systems. In the choice of their public or national gods, no sort of delicacy was manifested: the greater part of them being indiscriminately composed of mortals renowned in history for their virtues, and others distinguished alone by the enormity of their crimes; such were Osiris, Seraphis, Typhon, His, and others. With the worship of these was joined that of the constellations, the sun, the moon, the dog-star, animals of almost every kind, certain sorts of plants, etc. etc. Whether the religion of the state, or that which was peculiar to any province or city be considered, it will be found equally remote in its principles from every thing liberal, dignified, or rational. Some parts were ridiculous in the extreme, and the whole in no small degree contaminated by a despicable baseness and obscenity. In fact the religion of the Egyptians was so remarkably distinguished by absurd and disgraceful traits, that it was made the subject of derision even by those whose own tenets and practice were by no means conspicuous for wisdom. The Egyptian priests had a sacred code peculiarly their own, founded on principles very different from those which characterised the popular superstition, and, which they studiously concealed from the prying eye of the public, by wrapping it up in hieroglyphical characters, the meaning and power of which were only known to themselves.

The Persians derived their religious system from Zoroaster. The leading principle of their religion was, that all things are derived from two common governing causes: the one the author of all good, the other of all evil: the former the source of light, of mind, and of spiritual intelligence; the latter that of darkness and matter with all its grosser incidents. Between these two powerful agents they supposed a constant war to be carried on. Those, however, who taught upon this system, did not all explain it in the same way, or deduce the same conclusions from it: hence uniformity was destroyed, and various sects originated. The most intelligent part of the Persians maintained that there was one supreme God, to whom they gave the name of MYTHRA, and that under him were two inferior deities, the one called Oromasdes, the author of all good; the other Ariman, the cause of all evil. The common people, who equally believed in the existence of a supreme being, under the title of MYTHRA, appear to have

confounded him with the sun, which was the object of their adoration; and it is probable, that with the two inferior deities they joined others of whom little or nothing is now known.

None of these various systems of religion appear to have contributed in any degree towards a reformation of manners, or exciting a respect for virtue of any kind. The gods and goddesses who were held up as objects of adoration to the multitude, instead of presenting examples of excellence for their imitation, stood forth to public view the avowed authors of the most flagrant and enormous crimes. The priests took no sort of interest in regulating the public morals; neither directing the people by their precepts, nor inviting them by exhortation and example to the pursuit of what is lovely and of good report: on the contrary, they indulged themselves in the most unwarrantable licentiousness, maintaining that the whole of religion was comprised in performing the rites and ceremonies instituted by their ancestors, and that every species of sensual gratification was freely allowed by their deities to those who regularly ministered to them in this way. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, was but little understood, and of course only very partially acknowledged. Hence at the period when Christ appeared, any notions of this kind found little or no acceptance among the Greeks and Romans, but were regarded in the light of old wives' fables, fit only for the amusement of women and children. No particular points of belief respecting the immortality of the soul being established by their public standards of religion, every one was at liberty to avow what opinion he pleased on that subject.

It can excite no reasonable surprise, therefore, that under the influence of such circumstances, the state of society should have become in the highest degree vicious and depraved. The lives of men of every class, from the highest to the lowest, were spent in the practice of the most abominable and flagitious vices. Even crimes, the horrible turpitude of which was such, that decency forbids the mention of them. were openly practiced with the greatest impunity. Should the reader doubt of this, he may be referred to LUCIAN among the Greek authors, and to JUVENAL and PERSIUS among the Roman poets--or even to the testimony of the apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. In the writings of Lucian, for instance, he will find the most unnatural affections and detestable practices treated of at large, and with the utmost familiarity, as things of ordinary and daily occurrence. And when we turn our attention to those cruel and inhuman exhibitions which are well known to have yielded the highest gratification to both the Greeks and Romans, the two most polished nations of the world--the savage conflicts of the gladiators in the circus; when we cast an eye on the dissoluteness of manners by which the walks of private life were polluted; the horrible prostitution of boys, to which the laws opposed no restraint; the liberty of divorce which belonged to the wife as well as the husband; the shameful practice of exposing infants, and procuring abortions; the multiplicity of stews and brothels, many of which were consecrated to their deities;--when we reflect

on these and various other excesses, to the most ample indulgence in which the laws opposed no restraint; who can forbear putting the question, that, if such were the people distinguished above all others by the excellency of their laws, and the superiority of their attainments in literature and arts, what must have been the state of those nations who possessed none of these advantages, but were governed solely by the impulses and dictates of rude and uncultivated nature!

VIEW OF THE DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF GENTILE PHILOSOPHY

At the time of Christ's appearance upon earth, there were two species of philosophy that generally prevailed throughout the civilized world; the one that of Greece, the other what is usually termed the Oriental. The philosophy of the Greeks was not confined to that nation, for its principles were embraced by all such of the Romans as aspired to any eminence of wisdom. The Oriental philosophy prevailed chiefly in Persia, Chaldea, Syria, Egypt, and other eastern countries. Both these species of philosophy were split into various sects, but with this distinction, that those which sprang from the Oriental system all proceeded on one common principle, and of course had, many similar tenets, though they might differ as to some particular inferences and opinions: whilst those to which the philosophy of Greece gave rise, were divided in opinion respecting the elements or first principles of wisdom, and were consequently widely separated from each other in the whole course of their discipline. The apostle Paul is generally supposed to have adverted to each of these systems--to that of Greece, in Colossians 2:8, and to the Oriental, in 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; and 6:20--in all which places, he strongly warns Christians to beware of blending the doctrines of either with the simple gospel of Jesus Christ. Happy had it been for the Christian church, could they have taken the admonition which was thus given them by the apostle; but vain and presumptuous man could not rest satisfied with "the truth as it is in Jesus"--the wisdom that leads to eternal life, as it came pure from above; but must exercise his ingenuity in fruitless attempts to reconcile it; first of all with the principles of the Oriental philosophy, and afterwards to many of the dogmas of the Grecian sects.

The Greek philosophers, whose doctrines were also much cultivated by the Romans, may be divided into two classes: the first comprehended those whose tenets struck at the root of all religion--a species of Atheists, who, while they professed to support and recommend the cause of virtue, in reality nourished the interests of vice, giving color to almost every kind of criminality: the other was composed of such as acknowledged the existence of a Deity, whom it was the duty of men to worship and obey, and who inculcated an essential and eternal distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice, but who nevertheless subverted these just principles, by connecting with them various notions absurd or trifling in their nature. Under the first of these classes may be ranked the disciples of Epicurus, and those who passed under the name of Academics.

THE EPICUREANS maintained that the universe arose out of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms; that the gods, whose existence they hesitated absolutely to deny, were totally indifferent and unconcerned about all human affairs, or rather entirely unacquainted with them; that our souls are born and die; that all things depend on and are determined by accident; that in every thing voluptuous gratification was to be sought after as **THE CHIEF GOOD**; and even virtue itself was only to be pursued, inasmuch as it might minister at the shrine of pleasure. The votaries of a system like this, which indeed included nearly all the children of prosperity, the rich, the noble, and the powerful, naturally studied to pass their lives in one continued round of luxurious enjoyment. The only restraint they imposed on themselves arose out of a desire to avoid, at all times, such an excessive or immoderate addictedness to pleasure as might generate disease, or tend in any other shape to abridge the capacity for future indulgence.

THE ACADEMICS, though they affected to be influenced by wiser principles than the former, yet entertained maxims of an equally lax and pernicious tendency with them. They were nearly allied to the Sceptics; in fact, the main distinction lay in this,--that whereas the Sceptics contended that nothing should be assented to, but every thing made the subject of dispute; the Academics, on the contrary, maintained that our judgments should acquiesce in all things which bear the appearance of truth, or which may be considered in the light of probabilities. But as they were always undetermined respecting what constituted the sort of probability to which a wise man should assent, their doctrines contributed, no less than that of the Sceptics, to render every thing vague and unsettled. To make it, as they did, a matter of doubt and uncertainty, whether the gods existed or not; whether the soul was perishable or immortal; whether virtue was preferable to vice, or vice to virtue; was certainly nothing less than to undermine the fundamental principles of religion and morality. The Academic system of philosophy fell into such disrepute as to be, at one time, quite neglected and utterly lost; but Cicero revived it at Rome, a little before the birth of Christ; and so much weight was attached to his example and authority, that it was soon embraced by all who aspired to the chief honors of the state.

THE PERIPATETICS belonged to the other class of philosophers, for they acknowledged the existence of a God, and the obligations of morality; yet their tenets were not much calculated to inspire a reverence for the one, or a love for the other. The doctrine which Aristotle, their great master, taught, gave to the Deity an influence not much beyond that of the moving principle in a piece of machinery. He indeed considered him to be of an highly refined and exalted nature, happy in the contemplation of himself, but entirely unconscious of what was passing here below; confined from all eternity to the celestial world, and instigating the operations of nature rather from necessity than from volition or choice. In a deity of this description, differing but little from the god of the Epicureans, there surely was

nothing that could reasonably excite either love, respect, or fear. It is difficult to ascertain precisely what were the sentiments of this class of philosophers respecting the immortality of the soul; but it may fairly be asked, Could the interests of religion or morality be in any shape effectually promoted by teachers like these, who denied the superintendence of divine providence, and insinuated, in no very obscure terms, a disbelief of the soul's future existence?

THE STOICS assigned to the Deity somewhat more of majesty and influence, than the disciples of Aristotle, They did not limit his functions merely to the regulating of the clouds, and the numbering of the stars; but conceived him to animate every part of the universe with his presence, in the nature of a subtle, active, penetrating fire. They regarded his connection with matter, however, as the effect of necessity, and supposed his will to be subordinate to the immutable decrees of fate; hence it was impossible for him to be considered as the author either of rewards to the virtuous, or of punishment to the wicked. The Stoics denied the immortality of the soul, and thus deprived mankind of the strongest motive to a wise and virtuous course of life. In short, the moral discipline of the Stoics may be compared to a body of a fair and imposing external appearance, but which, on closer examination, is found destitute of those essential parts which alone can give it either energy or excellence, The Platonists seem, of all the Grecian philosophers, to have made the highest advances in knowledge, and the nearest approach to true wisdom. Yet the system of **PLATO** had its defects. He considered the Deity as supreme governor of the universe, a being of the highest wisdom and power, and totally unconnected with any material substance. The souls of men he conceived to proceed from this pre-eminent source; and, as partaking of its nature, to be incapable of death. His system gave the strongest encouragement to virtue, and equally discountenanced vice, by holding out to mortals the prospect of a future state of rewards and punishments. Yet after all, his notions of the Deity were very contracted, since he never ascribes to him the attributes of infinity, immensity, ubiquity, omnipotence, omniscience, but supposes him to be confined within certain limits, and that the direction of human affairs was committed to a class of inferior spiritual agents, whom he termed daemons. This notion of ministering daemons, as well as those points of doctrine which relate to the origin and condition of the human soul, greatly disfigured the morality of Plato; inasmuch as they tend to generate superstition, and to confirm men in the practice of worshipping a number of inferior deities. His doctrine, moreover, that the soul, during its continuance in the body, was in a state of imprisonment, and that we ought to endeavor, by means of contemplation, to set it free, and restore it to an alliance with the divine nature, had a pernicious tendency, in prompting persons of weak minds to withdraw a proper degree of attention from the body and the concerns of this life, and to indulge in the dreams and fancies of a disordered imagination.

THE ECLECTICS, were a sect of philosophers that took their leading principles from the system of Plato. They considered almost every thing which he had advanced

respecting the Deity, the soul, the world, and the daemons, as indisputable axioms: on which account they were regarded by many as altogether Platonists. Indeed this title, so far from being disclaimed, was rather affected by some of them, and particularly by those who joined themselves to Ammonius Saccas, another celebrated patron of the Eclectic philosophy. Yet with the doctrines held by Plato, they very freely intermixed the most approved maxims of the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, the Peripatetics, and the Oriental philosophers; taking due care, however, to admit none that were in opposition to the tenets of their favorite guide and instructor.

OF THE ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY

It is a subject of much regret among the learned, that the Greek writers, to whom we are chiefly indebted for our knowledge of the ancient history of philosophy, have taken so little pains to inform posterity concerning the opinions which, during the time that the Greek sects flourished, were taught in other countries, particularly in Egypt and Asia. It is owing to this, that the documents which have hitherto come to light relating to the Oriental philosophy are so few, and consequently our knowledge on the subject so imperfect. Some insight, however, into its nature and principles may be obtained from what has been handed down to us, respecting the tenets of several of the earlier sects that sprang up in the Christian church. The Oriental philosophy, as a peculiar system of doctrines concerning the divine nature, is said to have originated in Chaldea, or Persia; from whence it passed through Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt; and mixing with other systems, formed many different sects. There seems also to be sufficient ground for referring the formation of the leading doctrines of this philosophy into a regular system to Zoroaster, whose name the followers of this doctrine prefixed to some of their spurious books, and whose system is fundamentally the same with that which was subsequently adopted by the Asiatic and Egyptian philosophers.

The mixture of Platonic notions which is found in the Asiatic philosophy, as well as of Oriental doctrines among the later Platonists, may be easily accounted for, from the intercourse which subsisted between the Alexandrian and Asiatic philosophers, after the schools of Alexandria were established. From that time, many Asiatics who were addicted to the study of philosophy, doubtless visited Alexandria, and became acquainted with the then popular doctrines of Plato; and by blending these with their own, formed an heterogeneous mass of opinions, which in its turn mixed with the systems of the Alexandrian schools. This union of Oriental and Grecian philosophy was further promoted by the dispersion of the philosophers of Alexandria, in the reign of Ptolemy Physcon: many of whom, to escape from tyranny, fled into Asia, and opened schools in various places.

It is supposed to have been at the time when the Platonic philosophers of Alexandria visited the Eastern schools, that certain professors of the Oriental philosophy, prior

to the existence of the Christian heresies, borrowed from the Greeks the name of Gnostics, to express their pretensions to a more perfect knowledge of the Divine Nature than others possessed. The Pagan origin of this appellation is supposed to be plainly intimated by the apostle Paul in two passages of his writings; in one of which he cautions Timothy against "the opposition of false science," (1 Timothy 6:20,) and in the other warns the Colossians not to be imposed upon by a "vain and deceitful philosophy," framed according to human tradition, and the principles of the world, and not according to the doctrine of Christ -- Colossians 2:8. **But whatever may be thought concerning the name, there is little room left to doubt, that the tenets, at least, of the Gnostics, existed in the Eastern schools long before the rise of the Gnostic sects in the Christian church under Basilides, Valentine, and others; consequently must have been imported or derived by the latter from the former. The Oriental doctrine of Emanation seems frequently alluded to in the New Testament,** as hath been already observed, and in terms which cannot so properly be applied to any other dogmas of the Jewish sects.

The Oriental philosophers, though divided into a great variety of sects, seem to have been generally agreed in believing matter to be the cause of all evil, though they were much divided in opinion as to the particular mode or form under which it ought to be considered as such. They were unanimous in maintaining that there had existed from all eternity a divine nature, replete with goodness, intelligence, wisdom, and virtue, a light of the most pure and subtle kind diffused throughout all space, of whom it was impossible for the mind of man to form an adequate conception. Those who were conversant with the Greek language gave to this pre-eminent being the name of *buthos* in allusion to the vastness of his excellence, which they deemed it beyond the reach of human capacity to comprehend. The space which he inhabits they named *pleroma* but occasionally the term *aion* was applied to it. This divine nature, they imagined, having existed for ages in solitude and silence, at length, by the operation of his own omnipotent will, begat of himself two minds or intelligences of a most excellent and exalted kind, one of either sex. By these, others of a similar nature were produced; and the faculty of propagating their kind being successively communicated to all, a class of divine beings was in time generated, respecting whom no difference of opinion seems to have existed, except in regard to their number; some conceiving it to be more and others less. The nearer any one of this celestial family stood in affinity to the one grand parent of all, the closer were they supposed to resemble him in nature and perfection; the farther they were removed, the less were they accounted to partake of his goodness, wisdom, or any other attribute. Although every one of them had a beginning, yet they were all supposed to be immortal, and not liable to any change; on which account they were termed *aeonev*, that is, immortal beings placed beyond the reach of temporal vicissitudes or injuries. [The Greek term *aeon* properly signifies, indefinite or eternal duration, as opposed to that which is finite or temporal. It was however metonymically used for such natures as are in themselves unchangeable and immortal. That it was commonly applied in

this sense even by the Greek philosophers, at the time of Christ's birth is plain from Arrian, who uses it to describe a nature the reverse of ours, superior to frailty, and liable to no vicissitudes. There was therefore nothing strange or unusual in the application of this term, by the Gnostics, to beings of a celestial nature, liable to neither accident nor change. Indeed the term is used by the ancient fathers of the purer class, to denote the angels in general, good as well as bad.]

Beyond that vast expanse refulgent with everlasting light, which was considered as the immediate habitation of the Deity, and of those natures which had been generated from him, these philosophers placed the seat of matter; where, according to them, it had lain from all eternity, a rude, undigested, opaque mass, agitated by turbulent irregular motions of its own provoking; and nurturing, as in a seed-bed, the rudiments of vice and every species of evil. In this state it was found by a genius, or celestial spirit of the higher order, who had been either driven from the abode of Deity for some offense, or commissioned by him for the purpose; and who reduced it into order, and gave it that arrangement and fashion which the universe now bears, Those who spake the Greek tongue were accustomed to refer to the Creator of the world by the name of DEMIURGUS. Matter received its inhabitants, both man and other animals, from the same hand that had given to it disposition and symmetry. Its native darkness was also illuminated by this creative spirit with a ray of celestial light, either secretly stolen, or imparted through the bounty of the Deity. He likewise communicated to the bodies he had formed, and which would otherwise have remained destitute of reason and uninstructed, except in what relates to mere animal life, particles of the divine essence, or souls of a kindred nature to the Deity. When all things were thus completed, DEMIURGUS, revolting against the Great First Cause of all things, the all-wise and omnipotent God, assumed to himself the exclusive government of this new state, which he apportioned out into provinces or districts; bestowing the administration and command over them on a number of *genii*, or spirits of inferior degree, who had been his associates and assistants.

Man therefore, whilst he continued in this world, was supposed to be compounded of two principles, acting in direct opposition to each other;--an earthly, corrupt, or vitiated body-- and a soul partaking of the nature of the Deity, being derived from the region of purity and light. The soul, or ethereal part, being through its connection with the body, confined as it were within a prison of matter, was constantly exposed to the danger of becoming involved in ignorance, and acquiring every sort of evil propensity, from the impulse and contagion of the vitiated mass by which it was enveloped. But the Deity, touched with compassion for the hapless state of those captive minds, was ever anxious that the means of escaping from this darkness and bondage, into liberty and light, should be extended to them; and had, accordingly, at various times, sent amongst them teachers, endowed with wisdom, and filled with celestial light, who might communicate to them the principles of true religion, and thus instruct them in the way by which deliverance was to be obtained from their

wretched and forlorn state. DEMIUROUS, however, and his associates, unwilling to resign any part of that dominion, of whose sweets they were now become so sensible, or to relinquish the divine honors which they had usurped, set at work every engine to obstruct the Deity; and not only tormented and slew the messengers of heaven, but endeavored, by means of superstition and sensual attractions, to root out and extinguish every spark of celestial truth. The minds that listened to the calls of the Deity, and who having renounced obedience to the usurped authorities of this world, continued steadfast in the worship of the great First Parent, resisting the evil propensities of the corporeal frame, and every incitement to illicit gratification, were supposed, on the dissolution of their bodies, to be directly borne away, pure, aerial, and disengaged from every thing gross or material, to the immediate residence of God himself; whilst those who, notwithstanding the admonitions they received, had persisted in paying divine honors to him who was merely the fabricator of the world, and his associates, worshipping them as gods, and suffering themselves to be enslaved by the lusts and vicious impulses to which they were exposed from their alliance with matter, were denied the hope of exaltation after death, and could only expect to migrate into new bodies, suited to their base, sluggish, and degraded condition. When the grand work of setting free all these minds or souls should be accomplished, God, it was supposed, would dissolve the fabric of this lower world; and having once more confined matter, with all its contagious influence, within its original limits, would throughout all future ages live in consummate glory, and reign surrounded by kindred spirits, as he did before the foundation of the world.

The moral discipline deduced from this system of philosophy, by those who embraced it, was by no means of an uniform cast, but differed widely in its complexion, according to their various tempers and inclinations. Such, for instance, as were naturally of a morose disposition, maintained that the great object of human concern should be to invigorate the energies of the mind. and to quicken and refine its perceptions, by abstracting it as much as possible from every thing gross or sensual. The body, on the contrary, as the source of every depraved appetite, was, according to them, to be reduced and brought into subjection by hunger, thirst, and every other species of mortification, and neither to be supported by flesh or wine, nor indulged in any of those gratifications to which it is naturally prone; in fact, a constant self-denial was to be rigorously observed in every thing which might contribute either to the convenience or pleasantness of life; so that the material frame being thus by every means weakened and brought low, the celestial spirit might the more readily escape from its contagious influence and regain its native liberty. Hence it was that the Manicheans, the Marcionites, the Encraitites, and others, passed their lives in one continued course of austerity and mortification. On the other hand, those who were constitutionally inclined to voluptuousness and vicious indulgence, found the means of accommodating the same principles to a mode of life that admitted of the free and uncontrolled gratification of all their inclinations. The essence of piety and religion, they said, consisted in a knowledge of the Supreme Being, and maintaining

a mental intercourse and association with him. Whoever had become an adept in these attainments, and from the habitual exercise of contemplation, had acquired the power of keeping the mind abstracted from every thing corporeal, was no longer to be considered as affected by, or answerable for, the impulses and actions of the body, and consequently could be under no necessity to control its inclinations, or resist its propensities. Hence the dissolute lives of the Carpocratians and others, who assumed the liberty of doing whatever pleased them; and maintained that the practice of virtue was not enjoined by the Deity, but imposed on mankind by that power whom they regarded as the prince of this world, the maker of the universe.

From this concise review of the state of the Gentile world at the time of Christ's appearance on earth, the inferences to be deduced, are, it is presumed, sufficiently obvious. Mankind had been furnished with abundant experience of what reason and philosophy, in their highest state of cultivation, could do in the way of directing the human mind to the attainment of virtue and happiness; and what was the result? The very wisest among them were bewildered in fruitless speculations about the nature of the CHIEF GOOD, and equally so about the way of attaining it. Some of them, indeed, admitted that it consisted in virtue; but then if we enquire wherein they supposed virtue to consist, we shall find their notions as discordant and undefined as their ideas of happiness itself were vague and desultory. ARISTOTLE made the existence of virtue to depend upon the possession of an abundance of the good things of this world; and even laid it down as a principle, that "without the gifts of fortune, virtue is not sufficient for happiness, but that a wise man must be miserable in poverty and sickness;" DIOGOENES, from whose pride and stoical austerity one might have expected sentiments of a different nature, maintained that a poor old man was the most miserable thing in life. Even PLATO, the great preceptor of Aristotle, taught his followers that happiness comprehended the possession of wisdom, health, good fortune, honor, and riches; and maintained that the man who enjoyed all these must be perfectly happy. ZENO and his followers held it as a principle, that all crimes were equal. THALES, the founder of the Ionian sect, being asked how he thought a man might bear affliction with the greatest ease, answered, "By seeing his enemies in a worse condition." EPICURUS had no notion of justice but as it was profitable, and the consequence was that the morals of his followers were proverbially scandalous; for though their master taught that happiness consisted in virtue, he made virtue itself to consist in following nature, and thus he eventually led his disciples into such gross immorality, that, according to their manner of life, virtue and voluptuousness seemed to be convertible terms with them: and ever since, an Epicure is a title appropriate to every character in which excess and sensual indulgence are found to meet. [See Brucker's *History of Philosophys* translated by Dr. Enfield; and Mosheim's *Commentaries on the affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantine the Great*, translated by R. & Vidal, Vol. I. Introd. ch. 1.]

Such was the hopeless and forlorn condition into which the human race had sunk,

and such the wretched aspect of the Heathen or Gentile world, at the time of the Messiah's appearance upon earth. The Greeks and Romans had civilized the world; philosophy had done its utmost; literature, and arts, and the sciences in every department, had been cultivated to the highest perfection; but what, under all these advantages, was the real condition of our species in reference to man's highest end and aim, the knowledge of the true God and the duties which he owes him the actual state of religion and morals? We have it strikingly described by the great apostle of the Gentiles.

"They walked in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and being past feeling, they had given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness, with greediness;--they were without hope, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12, and ch. 4:17,18,13)

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ON THE STATE OF THE JEWISH NATION AT THE PERIOD OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The privileges which the Jews at this time enjoyed above all other nations, were many and distinguished; but in enumerating them, the apostle Paul lays the principal stress upon their being favored with a divine revelation, to guide them in matters of the highest importance to their present and everlasting happiness:--they had the oracles of God in their hands; the writings of Moses and the prophets, those holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (Romans 3:2; and 2 Peter 1:21). Yet with these incalculable advantages, the condition of the people in general was not much superior to that of the Gentiles.

The civil government of Judea, at the time of Christ's birth, was vested in the hands of a Roman stipendiary, named Herod the Great;--a title to which he could have no pretensions, except from the magnitude of his vices. Nature, it is true, had not withheld from him the talents requisite for a lofty and brilliant course of life; but such was his jealous disposition, such the ferocity of his temper, his devotedness to luxury, pomp, and magnificence so madly extravagant, and so much beyond his means; in short, so extensive and enormous was the catalogue of his vices, that he became an object of utter detestation to the afflicted people over whom he swayed the kingly scepter. Instead of cherishing and protecting his subjects, he appears to have made them sensible of his authority merely by oppression and violence; so that they complained to the Emperor Augustus, at Rome, of his cruelties, declaring they had suffered as much as if a wild beast had reigned over them; and Eusebius affirms, that the cruelty of this nefarious despot far surpassed whatever had been

represented in tragedy! Herod was not ignorant of the hatred which he had drawn upon himself, but to soften its asperity he became a professed devotee to the Jewish religion, and at a vast expense restored their temple, which through age had fallen into decay; but the effect of all this was destroyed by his still conforming to the manners and habits of those who worshipped a plurality of gods; and so many things were countenanced in direct opposition to the Jewish religion, that the hypocrisy of the tyrant's professions were too manifest to admit of a doubt.

On the death of Herod, the government of Judea was divided by the Emperor Augustus amongst his three surviving sons. Archelaus, the elder of the three, was appointed governor of Judea, Idumoea, and Samaria, under the title of Ethnarch. Antipas presided over Galilee and Peroea; whilst Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, with some of the neighboring territory, were assigned to Philip. The two latter, from their having a fourth part of the province of Judea allotted to each, were styled Tetrarchs. Archelaus, who inherited all the vices of his father, with but few of his better qualities, completely exhausted the patience of the Jews; and by a series of the most injurious and oppressive acts, drove them, in the tenth year of his reign, to lay their complaints before the emperor Augustus, who, after investigating the merits of the case, deposed the Ethnarch, and banished him to Yienne in Gaul.

On the expulsion of Archelaus, the greater part of Palestine, or Judea, was reduced by the Roman government into the form of a province, and placed under the superintendance of a governor, who was subject to the control of the president of Syria. It is probable that this arrangement at first met with the ready concurrence of the Jews, who, on the death of Herod, had petitioned Augustus that the distinct regal government might no longer be continued to them, but that their country might be received under his own immediate protection, and treated as a part of the Roman empire. The change, however, instead of producing an alleviation of misery to this unhappy people, brought with it an intolerable increase of their calamities. For, independent of the avarice and injustice of the governors, to which there were no bounds, it proved an intolerable grievance to them, who considered their nation to be God's peculiar people, that they should be obliged to pay tribute to a heathen, and an enemy of the true God, like Caesar, and live in subjection to those who worshipped false deities. Add to which, that the extortion of the publicans, who after the Roman manner were entrusted with the collection of the revenue, and for whose continual and flagrant abuses of authority it was seldom possible to obtain any sort of redress, became a subject of infinite dissatisfaction and complaint. And, to crown the whole, the constant presence of their governors, surrounded as they were by a multitude of foreign attendants of all descriptions, and protected by a Roman military guard, quartered with their eagles and various other ensigns of superstition, in the center of Jerusalem, their holy city, kept the sensibility of the Jews continually on the rack, and excited in their minds a degree of indignation bordering on fury. They naturally considered their religion to be disgraced and insulted by these innovations--their holy

places defiled--and in fact themselves, with all that they held sacred, polluted and brought into contempt. To these causes, are to be attributed the frequent tumults, factions, seditions, and murders, by which it was well known that these unfortunate people accelerated their own destruction.

If any vestige of liberty or happiness could have been possessed by a people thus circumstanced, it was effectually cut off by those who held the second place in the civil government under the Romans, and the sons of Herod, and who also had the supreme direction in every thing pertaining to religion, namely, the chief priests and the seventy elders, of whom the Sanhedrin or national council was composed. Josephus tells us, that the high priests were the most abandoned of mortals, and that they generally obtained their dignified stations either through the influence of money, or court sycophancy; and that they shrank from no species of criminality that might contribute to support them in the possession of an authority thus iniquitously purchased. Under a full conviction of the precarious tenure on which they held their situation, it became a leading object of their concern, to accumulate, either by fraud or force, such a quantity of wealth, as might enable them to gain the rulers of the state over to their interest, and drive away all competitors, or else yield them, when deprived of their dignity, the means of living at their ease in retirement.

The Sanhedrin, or national council, being composed of men who differed in opinion respecting some of the most important points of religion, nothing like a general harmony was to be found amongst its members: on the contrary, having adopted the principles of various sects, they allowed themselves to be carried away by all the prejudice and animosity of party; and were too often more intent on the indulgence of private pique, than studious of advancing the cause of religion, or promoting the public welfare. A similar depravity prevailed among the ordinary priests, and the inferior mixtlers of religion. The common people, instigated by the shocking examples thus held out to them, by those whom they were taught to consider as their guides, precipitated themselves into every species of vicious excess; and giving themselves up to sedition and rapine, appeared alike to defy the vengeance, both of God and man. There were, at that time, two prevailing systems of religion in Palestine, the Jewish and the Samaritan; and what contributed not a little to the calamities of the Hebrew nation, the followers of each of these regarded those of the other persuasion with the most virulent and implacable hatred, mutually venting their rancorous animosity in the direst curses and imprecations. The nature of the Jewish religion may be collected from the books of the Old Testament; but at the time of Christ's appearance, it had lost much of its original beauty and excellence, and was corrupted by errors of the most flagrant kind, that had crept in from various sources. The public worship of God was indeed still continued in the temple of Jerusalem, with all the rites of the Mosaic institution; and their festivals never failed to draw together all immense concourse of people at the stated seasons; nor did the Romans ever interfere to prevent those observances. In domestic life also, the

ordinances of the law were in general punctually attended to; but it is manifest, from the evidence adduced by various learned men, that even in the service of the temple itself, numerous ceremonies and observances, drawn from the religious worship of heathen nations, had been introduced and blended with those of divine institution; and that, in addition to superstitions like these of a public nature, many erroneous principles, probably brought from Babylon and Chaldea, by the ancestors of the people at their return from captivity, or adopted by the inconsiderate multitude, in conformity to the example of their neighbors the Greeks, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, were cherished and acted on in private.

The opinions and sentiments of the Jews respecting the Deity, the divine nature, the angels, daemons, the souls of men, their duties, and similar subjects, appear to have been far less extravagant, and formed on more rational grounds, than those of any other nation or people. Indeed, it was scarcely possible that they should wholly lose sight of that truth, in the knowledge of which their fathers had been instructed through the medium of revelation; especially as this instruction was rendered habitual to them, even at a tender age, by hearing, reading, and studying the writings of Moses and the prophets. In all their cities, towns, and villages, and indeed throughout the empire, wherever any considerable number of Jews resided, a sacred edifice, which they called a synagogue, was erected, in which it was customary for the people regularly to assemble, for the purposes of prayer and praise, and hearing the law publicly read and expounded. In most of the larger towns, there were also schools established, in which young persons were initiated in the first principles of religion, as well as instructed in the liberal arts.

But though the Jews certainly entertained many sentiments more rational and correct than their neighbors--sentiments which they had adopted from their own Scriptures--yet they had gradually incorporated with them so large a mixture of what was fabulous and absurd, as nearly to deprive the truth of all its force and energy.* Hence the many pointed rebukes which Jesus Christ gave to the Scribes and Pharisees, the prime leaders of religion in his day; telling them that they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and that they had made the divine law void through their traditions. Their notions of the nature of God, are supposed to have been closely allied to the oriental philosophy on that subject, while to the prince of darkness, and his associates and agents, they attributed an influence over the world and the human race so predominant as scarcely to leave a superior degree of power even to the Deity himself. Of various terrific conceits, founded upon this notion, one of the principal was, that all the evils and calamities which befall the human race, were to be considered as originating with this prince of darkness and his ministering spirits, who had their dwelling in the air, and were scattered throughout every part of the universe. Their notions also, and manner of reasoning respecting angels, or ministers of divine Providence, were nearly allied to those maintained by the Babylonians or Chaldeans, as may be readily perceived by those who will give

themselves the trouble to investigate the subject.

[* The Jews acknowledge two laws, which they believe to have been delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai: of which one was immediately committed to writing in the text of the Pentateuch, and the other is said to have been handed down from generation to generation, for many ages, by oral tradition. From the time of Moses to the days of Rabbi Jehuda, only part of the oral law had ever been committed to writing for public perusal. In every generation, the president of the Sanhedrim, or the prophet of his age, for his own private use, is said to have written notes of the traditions which he had heard from his teachers, but he taught in public only from word of mouth: and thus each individual wrote for himself an exposition of the law and the ceremonies it enjoined, according to what he had heard. Thus things were situated till the days of Rabbi Jehuda. He observed, that the students of the law were gradually diminishing, that difficulties and distresses were multiplying, that the kingdom of impiety was increasing in strength and extending itself over the world, while the people of Israel were driven to the ends of the earth. Fearing lest, in these circumstances, the traditions would be forgotten and lost, he collected them all, arranged them under distinct heads, and formed them into a methodical code of traditional law. Of this book, entitled the MISHNA, copies were speedily multiplied and extensively circulated; and the Jews at large received it with the highest veneration. See Mr. Allen's *Modern Judaism*; ch. 3. p. 22 - 36, where the reader will find numerous quotations from the Rabbi's shewing how this (supposed) oral law is by them extolled above the written law of Moses--just as the Papists in later ages have made void the doctrine of Christ and his apostles by the traditions of the fathers.]

But on no one point were the sentiments of the Jews of that day, more estranged from the doctrine that was taught by their prophets, than on that which regarded the character of **their Messiah**. The greatest part of the Jewish nation were looking with eager desire for the appearance of the deliverer whom God had promised to their fathers. But their hopes were not directed to such an one as the Scriptures described: **they expected not a spiritual deliverer, to rescue them from the bondage of sin and Satan, and to bestow upon them the blessings of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, the adoption of children into his family, and the hope of an eternal inheritance in the world to come; they looked for a mighty warlike leader, whose talents and prowess might recover for them their civil liberty**. Fondly dreaming of a temporal kingdom for their Messiah, their carnal minds were so riveted under the dominion of this master prejudice, that, in general, their hearts were blinded to the real scope of the law and the prophets.

It is abundantly manifest from the New Testament Scriptures, that at the time of Christ's appearance, the Jews were divided into various sects, widely differing in opinion from each other, not merely on subjects of smaller moment, but also on

those points which enter into the very essence of religion. Of **the Pharisees and Sadducees**, the two most distinguished of these sects, both in number and respectability, mention is made in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. Josephus, Philo, and others, speak of a third sect, under the title of the **Essenes**; and it appears from more than one authority, that several others of less note were to be found among them. The evangelist Matthew notices the **Herodians**; a class of men who, it seems highly probable, had espoused the cause of the descendants of Herod the Great, and contended that they had been unjustly deprived of the greater part of Palestine by the Romans.

Josephus makes mention also of another sect, bearing the title of **Philosophers**; composed of men of the most ferocious character, and founded by Judas, a Galilean-- a strenuous and undaunted assertor of the liberties of the Jewish nation, who maintained that the Hebrews, the favorite people of heaven, ought to render obedience to God alone, and consequently were continually stimulating one another to throw off the Roman yoke and assert their national independence.

The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, the three most powerful of the Jewish sects, were cordially united in sentiment respecting all those fundamental points which constituted the basis of the Jewish religion. All of them, for instance, rejected with detestation the notion of a plurality of gods, and would acknowledge the existence of but one almighty power, whom they regarded as the Creator of the Universe, and believed to be endowed with the most absolute perfection and goodness. They were equally agreed in the opinion, that God had selected the Hebrews from amongst all the other nations of the earth as his peculiar people, and had bound them to himself by an unchangeable and everlasting covenant. With the same unanimity, they maintained the divine mission of Moses; that he was the ambassador of Heaven, and consequently that the law delivered at Mount Sinai, and promulgated by his ministry was of divine original. It was also the general belief among them, that in the books of the Old Testament were contained ample instructions respecting the way of salvation and eternal happiness; and that whatever principles or duties were inculcated in those writings, must be reverently received and implicitly obeyed. But an almost irreconcilable difference of opinion, and the most vehement disputes, prevailed among them, respecting the original source or fountain from whence all religion was to be deduced. Both the Sadducees and Essenes rejected with disdain the oral law, to which the Pharisees, however, paid the greatest deference. And the interpretation of the written law, yielded still further ground for acrimonious contention. The Pharisees maintained that the law as committed to writing by Moses, and likewise every other part of the sacred volume, had a two-fold sense or meaning; the one plain and obvious to every reader, the other abstruse and mystical. The Sadducees, on the contrary, would admit of nothing beyond a simple interpretation of the words, according to their strict literal sense. The Essenes, or at least the greater part of them, differing from both of these,

considered the words of the law to possess no force or power whatever in themselves, but merely to exhibit the shadows or images of celestial objects, of virtues, and of duties. So much dissension and discord respecting the rule of religion, and the sense in which the divine law ought to be understood, could not fail to produce a great diversity in the forms of religious worship, and naturally tended to generate the most opposite and conflicting sentiments on subjects of a divine nature.

THE PHARISEES, in point of number, riches, authority, and influence, took precedence of all the Jewish sects. And as they constantly manifested an extraordinary display of religion, in an apparent zeal for the cultivation of piety and brotherly love, and by an affectation of superior sanctity in their opinions, manners, and dress, the influence which they possessed over the minds of the people was unbounded; insomuch that they may be almost said to have given whatever direction they pleased to public affairs. It is unquestionable, however, that the religion of the Pharisees was, for the most part, founded in consummate hypocrisy; and that in reality, they were generally the slaves of every vicious appetite; proud, arrogant, and avaricious, consulting only the gratification of their lusts, even at the moment of their professing themselves to be engaged in the service of their Maker. These odious features in the character of the Pharisees, drew upon them the most pointed rebukes from our Lord and Savior; with more severity indeed than he bestowed on the Sadducees, who although they had departed widely from the genuine principles of religion, yet did not impose upon mankind by a pretended sanctity, or devote themselves with insatiable greediness to the acquisition of honors and riches. The Pharisees admitted the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and of a future state of rewards and punishments. They admitted, to a certain extent, the free agency of man; but beyond that, they supposed his actions to be controlled by the decrees of fate. These points of doctrine, however, seem not to have been understood or explained by all the sect in the same way, neither does it appear that any great pains were taken to define and ascertain them with accuracy and precision, or to support them by reasoning and argument.

THE SADDUCEES, if we may credit the testimony of Josephus concerning them, were a sect much inferior in point of number to that of the Pharisees, but composed entirely of persons distinguished for their opulence and prosperity. He also represents those who belonged to it, as wholly devoid of the sentiments of benevolence and compassion towards others; whereas the Pharisees, according to him, were ever ready to relieve the wants of the indigent and afflicted. He further describes them as fond of passing their lives in one uninterrupted course of ease and pleasure; insomuch that it was with difficulty they could be prevailed on to undertake the duties of the magistracy, or any other public function. Their leading tenet was, that all our hopes and fears terminate with the present life; the soul being involved in one common fate with the body, and, like it, liable to perish and be annihilated. Upon this principle, it was very natural for them to maintain, that

obedience to the divine law would be rewarded by the Most High with length of days, and an abundance of the good things of this life, such as honors, distinctions, and riches; whilst the violators of it would, in like manner, find their punishment in the temporary sufferings and afflictions of the present time. The Sadducees, therefore, always connected the favor of heaven with a state of worldly prosperity, and could not regard any as virtuous, or the friends of heaven, but the fortunate and happy; they had no bowels of compassion for the poor and the miserable; their desires and hopes centered in a life of leisure, ease, and voluptuous gratification--for such is precisely the character which Josephus gives us of them. And, indeed, it appears to be countenanced by the inspired writings--especially if, as is now generally admitted by the learned, our Lord, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, (Luke, ch. 16) designed, in the person of the former, to delineate the principles and manner of life of a Sadducee. Considering the parable in this point of view, we cannot fail to see great force and beauty in it, which do not appear upon any other hypothesis. That the rich man was a Jew is evident, from his terming Abraham his father; and his request that the latter would send Lazarus to his father's house, for the purpose of converting his brethren to a belief of the soul's immortality, and the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments, is convincing evidence that during his life-time he had imagined that the soul would perish with the body, and had treated with derision the doctrine maintained by the Pharisees respecting the happiness or misery of a future state; and that the brethren whom he had left behind, entertained similar sentiments--sentiments which decidedly mark them as the votaries of that impious system to which the Sadducees were devoted.

THE ESSENES, though not particularly mentioned by the writers of the New Testament, existed as a sect in the days of our Lord, and are frequently spoken of by Josephus, who divides them into two branches; the one characterized by a life of celibacy, dedicated to the instruction and education of the children of others; whilst the other thought it proper to marry, not so much with a view to sensual gratification, as for the purpose of propagating the human species. Hence they have been distinguished by some writers into the practical and the theoretical Essenes.

The practical Essenes were distributed in the cities and throughout the countries of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Their bond of association embraced not merely a community of tenets, and a similarity of manners and particular observances, like that of the Pharisees or the Sadducees; but it extended also to an intercommunity of goods. Their demeanor was sober and chaste; and their mode of life was, in every other respect, subjected to the strictest regulations, and submitted to the superintendance of governors, whom they appointed over themselves. The whole of their time was devoted to labor, meditation and prayer; and they were most sedulously attentive to the calls of justice and humanity, and every moral duty. In common with the rest of the Jews, they believed in the unity of God; but from some of their institutes, it appears that they entertained a reverence for the sun; probably,

considering that grand luminary as a deity of an inferior order, or perhaps regarding him as the visible image of the Supreme Being. They supposed the souls of men to have fallen, by a disastrous fate, from the regions of purity and light, into the bodies which they occupy; during their continuance in which, they considered them to be confined, as it were, within the walls of a loathsome dungeon. For this reason, therefore, they did not believe in the resurrection of the body; although it was their opinion that the soul would be rewarded or punished in a future state according to its deserts. They cultivated great abstinence, allowing themselves but little bodily nourishment or gratification, from an apprehension that the immortal spirit might be thereby encumbered and weighed down. It was their endeavor, too, by constant meditation, to withdraw the mind as much as possible from the contagious influence of the corrupt mass by which it was unhappily enveloped. The ceremonies, or external forms, which were enjoined in the law of Moses to be observed in the worship of God, were totally disregarded by many of the Essenes; it being their opinion that the words of Moses were to be understood in a mysterious and recondite sense, and not according to their literal meaning. Others of them, indeed, so far conformed as to offer sacrifices, but they did this at home; for they were wholly averse from the rites which it was necessary for those to observe who attended the temple worship. Upon the whole, it does not seem an improbable conjecture, that the doctrine and discipline of the Essenes arose out of an ill-judged attempt to make the principles of the Jewish religion accord with some tenets which they had fondly imbibed from the Oriental philosophy, of which we have already treated.

Though the practical Essenes were very much addicted to superstition, society derived no inconsiderable benefit from their labor, and the strictness of their morals. Those of the theoretical class, however, seem to have set scarcely any bounds whatever to their silly extravagance. Although they professed themselves to be Jews, and were desirous to be considered as the disciples of Moses, they were almost entirely strangers to the Mosaic discipline. Renouncing employment of every description, and all worldly possessions, they withdrew themselves into solitary places, and there dispersed about in separate cells, passed the remnant of their days without engaging in any kind of bodily labor, and neither offering sacrifices, nor observing any other external form of religious worship. In this state of seclusion from the world and its concerns, they studied to reduce and keep the body low, by allowing it nothing beyond the most slender subsistence, and, as far as possible, to detach and disengage the soul from it by perpetual contemplation, so that the immortal spirit might, in defiance of its corporeal imprisonment, be kept constantly aspiring after its native liberty and light, and be prepared, immediately on the dissolution of the body, to re-ascend to those celestial regions from whence it originally sprang. Conformably to the practice of the Jews, the theoretical Essenes were accustomed to hold a solemn assembly every seventh day. On these occasions, after hearing a sermon from their president, and offering up their prayers, it was usual for them to feast together,--if that can indeed be called a feast, which was

restricted to a mutual participation of salt and bread and water. This repast is said to have been followed by a sacred dance, which was continued throughout the whole night, until the dawn appeared. At first the men and women danced in two separate parties; but at length, their minds, according to their own account, kindling with a sort of divine ecstasy, the two companies joined in one, mutually striving, by various shouts and songs of the most vehement kind, accompanied with the most extravagant motions and gesticulations of the body, to manifest the fervent glow of that divine love with which they professed to be enflamed. To such an extent of folly may men be led by the spirit of enthusiasm, and in consequence of their entertaining erroneous principles respecting the Deity, and the origin of the human soul!

As to the moral doctrine of these sects of the Essenes, as well as that of the Pharisees and Sadducees, into which the Jewish people were divided, it cannot be considered as having in any degree contributed towards promoting the interests of virtue and genuine piety. The Pharisees, as was frequently objected to them by Christ, who knew their hearts, were destitute of the love of God and their neighbor, the essential principles of righteousness--they were hypocritical in their acts of worship--proud and self-righteous--harsh and uncharitable in their judgment of others while they made the divine law void through their traditions. They paid little or no regard to inward purity or sanctity of mind, but studied by all possible means to attract the eyes of the multitude towards them, by an ostentatious solemnity of carriage, and the most specious external parade of piety and brotherly love. They were continually straining and perverting the most important precepts of the divine law; whilst at the same time, they enforced an unreserved obedience to ordinances which were of mere human institution. The Sadducees regarded all those persons as righteous, who strictly conformed themselves to the ritual observances prescribed in the law of Moses, and that did no injury to any of the Jewish nation, from whom they had received none. And as their principles forbade men to look forward to a future state of rewards and punishments, and placed the whole happiness of man in the possession of riches and in sensual gratification, they naturally tended to generate and encourage an inordinate love of money, a brutal insensibility to the calls of compassion, and a variety of other vices equally pernicious and degrading to the human mind. The Essenes labored under the influence of a depressing superstition; so that, whilst they were scrupulously attentive to the demands of justice and equity in regard to others, they appear to have altogether overlooked the duties which men owe to themselves. Those of them who were distinguished by the name of Therapeutae, or theoretical Essenes, were a race of men who resigned themselves entirely to the dictates of the most egregious fanaticism and folly. They would engage in no sort of business or employment on their own account; nor would they be instrumental in forwarding the interests of others. In short, they appear to have considered themselves as released from every bond by which human society is held together, and at liberty to act in direct opposition to almost every principle of moral discipline.

It cannot therefore excite any reasonable surprise that, owing to the various causes which we have thus enumerated, the great mass of the Jewish people were, at the period of the birth of Jesus Christ, sunk in the most profound ignorance as to divine things; and the nation, for the most part, devoted to a flagitious and dissolute course of life. That such was the miserable state of degradation into which this highly privileged people had fallen, is incontestibly proved by the history of our Lord's life, and the tenour of his discourses and conversations which he condescended to address to them. Hence his comparison of the teachers among them to blind guides, who professed to instruct others in a way with which they were totally unacquainted themselves; and the multitude to a flock of lost sheep, wandering without a shepherd. Matthew 15:14; John 9:39; Matthew 10:6; 15:24.

In addition to what has been already said respecting the sources of error and corruption among the Jews, we have still further to remark, that, at the time of Christ's appearance, numbers among them had imbibed the principles of the Oriental philosophy respecting the origin of the world, and were much addicted to the study of a mystical sort of learning to which they gave the name of Cabbala. [For a very ingenious and interesting account of the Cabbala, the reader is referred to Mr. Allen's *Modern Judaism*, ch. 5, p. 65.]

THE SAMARITANS are spoken of in the New Testament as a sect altogether distinct from the Jews; and as they were inhabitants of Palestine, they merit attention in this place. Their sacred rites were performed in a temple erected on Mount Gerizim; they were involved in the same calamities which befell the Jewish people, and were no less forward than the Jews in adding to their other afflictions, the numerous evils produced by factions and intestine tumults. They were not, however, divided into so many religious sects; although the instances of Dositheus, Menander, and Simon Magus, plainly prove that there were not wanting among them some who were carried away by the love of paradox and a fondness for novel speculations; and that they debased the religion of their ancestors, by incorporating with it many of the principles of the Oriental philosophy. Much has been handed down to us by Jewish authors respecting the religious sentiments of the Samaritans, on which however we cannot place reliance, as it was unquestionably dictated by a spirit of invidious malignity. It is certain, however, that our Lord attributes to the Samaritans a great degree of ignorance respecting God and divine things; it cannot therefore be doubted, that in their religious system the truth was much debased by superstition, and the light in no small degree obscured by the mists of error. They acknowledged none of the writings of the Old Testament as sacred, or of Divine authority, but the five books of Moses alone. We learn, nevertheless, from the conversation of the woman with our Lord at the well of Samaria, John 4:25, that the Samaritans confidently expected the Messiah, and that they looked forward to him in the light of a spiritual teacher and guide, who should instruct them in a more perfect and acceptable way of worshiping

the Most High than that which they then followed. Whether they were carried away with the fond conceit of his being a warlike leader, an hero, an emperor, who should recover for the oppressed posterity of Abraham their liberty and rights, and to the same extent that the Jews were, it would not be easy to determine. In this one thing, at least, they appear to have shewn themselves superior to the Jews in general, that they did not attempt to gloss over or conceal the many imperfections of their religion, but frankly acknowledged its defects, and looked forward with hope to the period when the Messiah should reform what was amiss, and communicate to them a larger measure of spiritual instruction, of which they stood so much in need. ["Jehoida, the high priest at Jerusalem, had a son named Manasseh, who married a daughter of Sanballat, governor of the Samaritans. Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem, banished Manasseh for this breach of the law. This exile carried a copy of the Pentateuch with him, read it to the Samaritans, and dissuaded them from idolatry, to which they never afterwards returned; and it was his father-in-law Sanballat, who obtained leave of Darius Nothus to erect the temple on Mount Gerizim, of which Manasseh was the first high priest. Hence proceeded a race of men, as the Jews acknowledge, more exact in worshipping the true God than themselves. Hence came the Samaritan Pentateuch in the old Phoenician character, which confirms that of the Jews. Hence also went a Greek version of the Pentateuch, for the use of Hellenistic Samaritans resident in other countries, and especially for those at Alexandria; and of course the conversion of the Samaritans was an event in providence favorable to the general knowledge and worship of the one true God." Robinson's *Ecclesiastical Researches*, p 27.]

So exceedingly great was the fecundity of the Jewish people, that multitudes of them, from time to time, were constrained to emigrate from their native country; and at the era of Christ's birth, the descendants of Abraham were to be met with in every part of the known world. In all the provinces of the Roman empire, in particular, they were to be found in great numbers, either serving in the army, or engaged in the pursuits of commerce, or practising some lucrative art. Of the truth of this we have evidence in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where we learn that on the day of Pentecost, there were assembled at Jerusalem, Jews "out of every nation under heaven," who had come up to attend the festival. Their dispersion over all the west, was the consequence of the subjugation of Judea to Rome, and it was an important link in the chain of divine Providence; for it placed them, as they express it, "witnesses of the rarity of God in all the nations of the world," and this at a time when idolatry and vice overwhelmed all the rest of mankind. Those of them who thus ventured to establish themselves without the confines of Palestine, were every where successful in obtaining that general sort of encouragement and protection from violence, which was to be derived from various regulations and edicts of the emperors and magistrates in their favor: but the peculiarities of their religion and manners caused them to be held in very general contempt, and not unfrequently exposed them to much vexation and annoyance from the jealousy and indignation of a superstitious

populace. Many of them, in consequence of their long residence and intercourse among foreign nations, fell into the error of attempting to accommodate their religious profession to the principles and institutions of some of the different systems of heathen discipline, of which it would be easy to adduce numerous instances. On the other hand, however, it should not be overlooked, that the Jews were often successful in proselyting to their faith many of those among whom they sojourned, giving them to perceive the superiority of the Mosaic religion to the gentile superstition, and were highly instrumental in causing them to forsake the worship of a plurality of gods.

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FROM THE BIRTH TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST

The kingdom of the Messiah forms an important article in the writings of the Hebrew prophets. Those holy men who, from time to time, were raised up to exercise their ministry in the Jewish church, had foretold the advent of this illustrious personage, and described, in the most glowing colors, the majesty of his character, the extent and perpetuity of his empire, the blessings of his government, and the happiness which his subjects should enjoy under his mild and gentle reign. Accordingly, the chosen tribes, throughout successive ages, anticipated his appearance with eager expectation. [2 Samuel 7:11-16; Psalm 2:8; 22:27, 73; 89:19-36; Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1-9; chap. 60; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15, ad finem; Daniel 2:44; 7:14.]

It was a custom among the eastern monarchs, when entering upon an expedition, to send harbingers before them to announce their approach, and prepare for their reception. Isaiah had taught the Jews to expect that such also should be the case with their promised Messiah; that he should be preceded by "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isaiah 40:3).

In conformity with this prediction, the sacred historian informs us that the joyful intelligence of the Messiah's immediate appearance was announced, in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius, by the preaching of John the

Baptist in the wilderness of Judea (Luke 3:1). The leading object of John's ministry was to proclaim the kingdom of heaven at hand; in virtue of which he called upon all who heard him, to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins; whilst the testimony that he bore to the character of his divine Master, was the most honorable that can be conceived (Matthew 3:1).

The Jewish Sanhedrin, hearing of his fame, sent to interrogate him, whether he were the promised Messiah; and if not, to inform them what he professed himself to be. John immediately directed their attention to the prophecy of Isaiah, declaring that he was merely the herald of his Sovereign--"the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah."--That there stood among them, one whom they knew not, whose character was infinitely more dignified than his own--one who, though he came after him, was preferred before him, and so much his superior, that he considered himself not worthy to loose even the latchet of his shoe (John 1:19-27).

When Jesus had attained the age of thirty, the period of life at which the priests entered upon their ministrations in the temple, and was about to commence his public ministry, he was solemnly inaugurated in his sacred office by means of the ordinance of baptism, administered by the hands of his fore-runner. Impressed with sentiments of the most profound veneration for his Lord, John hesitated, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus, however, reminded him, that there was a necessity for this--that his baptism was to serve as an emblematical figure of the manner in which he was to accomplish the work of human redemption: for as in baptism the individual is buried under, and raised again from the water, even so it became him to fulfill all righteousness, by dying for the sins of his people, and rising again for their justification. This being, accordingly, transacted in a figure, the evangelist informs us, that "the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descending like a dove, alighted upon Jesus, and a voice was heard from heaven, declaring, This Is My Beloved Son, In Whom I Am Well Pleased" (Matthew 3:13-17). The ministry of Jesus, which continued during a period of three years, was restricted to the benefit of the Jewish nation. The writer of the Acts of the Apostles sums it up in two words, "He did and taught" (Acts 1:1). He went about all Galilee "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:53).

His doctrine comprehended the nature and perfections of God--the misery of fallen man--a declaration of his own character as the Son of God and promised Messiah--the design of his mission into this world, which was to seek and save the lost, to give his life a ransom for many, and call sinners to repentance--the immortality of the soul--the resurrection from the dead--the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments that He was appointed of God to judge the world in righteousness at the last day; and, finally, the gracious promise, that whosoever believeth the divine testimony concerning himself shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 4:24;

3:3-19; Matthew 16:26; John 5:27-29; Mark 16:15,16). In his doctrine he rescued the moral law from the false glosses imposed upon it by the Scribes and Pharisees; unfolded its spirituality and extent, as requiring perfect love to God and man; and enforced its indispensable obligation upon all men as the rule of their correspondence with God; declaring that he himself came not to abrogate or annul one tittle, but to fulfill its utmost requirements, by his own obedience and conformity thereunto, and adopting it as the unalterable law of his kingdom, which is to regulate the conduct of his disciples to the end of time (Matthew 5,6,7).

The fame of this divine teacher soon spread "throughout all Syria," and "multitudes of people from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from all parts of Judea, and even from beyond Jordan, resorted to him to hear his discourses and be healed of their infirmities" (Matthew 4:24,25).

The miracles which he wrought from time to time, were the fullest attestation of his mission that could possibly be given; for they demonstrated that "God was with him" (Acts 10:38). They were performed at his word, in an instant, on persons both near and at a distance; they were done by him in the most public and open manner--at Jerusalem and in every part of Judea and Galilee--in cities, in villages, in synagogues, in private houses, in the public streets, and in the highways, in the fields, and in the wilderness--upon Jews and Gentiles--before Scribes and Pharisees and rulers of the synagogues--not only when he was attended by few persons, but when surrounded by great multitudes--and in a word, before men of every diversity of character. They were in themselves of such a nature as to bear the strictest examination, and they had every thing about them which could possibly distinguish them from the delusions of enthusiasm, and the artifices of imposture. Accordingly we find him appealing to them with all the confidence of an upright mind, fully impressed with a consciousness of their truth and reality. The appeal was short, simple, and decisive. He seldom reasoned on either their nature or design, but generally pointed to them as plain and indubitable facts, which spake their own meaning and carried with them their own authority. They were too public to be suspected of imposture; and being the objects of sense, they were secured against the charge of enthusiasm. They had no disguise, and were, in a variety of instances, of such a nature as to preclude the very possibility of collusion. They were performed in the midst of his bitterest enemies, and were so palpable and certain as to extort from them the acknowledgment, that "this man doth many miracles; if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him."

An inattentive reader of the evangelic history would be led to conclude, from the accounts that are given us of the multitudes who followed Jesus, that the number of his disciples was immense. But we have frequent intimations of the fallacy of implicitly trusting to appearances in these things. Were we to consider only the interesting nature of his doctrine, the wisdom and energy with which it was delivered,

and the stupendous works of supernatural power by which it was accompanied--the little success that attended it, must have ever remained a source of perplexity to us; but the problem is solved by admitting the scriptural account of the depravity of the human mind, its alienation from God, and its natural enmity against his truth. The reception which the Messiah was to meet with, had been described by an ancient prophet in these remarkable words, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"--And the event justified the prediction. Some few indeed, and those chiefly from among the inferior ranks in life, believed on him as the hope of Israel, and found in him all their salvation and desire; and while his claims of being the Messiah were generally set at nought by their countrymen, they could say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68,69).

From among these latter, Jesus selected twelve whom he named apostles, and whom he qualified and sent forth to preach the doctrine of his kingdom, and to cure diseases; and sometime afterwards he appointed seventy others also to labor in his vineyard. These he sent forth, two and two, into every city and place to which he himself would come, as his heralds, announcing his approach, and calling all descriptions of persons to repent and believe the gospel (Luke 10:1-16).

It appears from the testimony of ancient historians, that about the time of Christ's appearing, the Jews anxiously expected him as the great deliverer and chief ornament of their nation; and even among the heathens an opinion was at that time prevalent, probably derived from the Hebrew prophets, that a prince of unparalleled glory was to arise in Judea, who was to found a kind of universal monarchy. But in the humble appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jews found nothing that corresponded to the expectations they entertained on this subject. Their vain hearts, like those of the generality of men in all ages, were so intoxicated with the admiration of worldly pomp, that that was the only greatness for which they had any relish; and hence they formed a picture of him, who was the desire of all nations, very unlike the original. Nor was the doctrine which he inculcated more suited to their taste, than his personal appearance answered to their expectations. For, while they fostered the presumptuous imagination, that in virtue of the privileges they enjoyed as God's covenanted people, and especially as being the descendants of Abraham, they had a peculiar claim to the Divine favor and to all the blessings of their Messiah's kingdom, both Jesus and his fore-runner boldly attacked this master-prejudice, and evinced the futility of every such plea. They were now called upon to give up the erroneous sentiments which they entertained respecting their own characters, the way of acceptance with God, and the nature and blessings of their Messiah's reign, on pain of incurring eternal ruin. For whereas they expected eternal life as the reward of their Jewish privileges, or of their own personal righteousness, they were now taught, that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; that the Son of God came to be lifted

up upon the cross, as the antitype of the brazen serpent which Moses elevated in the wilderness, that whosoever, not of the Jews only, but among the Gentiles also, believed in him, should not perish, but obtain eternal life (John 3:16,17).

And, with regard to the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, the doctrines of Jesus were equally at variance with their fondest hopes; for, while they ardently longed for the accomplishment of the promises which God had made unto their fathers by the prophets, they seem in general to have had no other object in view than the establishment of a temporal monarchy, like the other kingdoms of this world, though doubtless much surpassing them in all its extent and splendor. Accordingly, being interrogated by their leaders "when the kingdom of God should come," Jesus perceived the mistake of their hearts, and to correct it, told them that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation"--that is, it did not at all resemble the kingdoms of this world--it was not to strike the senses of men by the glare of worldly grandeur; for as it is wholly spiritual, consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, he added, "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20,21). So also when he spake to them concerning their bondage to sin and vassalage to Satan, the god of this world, with the necessity of being set free from this spiritual tyranny before they could participate of the liberty of the sons of God, they resented it as the highest insult that could be offered them; "We are Abraham's seed," say they, "and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free" (John 8). If we keep in view these false principles by which the minds of the Jewish people were led astray, the invincible obstinacy of their prejudices, and the contrariety of the doctrine and character of Jesus thereto, we shall cease to wonder at the issue to which matters were ultimately reduced between them. When he avowed himself to be the Son of God, and claimed equality with the MOST HIGH, they resisted his pretensions and accused him of blasphemy. And when he acknowledged his regal character, they charged him with treason against the Roman government. On these grounds they demanded his death, and "the voice of them and of the chief priests prevailed" (Luke 23:23). It cannot be necessary to pursue this part of the narrative in detail, since the result must be familiar to every Christian.

"They that dwelt at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which were read every Sabbath-day,--they fulfilled them in condemning him; and though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain; and when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a sepulcher. But GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD" (Acts 13:27-30).

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, from the birth of Christ to the 18th Century: including the very interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses

By William Jones

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FROM THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST TO THE PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL AMONG THE GENTILES

The resurrection of Jesus is an article of such importance in the system of Christianity, that, like the key-stone in the arch of the building, it is emphatically that which supports the whole superstructure. "If Christ be not risen," says the apostle, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: yea, and we are found false witnesses of God" (1 Corinthians 15:14-19).

That the Messiah should rise again from the dead, was an event clearly predicted in ancient prophecy; (Psalm 2; Psalm 16:10,11; Isaiah 53:10-12) and Jesus himself repeatedly foretold both the fact of his rising, and the day on which it should happen, not only to his disciples but to his enemies also, and even rested the evidence of his divine mission upon that event. (See Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 12:38; John 2:18-20; 10:17; 8:28; Matthew 27:53.) Of the truth and certainty of his resurrection, then, the apostles were witnesses, and they were every way qualified for substantiating the fact. "He was seen by them alive, after his crucifixion." It was not one person, but many who saw him. They saw him not only separately but together, not only by night but by day, not at a distance but near, not once only but several times. They not only saw him but touched him, conversed with him, ate with him, examined his person to remove their doubts. "He shewed himself alive to them after his passion by many infallible signs, being seen of them forty days," during which time "he spake to them concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), which they were to be employed in setting up in the world. To qualify them for this vast achievement he had promised to pour down upon them the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, and directed them to wait at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. When thus fitted for their work, they were enjoined to "go and teach all nations," or proclaim to them the

glad tidings of salvation, to baptize all who believed the gospel, and then further to instruct them in all his commands (Luke 24:19; Acts 1:4). In doing this, they were to be witnesses for him both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:16). Thus having delivered to them his last injunctions, he led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while engaged in the very act of benediction, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven, a cloud receiving him out of their sight (Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:8).

When the seventh Sabbath from the passover was completely ended, and the next day or first day of the week fully come, that is, fifty days after Christ's resurrection, and ten days after his ascension, the apostles, with the hundred and twenty disciples, were all assembled together with one accord, agreeably to their stated practice (John 20:19, 26; Acts 2:1; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, sitting upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

Such is the account given to us by the Spirit of inspiration concerning this extraordinary interposition of heaven, and the effects which it produced upon the apostles were certainly of the most stupendous kind. For, it is evident, that a flood of light now broke in upon their minds, as it were instantaneously, instructing them in the meaning of the prophetic writings, far beyond what they had hitherto attained; removing the films of prejudice which clouded their understandings, and leading them into just views of the spiritual and heavenly nature of their Lord's kingdom. Upon many occasions, during his personal intercourse with them, they had discovered strong prejudices in favour of a worldly kingdom, and slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets had written: and even when their Lord had risen from the dead, and was about to ascend into heaven, they asked him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). But the illumination which now filled their minds, removed their ignorance, rectified their misapprehensions, and conformed their views to the scope of all the prophets, as well as to the doctrine which they had received from the lips of Christ himself.

It is also manifest that this effusion of the Holy Spirit had an amazing effect upon the apostles in animating them with a spirit of power, magnanimity, and zeal in their master's service. While he was yet with them, we may trace in their history numerous marks of timidity and weakness under the anticipation of danger. Such were their efforts to prevent his going into Judea: and their forsaking him at the time of his apprehension; on which occasion, it is recorded that they all forsook him and fled;

even Peter, the most intrepid among them, denied that he knew him. But what a revolution took place in their conduct in this respect after the day of pentecost. We behold them inspired with fortitude and resolution to declare their testimony before magistrates and rulers, regardless of personal danger, and even "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake."

But the most astonishing effect of all was, that they were hereby qualified for speaking various languages which they had never learned, thus making known their message to men of all nations under heaven, and confirming its truth by performing such miraculous works as were an evident indication that God was with them. This indeed was in perfect consistency with Christ's promise to them when he said, "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." An occurrence so remote from the common course of nature, we may readily suppose, would produce an astonishing sensation upon those who were witnesses of it. The sudden ability of so many rude and illiterate Galileans, to speak perfectly in all languages--to express themselves with propriety and force, so as not only to be clearly understood, but to impress the consciences of the hearers, was a phenomenon which carried with it a proof of Divine interposition too incontestible to admit of a rational doubt. Those who first observed it spake of it to others, and a rumor spread abroad. Jerusalem was at the moment the resort of Jews and Jewish proselytes dispersed throughout the various parts of the Roman empire, and multitudes had come from different countries to celebrate the feast. The promiscuous throng, who were collected by so strange a report, and had been accustomed to different languages, were therefore greatly astonished to hear them declare, each one in his own tongue, the wonderful works of God. While some expressed their surprise at this, others ascribed it to the effects of wine. This weak and perverse slander was, however, immediately refuted by the apostle Peter, who, standing up with the other eleven apostles, lifted up his voice and said unto them:

"Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you that these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day 2 -but this is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:14-16).

He then quotes the words of Jehovah in which he had promised to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh--attended with the most awful denunciations against those who should despise it, but with a gracious promise of salvation to all that should call upon the name of the Lord. The illustration of this remarkable prophecy, and its application to what was now obvious to all their senses, paved the way for the apostle's drawing their attention to the great subject of his ministry, the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had taken and by wicked hands had crucified and slain.

The Holy Spirit gave energy to his doctrine. Like a torrent, it bore down all the vain imaginations and presumptuous reasonings by which the minds of his hearers were fortified; it reached conviction to their consciences; so that, like men frantic with despair, they cried out in the anguish of their hearts, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" To persons reduced to this extremity, conscious that they had been imbruing their hands in the blood of the Son of God, how unspeakably welcome must have been the words of the apostle,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38).

This divine declaration of mercy, to men in the situation of these convicted Jews, pricked to the heart with a consciousness of their guilt and overwhelmed with despair, must have been like life from the dead. Three thousand of them joyfully received the apostle's doctrine, were baptized, and the same day added to the number of disciples that already existed in Jerusalem.

And here we contemplate the beginning of the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world; or, which is the same thing, the erection of the first Christian church. But before proceeding further, it may not be improper to pause, and endeavor to trace out a concise description of it in a few leading particulars.

When Jesus was interrogated by the Roman governor concerning his claim to royalty, he replied that his kingdom was not of this world; and in the church of Jerusalem we see the truth of this exemplified. We there behold a company of self-condemned sinners, who under the impending wrath of heaven had fled for refuge to the mercy of God, freely proclaimed to them in the gospel of salvation. They were persons who believed what these inspired witnesses testified concerning the mission, the character, the sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of the Son of God; and who, under all their accumulated guilt and wretchedness, found enough in these things to encourage their hope of forgiveness, and even fill their souls with peace and joy. The gospel which the apostles preached, was that which exactly suited their case--it contained no rules or directions about what they should do in order to atone for their deep and aggravated guilt; for they found all that was necessary to satisfy the most troubled conscience in the doctrine concerning the Son of God, as delivered for the offenses of the guilty and raised again for their justification. Hence we see that, in obedience to his command, "those who gladly received the truth, were baptized" in the name of the Lord Jesus. In this ordinance they confessed their faith in him as the Son of God, who died for their sins, was buried, and rose again the third day; publicly professing that all their hope of salvation centered in these things.

They separated themselves from "an untoward generation;" and "all that believed were together." They received from the apostles the various ordinances of public worship, the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the ordinances of prayer and praise; and in these things they continued steadfastly, having favor with all the people and receiving into their number, from time to time, such individuals as it pleased the Lord to call to the knowledge of the truth.

The doctrine which they believed, and in which they found all their happiness and joy, was the common bond of union among them. They loved one another for the truth's sake, which dwelt mutually in them. To this they were naturally attached, as being the common center of their hope and joy; and it prompted them to take a lively interest in each other's spiritual welfare. Having experienced much forgiveness at the hands of God, they were influenced to love much. And this love was not an inactive, dormant principle in them, for it manifested itself in the most substantial acts of kindness and liberality.

"There were none among them that lacked; or as many as were possessed of lands or houses sold them, and laid the amount down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made according as every man had need" (Acts 4:34).

It is evident, therefore, that they were not connected together by any of those ties which constitute the spring of action in the kingdoms of this world. In men actuated by such noble and disinterested principles, human policy could have no place. Their fears, their hopes, their joys, and their sorrows, were all of a spiritual and heavenly tendency; and they were animated by one object of pursuit, the attainment of that glory, honor, and immortality, promised them by the Lord Jesus.

Thus was the kingdom of Christ established with all possible evidence that it was not of this world. What laws were given were of Divine origin and authority, they were held superior to all other laws. We ought, say the servants of Jesus, to obey God rather than man. What power appeared, was the power of God working in a miraculous manner, and with supernatural efficacy. The design of this extraordinary interposition was not to restore again the kingdom to Israel, or to bestow the honors and the riches of the world on the followers of Christ; but to deliver them from the present evil world, and save them from perishing in the destruction that awaits it. So far were they from being allowed the hope of reigning in this life, that they were assured of being exposed to poverty, contempt, and every form of persecution. Neither their principles nor their practices were conformable to this world; nor were their hopes or fears to be engaged by the concerns of it; but they were to wait for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and expect to reign with him in glory.

If this be a just representation of the church or kingdom of Christ as it appeared in

its establishment, it is manifest that, wherever we trace it in subsequent periods, we must find something that resembles it in its leading features. We shall discern a people, holding the same views of the character and work of the Savior, owning subjection to him as the king whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion; evincing their allegiance to him by an implicit obedience to his laws, institutions, and ordinances; and discarding the doctrines and commandments of men. As the church at Jerusalem was the first Christian church established by the ministry of the apostles, so it was designed to serve as a pattern, in its faith and order, to all succeeding churches, to the end of the world. It was constituted under the direction of the twelve inspired apostles, who for a course of time acted as the elders, bishops, or overseers of the flock of Christ, took up their station in it, and under Divine direction, gave forth the law to regulate the practices of all other churches: for out of Zion was to go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Acts 15:6,22-29; Isaiah 2:2). Having briefly glanced at this heavenly kingdom in its first establishment, and seen its origin, nature, laws, immunities, and the character of its subjects, I now proceed to trace its subsequent history, agreeably to the account given of it by the prophet Daniel.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms; and it shall stand for ever" Daniel 2:44.

The success which attended the first publication of the gospel, is very beautifully described in the Book of the Revelation, ch. 6:1, 2, by a vision which the apostle had of the Lamb, opening the first seal. "And I saw," says he, "and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer." The history of the apostles and first preachers affords a striking comment on these words, at the same time that it illustrates to us an ancient prediction concerning the Messiah (Psalm 110:2); for now we see the standard of Christ first erected as an ensign to the nations; from hence went forth the rod of his strength, by which he ruled in the midst of his enemies, and (from that time, or) in that day of his power, the willing nations submitted to him cheerfully, and "numerous as drops of morning dew."

Among the Jews there were daily three stated hours of prayer, at which time some went up to the temple, and others prayed in their own houses with their faces directed towards the temple. The first of these stated times of devotion was at nine in the morning, which was the time of their offering the lamb for the morning sacrifice; the second at twelve at noon, called by them the time of the great meat-offering; and the third, at three in the afternoon, when they offered the lamb for the evening sacrifice. Two of the apostles, viz. Peter and John, going up together into the temple, on one of these occasions, were addressed by a poor cripple, who solicited alms from

them. The man had been lame from his infancy, and was carried daily to the gate of the temple, where he importuned the alms of the worshippers as they passed him. The apostles fixing their eyes upon him, demanded his attention to what they were about to say; assured him that silver and gold they had none, but that such as they had they were ready to communicate, adding, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:1, etc.). The power of the glorified Savior gave energy to the word of his servants. Peter took him by the hand and lifted him up; his feet and ankle bones received strength, and the invalid was in an instant restored to the entire and perfect exercise of his limbs. Wonder and amazement seized the minds of the spectators of this miracle; the people collected together in vast concourse around the apostles in Solomon's porch, "greatly wondering" at what had taken place, but wholly unable to account for it. Peter seized the opportunity, a most favorable one unquestionably, to draw their attention to the grand theme of his ministry, the death and the resurrection of his Lord. He first reprehended their stupidity in supposing for a moment, that a work so far exceeding the power of man, and so much above the course of nature, could have been accomplished by their own agency, or in virtue of their own holiness; pressed home upon them their guilt in putting to death the Prince of Life; boldly testified that God had raised him again from the dead; and declared that the miracle which they had witnessed, was effected solely by the power of Christ. The apostle admitted that their guilt had arisen from their own ignorance, and that of their rulers; and that God, whose province it is to educe good out of evil; who makes the wrath of man to praise him, and ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will, had over-ruled their wicked devices to subserve at once his own glory and the happiness of sinful man. He, therefore, exhorted them to repent and believe the gospel which he now preached, and which it was the Divine good pleasure should first of all be made known among them who were the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with the fathers. He declared to them that Jesus of Nazareth was that great Prophet whose coming had been foretold by Moses, and of whom he was only the type; that it was their indispensable duty to hear HIM in all things whatsoever he should speak; and reminded them of the warning which Moses himself had denounced against every one that should not hear that great Prophet. "Unto you first," says he, "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

This discourse produced a second harvest of converts to the Christian faith; for "many who heard the word believed; the number being about five thousand" (Acts 4:1).

By this time, however, the enemies of Jesus began to take the alarm. Peter had scarcely done speaking, when the priests and Sadducees, with the captain of the temple, rushing upon them, forcibly apprehended Peter and John, and committed them to prison. On the following day the Jewish Sanhedrin, their supreme court of

judicature, was convened. It consisted of the rulers or chief priests; the heads of the twenty-four courses; the elders of the other tribes; and the Scribes who were doctors of the law, commonly of the tribe of Levi. This great national council sat at Jerusalem. Annas, who had formerly been high-priest, but now ejected by the Roman procurator, was with them, and Caiaphas (his son-in-law) who was now high-priest; the very persons who had procured the death of Jesus Christ, and who of course were highly concerned to suppress this new doctrine. John and Alexander, two distinguished personages among the Jews, with others who were related to the high priest, were also present upon this interesting occasion. It was the custom for the Sanhedrin to sit almost in a circle, and to place the prisoners in its center. The apostles being now brought out and placed in the midst, it was demanded of them to say by what power, or by what name, they had performed the wonderful cure on the preceding day.

Peter, who had formerly trembled at the voice of a girl, was now not afraid to use the utmost freedom with the council and heads of the Jewish nation. He confessed the name and cause of Jesus; charged home upon their consciences the guilt of putting him to death; assured them the miracle was wrought in his name and by his power; and while he pointed their attention to the voices of their own prophets, declaring that "the stone which should be set at nought of the builders, would become the head of the corner;" finally averred that Jesus was the alone medium of salvation to the children of men.

A little reflection upon this strange scene will be sufficient to apprise us of the dilemma in which the Sanhedrin was now involved. On the one hand, the fortitude, the wisdom, and the composure of the apostles struck them with surprise: for they perceived that they were men destitute of the advantages of education, and had no pretensions to what the world calls wisdom. They were recognized by some as the former companions of Jesus previous to his crucifixion, in whose name they now declared the miracle to have been wrought; and the man who had been healed stood before them. There was no reasoning against matter of fact; the thing carried its own evidence along with it. But the question now was, how should the difficulty be got over? They, therefore, ordered the apostles out of court; held a solemn council among themselves; confessed that the miracle was incontrovertible; but that the best way of getting rid of the business was, as far as in them lay, to quash all further inquiry into this mysterious affair, and dismiss the apostles with a strict injunction that they should teach no more in the name of Jesus!

The number of the disciples continued to increase in Jerusalem, and, from the church there, the word of the Lord sounded out into the adjacent parts. The presence of Christ was conspicuously displayed among his people. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul;" the apostles were armed with fortitude to bear testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and "great grace was upon them all."

The instituted discipline of the house of God was manifested, by punishing, in the persons of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, the odious crimes of dissimulation and hypocrisy; and this awful manifestation of the Divine jealousy and holiness impressed the whole church with reverence and fear; while "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). Then it was that Zion "looked forth as the morning, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners" (Cant. 6:10).

The Sadducees, it would seem, had, at this time, the chief sway in the Jewish state. Josephus, their own historian, has described them "as remarkable for a fierce and cruel temper: and that, particularly when they sat in judgment, they were much more rigorous and severe than the Pharisees." [*Antiq.* b. 13. ch. sect. 10. 6. and b. 20. ch. 9, sect. 1; *Jewish Wars*, b. 2. ch. 3. sect. ult.] Of this sect were Caiaphas, the high-priest, and his party. They heard of the progress of the gospel, and were filled with indignation. Upon this occasion all the apostles seem to have been the victims of their rage. They were seized and confined in the common prison. But how futile is the rage of man when opposing the counsels of heaven! One stronger than the whole Sanhedrin, even the Lord Jesus, dispatched his angel that same night, who opened the prison doors and brought out the apostles, directing them to go in the morning into their very temple, and there speak to the people all the words of this life. How great must have been the amazement of the Sanhedrin at hearing, on their assemblage on the morrow, and giving commandment to have the apostles brought forth, that the officers found the prison doors shut with all possible safety, and the guards at their posts, but not a prisoner within; and that the apostles were, at that moment, in the temple, teaching the people.

The report, as may easily be imagined struck an unusual damp upon the whole court, who finding themselves so frequently foiled, began to hesitate about the result of all this. They had obstinately resisted the divine mission of Jesus, supported as it was by the most unquestionable miracles; and they had at length succeeded in putting him to death. Now they congratulated themselves that there was an end to him and his cause. But when they found his disciples, after his death, affirming that God had raised him from the dead, and exalted him to the highest glory in heaven; that they carried on the same design, and that they wrought miracles in his name, they could see no end of the affair, and were wholly at a loss what course to take. Add to all this, that the sentiments of the multitude were now evidently with the apostles, and some little prudence was necessary, while they punished the latter, that they did not bring down upon their own heads the vengeance of the former. The officers, however, were sent to take them, and enjoined to do it without violence. The apostles peaceably yielded themselves; and being brought before the council, were severely reprehended for disregarding the late prohibition they had received from the council. They answered with their usual firmness, as they had done upon a former occasion, that it was only reasonable they should obey God, rather than man; but

they avowed their determination to persevere, and even charged the Sanhedrin, in terms more pointed than ever they had yet done, with being the betrayers and murderers of the Lord of life. They, at the same time, asserted that "God had raised up Jesus from the dead, and exalted him to his right hand in heaven, to be a Prince and Savior, to dispense repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins."

It is manifest that matters were now arrived at the utmost crisis, between the apostles and the Jewish rulers, who were cut to the heart by the answer which the former had given them. The rage of the Sadducees could no longer be restrained; and the destruction of the apostles was the first thing that occurred to them:--A true picture of the spirit of bigotry in every age, when men armed with power have been engaged in opposing the cause of truth and justice. But God, who in his overruling providence, had hitherto guarded the lives of his servants, and had still further occasion for their labors, restrained the wrath of the Jewish rulers, and averted the purposes of this confederacy. There was among them a certain doctor of the Jewish law, of the sect of the Pharisees, (said to have been the son of good old Simeon, mentioned Luke 2:25,) and certainly the preceptor of the famous apostle Paul, a person of great eminence in his profession, and deservedly venerated for his prudent counsel in cases of difficulty. Gamaliel, after requesting that the apostles might withdraw a little while from the hall of justice, gave his advice that they should let those men alone. He reminded them of the fate of several impostors who had risen up among them from time to time, but who had all come to ruin; and that if this new sect were a mere human institution, it was unnecessary to give themselves any trouble to suppress it, for it would of itself quickly come to an end; but if it were really of God, all their opposition would be in vain, and they themselves would only be found ultimately fighting against heaven. The advice of Gamaliel prevailed; the apostles were again called in, and again commanded not to speak ally more in the name of Jesus; yet, to save appearances, they were not dismissed until they had been scourged and enjoined silence. But neither the stripes nor the injunctions had any influence upon them; they "retired from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, whilst daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:41).

At this interesting period, while Satan's kingdom fell like lightning from heaven before the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and the number of the Christians was daily increasing, a circumstance arose in the church, which demanded the attention and engaged the wisdom of the apostles, The church, though consisting wholly of Hebrews, comprised two classes of persons: one party understood only the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, which was used in their synagogues at Jerusalem and its vicinity; while the other had been accustomed chiefly to the use of the Greek language, into which the Old Testament Scriptures had been translated, (the version which we now call the septuagint) and which had been for some time in common use,

previous to the coming of Christ, in all the Jewish synagogues dispersed throughout the cities of Greece, as well as in Egypt. These last were called Hellenists, or Grecians; and of them it would appear, there were at that time many in Jerusalem, members of the church. As the multitude relieved out of the common fund was very great, it can excite no surprise that a few individuals were occasionally overlooked. Hence a "murmuring is said to have been excited among the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations" (Acts 6:1, etc.).

Hitherto the twelve apostles had executed the different offices of apostle, elder, and deacon—the former or highest office in the Christian church, being evidently considered as including every inferior one. To redress the alleged grievance, the apostles convened the whole church, stated to them that the ministry of the word of God was that which claimed their own primary attention, and how unsuitable it would be for them to neglect it for the sake of attending to the poor; they therefore recommended it to their brethren to look out among themselves for seven men, full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit, to be appointed over this matter. "But we," say they, "will give ourselves wholly to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal met the cordial approbation of all the church; and thus the office of deacon was instituted. They chose Stephen, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. Some of them (probably all) were occasionally engaged in preaching the gospel, but this was no part of their office as deacons, the latter being restricted to the serving of tables, or ministering to the wants of the poor.

There were in Jerusalem a great number of synagogues, to which the people resorted for religious instruction. One of these was called the synagogue of the Libertines; that is, such Jews and proselytes as had been Roman slaves, but had obtained their freedom, or were the descendants of such free men. It was also the resort of the Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and those who came from Cilicia, (among whom, in all probability, was Saul of Tarsus (Acts 23:34; 21:39) as well as others that came from Asia Minor. Stephen, by the boldness of his doctrine, and the miracles which he wrought among the people in attestation of it, had attracted the attention of certain persons belonging to that synagogue, who undertook to dispute with him; but not being able to resist the wisdom and the energy with which he spake, they had recourse to the old method of persecution. They suborned men to accuse him of blasphemy against Moses and against God. By this artifice Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin, where, though alone and unsupported, in the midst of furious enemies, he stood firm and unmoved, like a rock in the midst of the waves.

"And all that sat in the council looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15).

The noble defense which Stephen delivered on this occasion, will be found in the

seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, to which I must refer the reader; its length precludes its insertion; and to abridge would be to injure it.

But what avail signs and wonders, the most splendid appeals of eloquence, or the most forcible convictions of truth, among the obdurate and incorrigible? For, notwithstanding the goodness of his cause, the miracles which he had wrought to support it, the lustre with which he now appeared, and the eloquence which flowed in torrents from his lips, "they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him to death" (Acts 7:57-60).

His dying deportment evinced how eminently he was filled with the spirit of his divine Master, and is a pattern to all who are called to suffer in the same righteous cause. He knelt down with the utmost tranquillity and composure, and having committed his departing soul into the hands of his Redeemer, his only remaining concern was for his murderers, and, in the temper and spirit of his dying Master, his last words were, "Lord, lay not this sill to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." The death of Stephen was so far from satiating the rage of the Jewish rulers, that it seems to have been regarded merely as the tocsin to fresh scenes of slaughter and blood. They now gave full vent to their cruelty, and raised a general persecution against the whole church. The loss of this first of "the noble army of martyrs" was deeply bewailed by his brethren; and as the only remaining token of their affection, "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts 8:1,2).

During the last tragical scene, when his enemies were about to carry their vengeance into effect against him, they laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul, and who was one of those that gave their voice for his being put to death.

Saul was born at Tarsus, the chief city of the province of Cilicia. His parents were both of them Hebrew Jews, and his father, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, was a freeman of Rome. Having received the first rudiments of his education in his native city, he went to Jerusalem, where he entered himself of the sect of the Pharisees, and studied the law of Moses, with the traditions of the elders, under Gamaliel, a noted doctor of the laws. When Stephen was put to death, Saul, though but a young man, appears to have taken an active part upon the occasion; and now, flushed with the blood of that eminent martyr, he became outrageous. Armed with authority from the high-priest, he made havoc of the church: pursued them from house to house, dragging them away to prison without mercy, and scourging them in the synagogues, compelled them to blaspheme the name of Jesus, not sparing even the weaker sex (Acts 26:9,10).

Conformably to the instructions which Christ himself had left them, (Matthew 10:22) the disciples gave way to the storm, and dispersed themselves throughout the cities of Judea and Samaria, spreading the knowledge of the gospel wherever they came. And here it is scarcely possible for us not to contemplate the short-sightedness of human policy, as contrasted with the wisdom and over-ruling providence of God. The very methods taken to quash the cause of Christ became the direct means of promoting its progress. Philip, of whom we have lately seen that he was chosen a deacon of the church in Jerusalem, went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ among the inhabitants with great success. Intelligence being brought to Jerusalem that Samaria had received the word of God, two of the apostles went down thither, and communicated to the new converts the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, and thus the second Christian church was planted. Soon after this we find Philip, by Divine direction, meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch, to whom he communicated the knowledge of Christ, and baptized him into the faith of it, by which means the gospel would be carried down to Ethiopia, and the prediction of the Psalmist consequently fulfilled, "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God" (Psalm 68:31).

Philip, on returning from this interview with the eunuch, called at Azotus (the famous ASHDOD of the Philistines) (1 Samuel 6:17) a town on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and from thence passed through several cities that lay in his way, preaching the gospel in each of them, until he arrived at Caesarea, at that time the metropolis of Palestine, and residence of the Roman governor, where he appears to have afterwards settled for life (Acts 21:8,9).

In all this time the malice of Saul was raging with unabated fury. Intimation had probably been given him, that many of the persecuted disciples had taken refuge at Damascus. This was a most noble city, situated at the foot of Mount Lebanon. [So Milton, in reference to the Syrian idol, whose temple was fixed in that city, thus writes;--"Rimmen, Whose delightful seat "was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams," *Paradise Lost*, b. 1. 1. 467, etc. Mr. Maundrell describes it as "situated on an even plain of so great extent, that one can but just discern the mountains which compass it on the farther side; It stands on the west side of the plain, about two miles distant from the head of the river Barrady which waters it. It is of a long straight figure, about two miles in extent, adorned with mosques and steeples, and encompassed with gardens, according to computation, full thirty miles round." The fruit tree called the Damascene, and the flower called the Damask rose, were transplanted from the gardens belonging to this city; and the silk and linen, known by the name of Damask, were probably the invention of its inhabitants. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* 8vo. vol. 1. p. 260.] It had formerly been the capital of Syria, and was still very considerable. Josephus says it abounded with Jews, and in one place mentions that the inhabitants shut up in their baths and destroyed in one hour, ten thousand of them [*Wars*, b. 2. oh. 20. sect. 2]; and upon another occasion

he represents the Damascenes as having murdered eighteen thousand Jews with their wives and children, without the least color or pretext. [Ibid. b. 7. ch. 8. sect. 7.] To this city Saul petitioned the high-priest to grant him letters of authority to go and search the synagogues for the disciples of Jesus, and that, if he found any, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Caiaphas was still in office, and, no doubt, every way as anxious as Saul himself could be to stop the growing heresy. The request was cheerfully complied with; and, in the capacity of chief inquisitor, and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Christians, Saul hastened on his journey, to fulfill, as he thought, the holy errand of extirpating heretics. About noon, Saul and his companions arrived in the vicinity of the city of Damascus, when suddenly there appeared to him the Schekinah, or glory of the Lord, far more bright and dazzling than the sun in his meridian splendor, and this great light from heaven shone around them. Saul was sufficiently versed in Jewish learning to recognize this as the excellent glory, and he instantly fell to the earth as one dead. But how inconceivably great must have been his astonishment to hear himself addressed by name, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And yet, if alarmed at the question, his surprise could not be diminished on asking, "Who art thou Lord?" to be told in reply, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,--it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Trembling and astonished, Saul inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus said unto him, "Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And Saul arose from the earth, but the splendor of the vision had overpowered his bodily eyes, so that he was led by the hand into Damascus, where he remained three days without sight or food. The Lord afterwards appeared in vision to a certain disciple, in Damascus, named Ananias, and directed him where he should find Saul, and what instructions he should give him as to his future conduct, telling him that he was a chosen vessel unto him, to bear his name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel, "for I will shew him," said the Savior, "how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:1-16).

Ananias obeyed the Divine command, and laid his hands on Saul, when a thick film like scales fell from his eyes; his sight returned, his mind became tranquillized, and he was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Thus the lately persecuting Saul was numbered with the disciples; and in a few days "he straightway preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God;" an event no less wonderful to the disciples which dwelt at Damascus than to their enemies; but "Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt there, proving that Jesus is the true Messiah" (Acts 9:22).

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, from the birth of Christ to the 18th Century: including the very interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses

By William Jones

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FROM THE FIRST PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AMONG THE GENTILES, TO THE RETURN OF PAUL AND BARNABAS FROM THEIR FIRST JOURNEY

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus to the faith of Christ is a memorable event in the annals of the Christian church. Whether we consider the nature of the change which then passed upon his mind, the extraordinary signs which accompanied it--such as the miraculous shutting and opening of his eyes--or the astonishing effects which these things produced, we shall find something to excite our admiration, and lead us to adore the riches and sovereignty of divine grace. Such a revolution was now produced in all his sentiments and in all the springs of his life, as resembled the course of a mighty river changed from east to west by the shock of an earthquake. The supernatural signs which affected his bodily frame, shewed what befell his mind, and at the same time served to exemplify the effects which his ministry should produce among the Gentiles, unto whom Christ now sent him "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18, with ch 9:17, 28). "When it pleased God," says he, "who called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus" (Galatians 1:15-17). In that country he appears to have spent nearly the term of three years (verse 18), but the inspired historian has given us no account of the fruit of his ministry there. Our own reflections, however, may teach us to contemplate the wisdom of God, in directing the steps of Saul into Arabia, at this particular juncture of his life. His conversion to the Christian faith must, in the eyes of his unbelieving countrymen, and especially of his former associates, have been in the highest degree provoking. Engaged as he had formerly

been in the most active measures for destroying the subjects of the kingdom of Christ, they must now necessarily have regarded him as a grand apostate, whose conversion tended greatly to weaken the cause in which they were so zealously engaged, while it strengthened the hands of the Christians.

But, notwithstanding the interval that had elapsed, and which, humanly speaking, might have given time for the fiercest rage to cool, Saul had no sooner returned to Damascus, than "the Jews took counsel to kill him" (Acts 9:23). The Lord, however, opened a way for his escape. For although his adversaries had prevailed upon the governor of the city to aid them with a military force; and though sentinels were placed at the gates of the city night and day to prevent his escape, his friends let him down by night through a window in a basket, by the wall of the city, and thus frustrated their malicious designs (2 Corinthians 11:23).

Saul, upon this, went up to Jerusalem to have an interview with some of the other apostles, where he met with Peter and James, and abode with them fifteen days. It is perfectly natural to suppose that such of the disciples of Christ, in that city, as had a personal knowledge of him, and had witnessed his former persecuting zeal against them, would, if unacquainted with his conversion, take the alarm on his again appearing among them. Such, in fact, was the case; for when he attempted to join himself to them, "they were all afraid of him, not believing him to be a disciple" (Acts 9:26). Their fears, however, were instantly dispelled by the intelligence which Barnabas gave them of his conversion, and of his subsequent preaching at Damascus. He was therefore received of the church, and gave them the most convincing proof of the sincerity of his profession, by the boldness with which, during the short time he was among them, he spake in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the members of the synagogue with whom he had been formerly connected. The consequence was, that another effort was made to destroy him, which coming to the ears of his brethren, he was safely conveyed down to Caesarea, and from thence sent to Tarsus, the place of his nativity.

The persecution which had arisen in consequence of the death of Stephen, and which occasioned the dispersion of the greater part of the church, had now raged during a period of four years; but it pleased God at this time to grant his people a season of repose and tranquillity.

Tiberius, who had swayed the imperial scepter at Rome for three and twenty years, was now dead, and had been succeeded, as emperor, by his grandson Caius Caligula. So infamous had been the conduct of the former, and so odious had he rendered his character in the eyes of his subjects, that, if we may credit historians, he was suspected of choosing the latter for his successor, "as foreseeing that Caius alone would outstrip him in what was vile and abominable." [Dion. Cassius, b, 58.] Certain it is that his excessive wickedness, and intolerably shocking behavior, tended in no

small degree to obliterate the recollection of the horror and infamy that had attached itself to the name of Tiberius. [Suetonius' *Life of Calig.* c. 11: Josephus Antiq. b. 18. c. 6. sect. 10. Eutrop. *Brev. Hist. Romans* b. 7. sect. 12.]

The commencement of the reign of Caius was rather auspicious than otherwise. He signaled himself by several wise and beneficent actions, and gained upon the love and popularity of his subjects, They retained an affectionate remembrance of his father Germanicus, and hoped the son would tread in his steps. But the atrocious character of the new emperor speedily began to develop itself. One of his first vile actions was the murder of the younger Tiberius, who had been appointed, by the late emperor Tiberius, his colleague in the government of the empire. Another was the murder of Macro, a person to whom Caius himself owed the greatest obligations. When Caius did any thing unbecoming his dignity, it had been the custom of Macro to admonish him boldly of the impropriety of his conduct, a freedom which the despot soon grew weary of, and therefore ordered him to be put to death. To such a pitch of extravagance and impiety did he at length arrive, that he set himself up for a deity, and insisted upon being worshipped as such; a thing to which the Jews, of all nations, would never consent, and hence they incurred his resentment. Altars and temples were erected to Caius throughout the various countries then subject to the Roman arms, and the image of this detestable tyrant was set up as an object of adoration. An attempt was even made by some heathens who dwelt at Jamnia, a city of Judea, and who had an aversion to the Jewish laws, to build an altar of brick in honor of Caius, intending probably thereby, at once to vex the Jews and ingratiate themselves with the emperor. The Jews instantly demolished the altar, and the heathens complained to Capito, the questor (or collector of the Roman tribute) who transmitted an account of the affair to the emperor; though Capito himself was suspected of being the real author and contriver of the plot, in order to ensnare and destroy the Jews. Caius, without delay, recalled Vitellius, the Roman governor of that province, from his station; a man whose mild and gentle deportment had greatly conciliated the Jews; and sent Petronius to succeed him, giving him orders to go to Jerusalem with an army and set up his statue in their temple, in the most holy place, with the name of Jupiter inscribed upon it; enjoining him to put to death every Jew that dared to resist, and to make all the rest of the nation slaves. This order from Caligula came upon them like a clap of thunder. At first, the Jews could scarcely credit the report of so execrable a design, but their incredulity was soon dissipated. Petronius marched with a large body of auxiliaries raised in Syria, from Antioch into Judea, and even advanced as far as Ptolemais. The Jews were thrown into the utmost consternation. An immense multitude of them were collected together, who, with their wives and children, went into the plain near Ptolemais, and supplicated Petronius, first for their laws and next for themselves. The friends of Petronius seeing them at a distance, mistook them for a large army; but, on a nearer approach, they found them only an unarmed, lamenting multitude. Advancing in sight of Petronius, who was seated upon an eminence, they threw themselves down upon the ground

before him, uttering the deepest lamentations. When ordered to rise, they approached him with dust upon their heads, and their hands behind them like men condemned to die, and the Senate addressed Petronius to the following effect: "We come to you, sir, as you see, unarmed; we have brought with us our wives, children, and relations; and we throw ourselves down before you as at the feet of Caius, having left none at home, that so you may save all, or destroy all;" with much more to the same purport, declaring also that their love for their temple and laws was greater than for their lives, accompanying the whole with expressions of the bitterest lamentation, and every token of anguish and distress. Their entreaties prevailed; Petronius humanely granted their request, and deferred executing his commission. Some, indeed, attribute his lenity to another cause. Caligula was expected to visit Alexandria in Egypt the ensuing summer; had Petronius pushed matters to an extremity at this moment with the Jews, it would, in all probability, have led them to neglect their harvest, and the cultivation of their lands; and as the emperor's journey must unavoidably be made through those parts, it was apprehended that such neglect would have prevented that plenty which was requisite to accommodate the vast concourse that might be expected to accompany him on such an occasion. He therefore wrote to the emperor, urging the most plausible pretexts for the delay, and especially the necessity that existed of deferring the matter, for fear of the scarcity that might ensue.

It has been usual with commentators to attribute the cessation of persecution at this time to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; but I apprehend a much more adequate cause is to be found in the circumstances now related. The Jews were fully employed in warding off this terrible blow from themselves and their temple, which was their glory and confidence; and, in such a state of things we may be fully assured, that they would want both the leisure and inclination to pursue and persecute the Christians. Caligula died soon after, in the fourth year of his reign, being assassinated in his own palace by one of his officers. And thus "the churches had rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, were edified and multiplied." It is probable, also, that during this interval of external peace, many of the Christians, who had been driven from their families and houses, by the cruel hand of persecution, again returned to Jerusalem. [Philo de Legat. ad Caium, p. 1010-1021. Josephus de Bello Jud. b. 2. c. 10. sect. 1. Lardner's Credibility, ed. 1730. p. 121-145.] During this auspicious season, Peter revisited the churches already planted in Galilee and Samaria, and among other places came down to Lydda, where there appear to have been a few disciples not yet organized as a church. Here he wrought a miracle by restoring a man to health and soundness who had been afflicted with palsy, and confined eight years to his bed. At Joppa, a neighboring town, he raised to life a female disciple, named Tabitha. These things were spread abroad, and drew the attention of such as heard of them, "and many believed and turned to the Lord."

Peter took up his residence for some time in Joppa: and while he continued there, an event took place which merits particular relation. The church of Jerusalem had been now planted about eight years, during which time the preaching of the gospel had been restricted to the natural descendants of Abraham. The period, however, was now at hand, when, according to the Divine good pleasure, the Sun of Righteousness was to arise upon the benighted Gentiles with healing in his wings. This mystery, which had been hid from ages and generations, was now unfolded to the mind of the apostle Peter, by means of a vision which he had while he abode at Joppa (Acts 10:9), and by the interpretation of that memorable vision, he was instructed to consider the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles as no longer in force; that henceforward he was to call no man common or unclean. He was sent Caesarea to preach the gospel of Christ to Cornelius the centurion and his household; and while engaged in making known to these Gentiles the way of salvation, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all his hearers in the same supernatural manner as had been formerly done upon the Jews on the day of Pentecost, to the astonishment of the apostle and of all the Jewish brethren who accompanied him from Joppa. Thus was his mind instructed into this part of the Divine will; the believing Gentiles baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and received into the kingdom of the Messiah: and thus was Peter now honored by his divine Master in opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, as he had previously done to the Jews at Jerusalem, for unto him were committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:18).

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he found his fellow apostles and all his Jewish brethren, laboring under the same mistaken sentiments concerning the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of Christ, which had recently occupied his own mind. They had heard with some surprise that the Gentiles had also received the word of God, and waited the apostle's arrival, probably with some impatience, to explain to them his conduct in going into men uncircumcised and eating with them. Peter recapitulated the whole matter in detail, and terminated the narrative with this pointed appeal to themselves, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, What was I that I should withstand God?" This silenced all their scruples; for it is said, "they held their peace and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:1-18).

When Saul of Tarsus was called by divine grace to the knowledge of the truth, he at the same time received a commission from the glorified Savior, to execute his ministry among the Gentiles. Hence, in explaining to the churches of Galatia his apostolic authority, he says, "He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:8).

And to this great undertaking he devoted himself most unreservedly, as we shall perceive by taking a brief review of his labors. The place where we begin to trace the

history of this great apostle of the Gentiles, is **ANTIOCH**. There were formerly many cities which bore that name; but this was the metropolis of Syria, and indeed of all the east. For situation, magnitude, populousness, and various other advantages, it ranked as the third city in the Roman empire, being inferior only to Rome and Alexandria. The greater part of its inhabitants were Greeks; but Josephus says, that many Jews also settled in it. "The kings of Syria allowed the Jews the freedom of Antioch equally with the Greeks, so that their numbers increased exceedingly, and they were always bringing over a great many of the Greeks to their religious worship." [Josephus' Wars, b. 7. ch. 3. sect. 3.] This city, which is situated on the river Orontes, was remarkable, not only for its local scenery, but also for the magnificence of its buildings, the extent of its commerce, and the learning of its inhabitants, insomuch that it seems to have been considered in those days as an honor to be one of its citizens. Hence, Cicero, in his oration for the poet Archias, a native of Antioch, calls it "a noble city, once eminent and wealthy, abounding in men erablent for their great learning and true taste."

But however famous Antioch was for the things mentioned by Cicero, it became more remarkable in having the light of the glorious gospel bestowed upon it; for the success which the gospel had among its inhabitants, the fruit of which appeared in the erection of a numerous Christian church; and for its giving the name of CHRISTIAN to the followers of Jesus Christ. Here Christianity flourished to such a degree, for many ages, that it obtained the appellation of Theopolis, or the city of God, and this church was considered as the first and chief of the Gentile churches. The gospel, indeed, had found its way into this great city previous to its being visited by Saul; for it appears from the inspired history that some of the teachers, who had been driven from Jerusalem by the persecution which arose about Stephen, had reached Antioch, where they made known the glad tidings of salvation among the Grecians or Hellenistic Jews; and "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:19-22). When the report of these things reached Jerusalem, that church sent Barnabas to Antioch, who rejoiced at seeing the grace of God so illustriously displayed among them; and, by his own exhortations and discourses, he was eminently instrumental in promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among them. Hearing that Saul was at Tarsus, Barnabas went in quest of him, and having found him, he brought him also to Antioch, where they both continued a whole year labouring with much success in the work of the Lord.

Caius Caligula, whose death has been already noticed, and which took place about this time, was succeeded in the empire by Claudius Caesar, who, soon after his entrance on the government, bestowed the kingdom of Judea on Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, (mentioned Matthew 2) and nephew to Herod the Tetrarch, who put to death John the Baptist. Herod Agrippa experienced much of the vicissitudes that usually accompany the pursuit of ambition. He had incurred the

displeasure of Tiberius, by whose order he was put in chains and committed to prison. The account which Josephus gives us of this affair is as follows. Before Caius Caligula ascended the throne of the Caesars, as Herod and he were one day riding together in their chariot, the former, who was anxious to ingratiate himself with the heir apparent to the throne, "wished to God that Tiberius was gone, and Caius emperor in his stead." Eutychus, who drove the chariot, overheard the words, but concealed his knowledge of them at the moment. Some time afterwards, however, being accused by his master Herod of theft, he discovered the treason to Tiberius, who instantly had him arrested, and confined during the life of the latter. When Tiberius died, Caius not only liberated his old friend, but invited him to his palace, put a crown upon his head, and constituted him king of the tetrarchy of Philip, and bestowed on him a chain of gold, of the same weight as the iron one which he had worn during his imprisonment. [Josephus' Antiq, b. 18. ch. 6. sect. 5. and Wars, b. 1. ch. 9. sect. 4.]

Herod was a professed zealot for the law of Moses and the peculiarities of Judaism, and studied by every means in his power to ingratiate himself with the Jews. He expended large sums in the defense and ornament of their city; but it was now in his power to attempt a more acceptable service, by exerting his authority against the Christians; and the motives of vanity and popular applause by which he was governed, prompted him to embrace the opportunity. He began by apprehending the apostle James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, whom he hastily put to death; and finding the Jews were highly pleased with this step, he caused Peter also to be apprehended and imprisoned, intending to have him executed after the passover; a period when, by reason of the influx of strangers from all parts to the city, he should have an opportunity of shewing his zeal against this new sect to a greater number of spectators. James, indeed, had finished his course, and was gone to receive the crown of righteousness from the hands of his divine Master in the kingdom of God. But the work of Peter was not yet accomplished; and though marked out by Herod for a speedy sacrifice, he was still secure. So intent was Herod, however, upon his destruction, that he not only committed him to prison, but loaded him with two chains, and consigned him to the charge of sixteen soldiers, who were to watch him by turns, four at a time, two of them being chained to him, one on either side, and two placed as sentinels at the prison door. It is probable that the Jews still recollected how all the apostles had formerly escaped when put in prison, and perhaps they suspected the fidelity of the guards; nor is it unlikely that at their particular request, all these precautions were taken in the case of Peter. We may also realize something of the anxiety and concern which must have pervaded the church on this distressing occasion. They had lost Stephen and one apostle; and the life of the great apostle of the circumcision was in the utmost jeopardy: "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." How long it pleased God, in this instance, to exercise the faith and confidence of the church, does not clearly appear. It is thought by some, that Peter was apprehended about the beginning of

April, or during the days of unleavened bread, which was the beginning of the feast of the passover. [See Benson's *First Planting of Christianity*, ch. 5. sect. 6.] That feast lasted eight days, and they date the transactions in the third year of the reign of Claudius. It was the usual practice of the Jews, during the festival, to indulge in mirth and jollity, and at the end to release the prisoners. On this occasion, however, they were anticipating the high satisfaction of seeing, as soon as the paschal lamb was eaten, and the festival quite ended, the foremost of this sect brought out and put to death. His enemies congratulated themselves in thinking that they had him secure. The next day was appointed by Herod for his being publicly executed. But the night before this was to take place, the Lord interposed and rescued him out of their hands. Peter, in all probability, knew the time they had appointed for his martyrdom; but he seems to have been in the enjoyment of a serene and tranquil mind, and not in the least alarmed about their machinations. He was sleeping very composedly between the two soldiers, chained by the arm to each of them, when the angel of the Lord came upon him, accompanied by an effulgent brightness, and smiting Peter on the side, raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly; and his chains fell off from his hands, And the angel said, "Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals; and he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee and follow me, and he went out and followed him," apprehending that he saw a vision. The prison was in the suburbs of Jerusalem, and when they had passed the first and second watch, they came unto the great iron gate which led towards the city. This opened to them of its own accord; and the angel having escorted Peter through one street, and completely delivered him out of the hands of his enemies, he departed from him. In the morning, Herod found himself disappointed of his prey! The guards were examined, but being unable to give a satisfactory account of their prisoner, he commanded them to be put to death. It is not improbable that Herod might suspect a miraculous interposition in this instance; but to punish the guards as if they had been guilty of conniving at his escape, was the likeliest method to stop further inquiry, and prevent the people from suspecting any thing extraordinary in the affair (Acts 12:1-19).

Herod did not long survive this event. He lived and died a monument of the instability of human greatness. He was much devoted to his Roman masters, and had a taste for their magnificence. This induced him to celebrate games and shows at Caesarea in honor of the emperor; on which occasions he labored to display the utmost of his grandeur. His pride was farther flattered by an embassy from Tyre and Sidon. Those cities had incurred his displeasure; but as they chiefly drew their subsistence from his dominions, they were compelled to supplicate peace, which, though they had highly offended him, they obtained by their interest with Blastus, his chamberlain. The king appointed a day on which to receive their submission, when he appeared in the theater with a splendor that dazzled the eyes of the spectators. He addressed himself to the ambassadors in a pompous oration, suited, we may suppose, to give them the highest idea, both of his power and clemency. When he had ended, he

heard his praises resound from every quarter as the multitude shouted, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man." His vain heart was elated with this impious compliment, which, considering that Herod professed the knowledge of the true God, displayed an awful instance of pride and impiety, The angel of the Lord smote him with an irresistible though invisible stroke, because he gave not God the glory; and while surrounded with the fancied insignia of majesty, and in the midst of their idolatrous acclamations; he was seized with excruciating pains, "worms bred in his putrefied flesh and devoured him alive." In this wretched condition he continued five days, and then expired, an awful instance of God's just judgment, "who resisteth the proud, and will not give his glory to another."

[The account which Josephus gives of the death of Herod coincides with that given by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, except that the former goes more into detail, and has particularly noticed that the king himself could not but acknowledge the hand of God in his sufferings, and how flattering and unjust the acclamations were, which ascribed divinity to him, a mortal being, now seized with a disease which would quickly hurry him out of the world. He left behind him a son named AGRIPPA, then seventeen years of age, before whom Paul afterwards appeared and made the well known apology for Christianity, by which he almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian. He also left two daughters, who are noticed in the New Testament, viz. BERNICE, who was married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her father's brother, when she was only sixteen years of age; and DRUSILLA, who was afterwards married to the governor Felix. After the death of Herod Agrippa, the kingdom was again reduced to a Roman province, and then the persecution of the Christians, for awhile, abated.]

While these things were transacting in Judea, 'the church of Antioch increased greatly, both in numbers and in gifts. For besides the stated office-bearers of bishops, and deacons, which were common to all the churches, this at Antioch had several eminently gifted persons, as prophets (or exhorters,) and teachers (or ministers of the word;) among whom were Barnabas and Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, and Saul. By means of a certain prophet who had come down from Jerusalem to Antioch in those days, the Lord was pleased to intimate his will that, among other things, a season of scarcity was approaching which would severely affect the disciples in Judea; an event which accordingly took place in the latter end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth year of the reign of Claudius, as is noticed by Josephus, Eusebius, and Orosius. In this calamitous event, we have a signal display, not only of the care of the blessed God over his people, in revealing its approach by the ministry of this prophet, and thus giving them an opportunity to provide against it, at a time when many of the Christians in Jerusalem had forsaken all for the gospel's sake, and were laboring under peculiar difficulties; but we have also a manifestation of his divine wisdom and goodness in so ordering the course of events, as that, in the generous and disinterested conduct of the believing Gentiles, the church at Jerusalem should have a pledge of their fervent love and affection towards them as

their Christian brethren, and of the sense they entertained of their obligations to those from whom the sound of the gospel first came out; for "having been made partakers of their spiritual things, they thought it perfectly reasonable to minister unto them in temporal things." And if we also take into the account, that even among the believing Jews there was at that time some little remains of the ancient jealousy about the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of Christ, we cannot but see how wisely adapted this was to dissipate all evil surmising from the minds of the former, and to promote the most cordial amity and concord between these different classes of Christians. Nothing has so powerful a tendency to meliorate the human heart, as acts of kindness and love; nothing softens the mind of man and infuses into it a favorable opinion of others like expressions of charity! No sooner was the approach of this famine intimated in the church at Antioch, than "the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren which were in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Soon after Barnabas and Saul had returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, the Lord was pleased to make known his will, that they should be separated for the great work whereunto he had called them, which was accordingly done by fasting and prayer, accompanied with the imposition of hands. Saul had long been invested with the apostolic office; for he received it not from any man or body of men, as he himself declares, but immediately from Jesus Christ. We are not therefore to imagine that the act of the church, on this occasion, constituted either Saul or Barnabas apostles but it recognized them as the apostles of Christ; and from the whole transaction we may at least deduce this instruction, that as God is not the author of confusion, but of order and peace in all the churches of the saints, so it is his will that all the affairs of his kingdom should be conducted, not as human wisdom may suggest, but from a regard to his authority, under the control of his revealed will, and in a dependence upon him for his blessing, without which the wisest and best concerted measures must prove fruitless.

Thus sent forth "by the Holy Spirit," concurring with the act of the church at Antioch, they accordingly departed unto Seleucia, a place fifteen miles below Antioch, and situated upon the same river, Orontes, and five from the place where that river runs into the sea. From thence they sailed to the island of Cyprus, situated in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, being the native country of Barnabas. As this island lay contiguous to Judea, it abounded with Jews, as it is attested by several ancient authors. The first place which the apostles visited in that island was Salamis, a city lying on the eastern extremity, and one of the highest ports to Syria. The gospel had already reached that island, but the knowledge of it was confined to the Jews (Acts 11:19). The apostles here found Jewish synagogues, which they frequented, and in which they preached the word of God to both Jews and Gentiles. After this they traveled nearly the whole length of the island, till they came to Paphos, which was

situated upon the western extremity, a place famed for its temple and obscene worship of the Paphion Venus. This was the residence of Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, who, hearing of the arrival of Barnabas and Saul, sent for them, desiring to hear from their mouths the word of God. Here the apostles were withstood by Elymas, a noted magician, who sought to turn away the deputy from the faith. Saul, however, detected his malicious intention; and, as Peter had formerly done in the awful instance of Ananias and Sapphira, so Saul by his apostolic power, denounced upon Elymas the impending judgment of God for his iniquity. Scarcely had he uttered the words when the sorcerer was struck with a total blindness, insomuch that he went about seeking some one to lead him by the hand (Acts 13:6-12). The Lord was pleased by means of this judgment upon Elymas, to awaken the attention of the proconsul to the things which concerned his everlasting peace, for "when he saw what was done, he believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." On this occasion, we find the first intimation of the change of the name of the great apostle of the Gentiles from Saul to Paul. Various conjectures for this have been offered by the learned. By some it is supposed that the latter title was given him because he had been the means of converting Sergius Paulus to the Christian faith; as Scipio obtained the appellation of Africanus from the circumstance of his having conquered Africa. Others, however, and among them ranks the judicious Benson, account for it, by supposing that at the time of his circumcision he received the two names of Saul and Paul - -the latter as his Roman name, (for he was born a freeman of Rome,) and the former as his Jewish name, for he was a Jew, or as he calls himself, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. As, therefore, he had been called Saul, while he continued among the Jews, and as he was henceforward to execute his ministry among the Romans he adopted his Roman name. And the same reason hath been assigned, for changing the name of his companion Silas into that of Silvanus. Paul and Barnabas quitting Paphos sailed to Perga, a town in Pamphilia, not far from the coast of Asia Minor, from whence they passed on to Antioch In Pisidia. And here we may remark, that, in executing their mission among the Gentiles, it was the invariable practice of these apostles, on their arrival at any city or town, where they had not previously been, in the first place to inquire whether there were any Jewish synagogue in it. and if they found one, they attended its worship on the ensuing Sabbath. Such was the case at Iconium, Acts 14:1. -- at Thessalonica, ch. 17:1. -- at Corinth, ch. 18:4. -- at Ephesus, ch. 19:8, and other places; and such was the case at Antioch in Pisidia, where "they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day and sat down" (Acts 13:14, etc.). This manner of proceeding does not appear to have been arbitrary or capricious; but conformable to the revealed will of their divine Master, who, in the commission which he gave to his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, commanded them "to begin at Jerusalem," the place where he was crucified. This was altogether in unison with the nature and with the properties of the grace revealed in the gospel itself -- which. "Grand as the bosom whence it flowed, and kind as the heart that gave it vent,-outshines the thoughts of shallow man." So we find Peter reminding the Jews that unto them first God, having raised

and walked into the city, and the following day, Barnabas and he took their leave and departed for Derbe, where they preached the gospel with much success, and from thence returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, establishing the minds of the disciples in the truths they had received, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and warning them that they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Upon this second visit, they also ordained elders or bishops in every church, which was done by fasting and prayer, commending them to the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ on whom they believed. After this they passed throughout all the region of Pisidia and came to Pamphilia, where they again preached the word in the city of Perga, and passing through Attalia, sailed for Antioch in Syria, the city from whence they had originally taken their departure. Thus having accomplished their first journey, they reported to the church all that God had wrought by their means, and especially how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. This done they took up their abode again for a considerable while with the disciples at Antioch (Acts 14:19-23).