

In the Name of Jesus Christ

THE
FIRST CHURCH
OF
ROME

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	<p style="text-align: center;">THE FIRST CHURCH OF ROME</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HOUSE CHURCH (ECCLESIA DOMESTICA)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>on the Esquiline Hill on the Vicus Lateranus [the site later known as S. Praxedis (Santa Prassede)] founded probably by Andronicus and Junia between AD 33-37 Aquila and Priscilla fellowship here</i></p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">AD 41 CLAUDIUS INTRODUCES LAWS AGAINST PUBLIC ASSEMBLING OF JEWS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Aquila and Priscilla cannot assemble in this Messianic congregation in a manner which is observant of the Torah</i></p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">ARRIVAL OF SIMON MAGUS IN ROME</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Clemens (Clement) is appointed Pastor of the First Church by Peter in Caesarea but is unable to take up his position because</i></p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">c. AD 45-49 EXPULSION OF JEWS BY CLAUDIUS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Aquila and Priscilla leave Rome between AD 41 and AD 49 and go to Corinth in Southern Greece. The Gentile converts are orphaned of their Jewish leaders and spiritual guides. Paul meets Aquila and commits the care of the Church in Rome to a young Gentile convert, the slave Hermas.</i></p>	

	<p><i>Hermas is unable to prevent the turning of the fellowship into a Gnostic school in days of Claudius c. AD 41-54 by "Father"</i></p> <p><u>Simon Magus</u></p> <p><i>He wins over the majority of the Gentile Christians who had been converted by the fellowship of Andronicus and Junia, and Aquila and Priscilla before the reign of Claudius.</i></p>	
	<p>AD 54 DEATH OF CLAUDIUS RETURN OF JEWS TO ROME</p>	
<p>THE SECOND CHURCH OF ROME</p> <p>HOUSE CHURCH (ECCLESIA DOMESTICA)</p> <p><i>on the Aventine Hill near the Circus Maximus [the site later known as S. Prisca] founded by</i></p> <p>Aquila and Priscilla</p> <p><i>(Prisca) on their return to Rome between AD 54-58. No further record after 60s when</i></p> <p>Aquila and Priscilla move to Ephesus</p> <p><i>(before AD 64)</i></p>	<p>Simon Magus</p> <p><i>continues agitating against the Jewish Christians</i></p> <p>AD 58</p>	<p>Paul writes his Epistle to the Romans AD 58</p> <p>Andronicus and Junia</p> <p><i>are in prison in Rome</i></p> <p>Rufus (Pudens)</p> <p><i>and likeminded brethren, including</i></p> <p>Hermas,</p> <p><i>assemble in the House of Pudens on the Viminal Hill on the Vicus Patricius.</i></p> <p><i>There is as yet no Pastor appointed for this fellowship</i></p> <p>Paul a house-prisoner in Rome AD 61</p>
	<p>HOLOCAUST OF MANY CHRISTIANS IN ROME BY NERO AD 64</p>	<p>AD 62 PETER IMPALED (JERUSALEM), PAUL BEHEADED (NEAR ROME)</p>
	<p>Simon Magus</p> <p><i>returns to the East</i></p>	<p>THE THIRD CHURCH OF ROME</p> <p>HOUSE CHURCH (ECCLESIA DOMESTICA)</p> <p><i>on the Viminal Hill on the Vicus Patricius in the House of Rufus Pudens [the site later known as S. Pudenziana (Santa Pudenziana)]. Certain unnamed Apostles appoint Linus Pastor</i></p>

	<p><i>Simon Magus and his circle prompt</i></p> <p>Cerdon <i>to set out from Syria and become the chief Gnostic guru in Rome, the "Father" of the Gnostic school on the Vicus Lateranus. This school is now referred to by Bible-believing Christians (of the Third Church) as the "Cerdonian sect".</i></p> <p>Cerdon <i>remodels the school into the outward semblance of a "church", accepting c. AD 115-125 Sixtus, son of the prophet Hermas, as the first "bishop" of his "church". Sixtus had once been, before his apostasy, a validly ordained elder of the Bible-believing congregation, the Third Church of Rome. Cerdon remained the chief doctrinal authority in the First Church till the days of Hyginus, its third "bishop".</i></p> <p><u>Sixtus (c. AD 115-125)</u> – also called Xystus, originally ordained an elder by Alexander</p> <p><u>Tele(s)phorus (c. AD 125-136)</u></p> <p><u>Hyginus (c. AD 136-140)</u></p> <p><u>Pius (c. AD 140-155)</u> <i>the brother of the prophet Hermas of the Third Church. Originally an elder in the Bible-believing congregation, he apostatizes and joins Hermas' son Sixtus. He calls the church at Santa Prassede the official "Church of Rome".</i></p>	<p><u>Linus (AD 67-76)</u></p> <p><u>Anencletus (Cletus or Anacletus) (AD 76-88)</u></p> <p><u>Clemens (Clement) (AD 88-97)</u> <i>He was originally appointed Pastor of the First Church by the Apostle Peter before its apostasy early in reign of Claudius but was prevented from taking up his position at that time by the expulsion of Jews from Rome, then by the apostasy of the First Church under Simon Magus.</i></p> <p><u>Evaristus (AD 97-105)</u></p> <p><u>Alexander (AD 105-115)</u> <i>Alexander ordains an elder called Sixtus, the son of the prophet Hermas, who later defects to the Gnostic school, becoming its first "bishop"</i></p> <p>Hermas <i>previously an elder with a gift of prophecy, is now appointed at an advanced age the Pastor of the Third Church. He preaches against the Gnostic heretics.</i></p> <p>Martinus <i>is now Pastor (around AD 145 to around AD 177 at latest) and is supported by the Bible teacher</i></p>
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Marcion

is now the chief Gnostic guru in the congregation. He teaches that the Bread of the Eucharist is the "proper" material body of Jesus, whilst the human Jesus was a mere phantasm and did not have a truly human body at all.

Anicetus (c. AD 155-166)

Soter (AD 166-175)

Eleuther(i)us (c. AD 175-189)

Victor (AD 189-199)

Zephyrinus (AD 199-217)

Callistus (AD 217-222)

Callistus remodels the First Church's doctrine and practice along the lines formulated by his predecessor Victor. He promotes the Docetic theology of Simon and Cerdon in a new "Callistian" form, which likewise represents Jesus as a direct manifestation of God, without any real human element. Jesus' mother Mary now becomes "The Mother of God" – like the Great Goddess of the pagan Romans, the Mother of the Sun-god Mithras or Apollo.

The apostle Peter becomes the mystic "Rock" out of which the Sun-god arose, the founder of the First Church in the sense that he transmitted his authority, and, indeed, his spirit, to its later bishops. The priesthood of the First Church becomes a pseudo-ascetic clique who are given the power to forgive sins by their own authority and are freed from the personal requirements of the moral law. This Callistian heresy is in all essentials Roman Catholicism as it is practiced to this day.

Justin Martyr

who previously taught in Ephesus amongst the disciples of the Apostle John. He preaches against the Gnostic heretics. A Messianic Jewish Bible teacher called

Hegesippus

visits Rome and lends his authority to the succession of pastors in the Third Church, preaching against the Gnostic heretics.

Visit of

Polycarp

the disciple of the Apostle John. He turns many of the followers of the Gnostic heretics of the First Church back to the true faith.

Irenaeus

the disciple of Polycarp visits Rome and teaches there, preaching with great power against the Gnostic heretics.

Hippolytus

the disciple of Irenaeus is now Pastor. He preaches against the Gnostic heretics, and specifically against Callistianism.

Origen

the disciple of Hippolytus continues the battle against Gnosticism, and, particularly, Callistianism and the related heresy Sabellianism, on into the third century

Novatian

continues the work of Hippolytus in Rome as teacher then Pastor. This church is called the "Novatianist" Church after him

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Thank you -- *Richard T. Dodds (author)*



The First Church of Rome

NOTE: There are links in the text to footnotes quoting the original ancient writers and other evidence providing authority for statements in the text. Click the numbers in round brackets [e.g. (1)] to go direct to the footnote. To return to the text click your Back button. Two forward arrows [>>] take you forward or backward in the main text. Larger quotations and individual studies are found in the Appendices linked in the footnotes. Links, as well as the main text, are being regularly supplemented and updated. A PDF version, complete with notes, images and Appendices is provided below. To download it onto your hard drive, right-click on the link and select "Save Target As ..." or "Save Link As ...".



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NOTE ON TERMS: In the following account the terminology is non-technical, and used in a way that attempts to reflect the simple views of the Pre-Nicene Church Fathers. Those who deviated from the doctrines found in the Received Text of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, are described as "heretics"; those who adhered to those doctrines are called "Bible-believers", "Evangelicals" (believers in the Gospel as found in the Bible), "Catholics" (in the original sense of upholders of the universal, common, Bible faith) "Orthodox" (i.e. having correct opinions on Bible doctrine), and, if Hebrews, "Messianic" (the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek term "Christians"), though occasionally the word "Messianic" is used in this account in a more general way to denote Jews who believed in or looked for a Messiah other than Jesus. Through the centuries these names have become attached to particular groups and churches. The original meanings are always intended in this work, unless otherwise indicated.

NOTE ON SOURCES: This account was inspired by the great prophetic and expository work of Bro. William M. Branham, *The Seven Church Ages*, which, in one section, summarizes the early history of the First Church of Rome. For that part of his work, Bro. Branham used, selectively, the research of a Pentecostal historian, Rachel C. Hazeltine, in the book "How Did It Happen?" (Library of Congress Control Number: 58049286). I had done my own research using the originals of the Early Church Fathers to background Bro. Branham's account before reading Hazeltine's book. I found my conclusions usually agreed with Hazeltine's. However, because of the particular style of Hazeltine's book, she did not give details of sources and authorities, and sketched and dramatized the main outlines of the history. This account attempts to bring out the finer points of historical detail, and gives the original authorities for historical interpretations throughout.

[The Founding of the First Church of Rome and Its Corruption by Simon Magus and Cerdon](#)

1. The First Church of Rome was founded shortly after Pentecost. There were Jews from Rome and native-born Romans who had been converted to Judaism (1) amongst the pilgrims from many lands staying at Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost in AD 33 (2). Many believed the message of the Resurrection, when they heard the preaching of Peter and witnessed the miraculous demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's power performed through the Apostles: some will have returned after the Feast to their native lands, carrying their new faith with them.

2. Paul in his *Epistle to the Romans* (3) written around AD 58, mentions two members of the Church in Rome, Junia (traditionally a woman's name) and Andronicus, who were Christians before Paul, that is, before *c.* AD 37. This was several years prior to the conversion of the first Roman Gentiles or non-Jews at the house of Cornelius (*c.* AD 41), as related in the *Acts of the Apostles* (4). Therefore, Junia and Andronicus are unlikely to have heard the Gospel through Gentile intermediaries. They were Jews by birth, not proselytes (Paul calls them his *kinsmen*), and had come to Christ at a time when the Gospel had not spread beyond the ancient boundaries of Israel and the city of Damascus, except for the individuals from foreign lands who were present at Pentecost and occasional foreign converts such as the Ethiopian eunuch. As they had Roman names, they

were perhaps Jews who had been born in Italy, or had natural ties with that country. How and where, then, did these two become Christians so early in the history of the Church? They were either converted at Pentecost or in the first few years thereafter and most probably in the near vicinity of Judaea. If they were originally Jewish residents in Rome, they may have made a pilgrimage to the festival at Jerusalem in AD 33, as Jews who lived in foreign countries commonly did, and there heard Peter preaching on the Day of Pentecost and witnessed for themselves the momentous and miraculous events of that time.

3. They were evidently more than mere spectators. Paul uses an unusual phrase to describe Junia and Andronicus: he says they were "of note among the apostles". 1) They were OF NOTE (Greek *episemoi*, literally marked or stamped, *i.e.*, as we might say, they were noticeably of the same fine brand as the Apostles); 2) they were counted AMONG the Apostles; 3) they were counted among THE Apostles. These considerations suggest not only that they were closely associated with the circle of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem (point 3) but also that they had the same remarkable, supernatural ministry and self-sacrificing energy which distinguished the Galilean Apostles (point 1): Paul uses the image of a seal, imprinting impressions, marks or signs on clay or metal to describe the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in transforming the human personality; the "signs" or "marks" of an Apostle were miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, like healing and prophecy, that accompanied the ministry, and the patient endurance of suffering and hardship in behalf of the Gospel. Junia and Andronicus were obviously "stamped" with that Apostolic Seal. Paul refers to them as his "fellowprisoners" and this shows they had already suffered for the cause of Christ. The phrase also appears to denote that Andronicus and Junia received the Seal or Stamp of the Holy Spirit "among the Apostles", *i.e.* when and where the Apostles received It, confirming their presence at Pentecost. Furthermore, it implies (point 2) that they had a singular call to missionary work and that this work rivaled in importance that of the Apostles themselves. What more likely than that call was in the direction of their adopted home, to evangelize the capital of the Gentile world as the Apostles evangelized the capital of Israel? At any event, on their return to or arrival in Rome, as joyful, Spirit-filled believers in the Lord Jesus, baptized in His

Name, they surely would have spread the Word amongst their Jewish compatriots, and gathered a Jewish Christian circle, as well as Gentile converts, around them. The core of the fellowship would have been what we would call today Messianic Jews, keeping the commandments of the Torah, the Law of Moses, as did the disciples in Jerusalem, but depending wholly on the Messiah Jesus for salvation of their soul.

4. We know that when Emperor Claudius (AD 41-54) enacted legislation against the Jews, first denying them the right to assemble (early AD 41) (5) and subsequently (*c.* AD 45-49) expelling all Jews from Rome, it was because he had become alarmed at the increasing number of foreign cults in the city and the disturbances to which they gave rise: the Jews were, according to the Roman historian, Suetonius, continually causing riots because "they were driven to do so by Chrestus" (6) (Chrestus is the common, pagan Roman, way of spelling the name Christ). This implies there were already Christians in Rome by the time of Claudius and that their preaching had upset the established Jewish community. The same decree of Claudius drove two Jews from Rome, named Aquila and Prisca (or, less formally, Priscilla), a man and his wife. They fled to Corinth, the chief city of Achaea or Southern Greece, and there met the Apostle Paul who was preaching the Gospel in that city. The *Acts of the Apostles* mentions nothing of their conversion and implies that Paul was immediately at home with them; in fact he set up business with them (both Aquila and Paul made tents for a living). This strongly suggests they were already Christians when Paul met them.

5. There seems, then, to have existed at Rome in the reign of Claudius a community of Christians, composed of Messianic Jews and as many Gentile converts as they had won to Christ, founded between AD 33 and 49 as a consequence of the preaching of Peter at Pentecost, and counting in its ranks the Jewish couple Aquila and Priscilla and probably also the Spirit-anointed Jewish missionaries Andronicus and Junia. The location of this community seems to have been quite close to the center of the city in the crowded Subura, since a remnant of that first church is found in the second century AD holding meetings in an extension of the Subura along the Vicus Lateranus on the Esquiline Hill, priding itself in its status as the "First Church

of Rome"; also a second house-church associated with members of the fellowship of Junia and Andronicus listed in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, traditionally a "sister-church" of the one on the Vicus Lateranus, is found located in another extension of the Subura, along the Vicus Patricius on the Viminal Hill, from the latter half of the first century AD, which tends to confirm the connection of the two missionaries with that particular district. The common origin and subsequent estrangement of these twin house-churches will form the central theme of the story as it unfolds. The Subura was a bustling, noisy, red-light zone, described as dirty and wet, frequented by traders in provisions and delicacies and artisans of various sorts, and dotted with the occasional residence of some noble family, including that of Caesar himself and that of L. Arruntius Stella, consul in AD 101. There was, indeed, a Jewish colony in the Subura, as there were in several other regions of the city, including Porta Capena on the Aventine (also traditionally the site of a house-church in the latter half of the first century AD), but the largest Jewish settlement in the reigns of the early emperors was on the Janiculum Hill in Trastevere (Trans Tiberim in Latin), across the River Tiber from the Roman Forum, that being the heartland of the rabbinical Jewish community in the city. Then came the decree banishing Jews - including Christian Jews - from Rome. Emperor Claudius did not revoke his decrees during his lifetime, therefore they were still in force until his death in AD 54. During his 13 year reign only Jewish Christians who did not adhere to the Law of Moses and latterly only Christians who were not of the nation of Israel could practice their faith without hindrance in the city. The Gentile converts of that first church would suddenly have found themselves orphaned (6a): their Jewish teachers and faithful apostles, their spiritual guides, had been driven out of the city. What would become of them in the hostile, pagan, and downright corrupt, environment of first-century Rome? As their subsequent history proves, that fatal wound to the earliest church in the capital was never properly healed.

6. Some years after the death of Claudius, around AD 58, Paul wrote his *Epistle* to the Roman Christians. He states in that epistle that he had wanted to visit the Christians in Rome for "many years" (7): "many" must mean more than one or two, and considering that "few" means "eight" elsewhere (8) in the New Testament epistles, this confirms the existence of a Christian community in

Rome at least as early as the reign of Claudius. Now, in Chapter 16 of the epistle, Paul sends greetings to Aquila and Priscilla and Junia and Andronicus. So by AD 58, when Claudius was dead and his decrees had lapsed, the Jewish Christians were back in Rome.

7. In fact Paul refers in his epistle to THREE groups of Christians in Rome at that time. One is the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (3). The church of Santa Prisca on the Aventine near the Circus Maximus occupies the traditional site of their house, in the Porta Capena area with its Jewish colony. The second is the group whose missionaries were Junia and Andronicus. They did not have a pastor at that time and Junia and Andronicus were in prison (3). It was to this second group mainly that Paul wrote his epistle. Paul said he longed to come to Rome himself and establish these latter Christians in the Faith, imparting to them some spiritual benefit by his presence. Paul's normal practice would have been, once he arrived there, to ordain a pastor for them whom he discerned to be capable of taking responsibility for the church's spiritual welfare. The church leaders in those days were called "elders" (in Greek *presbyteroi*, from which we get the word "priests"), "shepherds" (*pastor* is the Latin word for "shepherd") and "supervisors" (in Greek *episkopoi*, "bishops"). They were servants of the laity, not overlords. One of the Christians in this second group, Rufus, is believed by some to have been the Roman senator Rufus Pudens, who later opened his house on the Vicus Patricius for Christian meetings >>> under a pastor appointed by "apostles", Paul perhaps one of them, when he finally reached the capital. The church of Santa Pudenziana (Pudentiana), named after Pudens, on the Viminal Hill, marks the traditional site of this ancient house-church. Hermas, another in this second group, >> a converted slave, later received a prophetic ministry amongst the brethren of Pudens' fellowship.

8. Finally, Paul refers to a rather mysterious, THIRD group of Christians present in Rome around AD 58. The members of this group, Paul says, were the cause of DIVISIONS in the Christian body of Rome (3) (i.e. they had formed a sect or sects of their own) and they were opposed to the True Faith of the Christians Paul was writing to. Paul said their god was their belly: they were selfish, sensual Christians, interested in Christianity only for what

9 The First Church of Rome

they could get out of it. Paul told the Christians to MARK AND AVOID them. This means they were past correcting in Paul's judgment. In fact these false ones tried to deceive the simple believers by their show of higher education and oratory, by "good words" and fair speeches. They were a menace to the newly reconstituted churches of the city. No wonder Paul was concerned for that flock without a pastor.

9. Where did this SECT come from? A clue is found in the name "Chrestus" (not "Christus") which the Roman history gives as the name of the *instigator (impulsor)* of the Jewish riots in Claudius' reign and who the wording of the passage implies was actually *present in Rome* at that time. There was a sect of heretical Christians, called Gnostics ("Knowing Ones"), who claimed to have special divine "Gnosis" ("Knowledge" or "Science" falsely so called - Paul refers to it (9) at the end of his *First Epistle to Timothy*); they had particular reasons to call Jesus "Chrestus" and the cult-leader who founded their movement is said to have arrived in Rome *during the reign of Claudius*. The origin and beliefs of this sect will be examined in more detail hereafter. "Chrestus" means the "Good One" and was a title of several heathen gods. The pagans whom the heretics were eager to impress already knew of gods called "Chrestus", but Jesus' proper title "Christus" (from the Greek *Christos*, "Anointed One", a translation of the Hebrew *Mashiach*, "Anointed One, Messiah") meant nothing to them: it is not surprising, therefore, to find the name "Chrestus" for Christ and "Chrestiani" for Christians in common use thereafter amongst the pagan Romans, this being the earliest historical evidence of that usage. Furthermore, the heretics wanted to disassociate their "good" god from what they termed the "evil" god of the Jews. The latter, the Creator God of the Old Testament, was, on their blasphemous theorizing, a veritable demon, a malevolent, inferior, spirit, guilty by his own admission of the murder of innocent, Canaanite, babies, and prone to fits of bad temper, in which, as at Sinai, he thundered down in judgment and damnation on "good", sweet, loving people (like themselves and the worshippers of the Golden Calf!). He was also responsible, according to them, for all the suffering, pain and death found in the material world which he had created. Such a god, they said, could never have been the Father of their Jesus "Chrestus", the messenger of Love and Goodness. There are nominal Christians still under



REMAINS OF SENATOR PUDENS' HOUSE (FRONT)

on the Vicus Patricius, in the Subura district, Rome (from Lacus Curtius' online edition of Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*)

the influence of this heretical view of the God of the Old Testament through its appropriation by, and perpetuation in, Roman Catholic Christianity, as well as in certain Protestant movements which sprang from Rome in the Reformation. It breeds anti-Semitism in all its vile forms. Notice the "good words" (Greek *CHRESTOLOGIA*) which Paul in the *Epistle to the Romans* says the heretics used to deceive the faithful. Notice also how Paul begins his letter to the pastorless Roman Christians with a condemnation of certain intellectual pseudo-believers who, like these heretics, had a knowledge (*epiGNOSIS*) of God but who fell into idolatry and then into all kinds of moral deviation and sexual perversion (10).

10. Christian writers in the second century AD claimed that the earliest sect of heretics in Rome were the disciples of the Samaritan cult-leader, Simon Magus (11). Simon Magus is said to have been, originally, a disciple of the prophet, and forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist, the most prominent of his inner circle of thirty

disciples. However, after acquiring a smattering of Greek learning in Alexandria, Simon drifted into heresy. He became the associate of a false teacher and sorcerer, called Dositheus, who was likewise, originally, one of the thirty disciples of John the Baptist. Dositheus claimed to be nothing less than the manifestation or embodiment of God on earth, the so-called "Standing One", who would never taste of death. This was his way of asserting that he was the expected "Coming One" (the Christ or Messiah) foretold by John the Baptist. For John had prophesied to those who asked him whether he was the Messiah: "I baptize with water: but there STANDETH one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (11a). Dositheus, like John, was the head of thirty disciples. Simon eventually ousted his master from his position of leadership. The story goes that on one occasion, when Dositheus smote Simon with a staff, because of his impudence in asserting his superior knowledge, the staff passed through him as though through smoke. Dositheus asked Simon if it was he, indeed, who was the "Standing One", and, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, bowed down to him in worship. Filling out his divine title a little, Simon now presented himself as "He Who Stood, Stands and Is To Stand"! Soon he established himself in his home territory of Samaria, bewitching the multitudes by his pretended "signs and wonders" and persuading them to believe that he was indeed the embodiment of the Supreme Power.

10a. That, for the present purposes, would have been the end of the story had not an unusual turn of events brought Simon into contact with the Apostles of Jesus shortly after Pentecost (12). Philip the Evangelist was led of the Spirit to preach the Word of God and the Resurrection of Jesus in Samaria. Simon was astounded at the miracles he saw performed in the ministry of Philip the Evangelist, which far surpassed anything he was able to produce, and which thoroughly convinced the previously bewitched Samaritans of the truth of Philip's message. Simon, too, was convinced and believed (so far as his intellectual faculties were persuaded by the outward manifestations of the Spirit) and was baptized. A little while later, however, the Apostles Peter and John came to Samaria to pray for the new believers there to receive the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was received by the Samaritans at the

laying-on of hands by the Apostles, Simon imagined that this was some kind of magical rite, through which the supernatural powers he had witnessed in Philip's ministry could be conferred from person to person. He approached Peter and offered him money to acquire from him the power to lay on hands and transfer the Holy Spirit to others. (Both the creed and the deed thus first exemplified in Simon Magus are prevalent in denominational Christianity to this day.) Peter roundly rebuked him for his shamelessness and blasphemy. His real motivation and lack of heartfelt faith could not be concealed from the all-seeing eye of the Spirit of God in Peter. He was openly denounced as a money-loving hypocrite, thoroughly, still, in bondage to the occult.

10b. Though terrified at Peter's rebuke and the fate that might befall him as an apostate, Simon was far from being repentant, as his subsequent history proves. He realized that his exposure by the Apostles and the success of the Gospel preached by them amongst the Samaritans spelt the death-knell to his efforts in those parts. Looking for greener pastures in the West, Simon came to Rome IN THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR CLAUDIUS, between AD 41 and 54, precisely in the period when the Jews, including Christian Jews, were expelled from Rome because of rioting at the instigation of "Chrestus". Though Simon himself seems to have been Jewish on his mother's side, and Gentile Cypriot on his father's, he was a Samaritan by nationality, a native of the Samaritan village of Gitto, and also had at least one, very powerful, friend in Claudius' court (12a). Claudius' ban did not affect him. Later Christian writers claim that Simon deluded and held under his occult sway many Christians present in Rome at that time. The reference must be mainly to Gentile Christians (13) – since faithful Jews had been forced to leave - and indeed, being Gentiles, newly brought to faith in Christ and without Jewish background in the Scriptures, they would have been easy targets for deceivers like Simon (13a). Here was the sad remnant of that first church, so cruelly orphaned by Claudius' decree. Satan had provided the orphans with a "father". These Gentile Christians were now wholly under the turbulent influence of Simon Magus and his Gnostic heresy (14). But the Samaritan magus also impressed some Romans in high position in the State, because the authorities of Rome sanctioned the erection of a statue to Simon "The Holy God" on the island in the River Tiber at

Rome, the base of which with its inscription was discovered in 1574. >> This was at a point in the River just below the Jewish colony at the foot of the Janiculum Hill, and was, no doubt, a provocation to the Jews. The Roman authorities would in the circumstances have had no objection to such anti-Semitic posturing.

10c. The evidence is (12a) that in Rome Simon became acquainted with Claudius' favorite, the ex-slave and socialite, Antonius Felix. Felix influenced the legislation that Claudius introduced. As Simon's anti-Semitic sway over Felix increased, Felix encouraged Claudius to act against the Jews. Hence Claudius' law expelling Jews from Rome (c. AD 45-49). Later in Claudius' reign, Felix was granted his wish to become, of all things, procurator of Judaea. There his obligation to Simon became even greater. He asked the magus to help him woo the young and beautiful Drusilla from her royal husband, Azizus, king of Emesa. Simon agreed. Sent by Felix to Drusilla, Simon's hypnotic powers of persuasion prevailed. Drusilla abandoned her husband and married Felix. When, a few years later, the Apostle Paul was arrested in Judaea, he was brought to trial before Felix and his adulterous consort, Drusilla, in Caesarea (c. AD 59). It is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles* that Felix trembled when he heard Paul talk about righteousness and the divine Judgment to come, this in spite of the fact that (probably through the magus Simon) Felix had a quite accurate knowledge of Christian doctrine. As was the case with his friend, Simon, Felix's intellectual appraisal of Christianity was utterly divorced from its practical, moral, application (14a). It does not surprise us to find Felix thereafter pursuing anti-Semitic policies in Judaea and provoking Jewish riots. Soon Simon's dreams were fulfilled. The Jewish reaction led to Roman intervention, then to the Jewish revolt against Rome, and finally to the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (AD 70). Nine years later, as the judgment of God on all the players in this drama unfolded, Drusilla's child, Agrippa III, the offspring of her illegitimate union, perished in the eruption of Vesuvius.

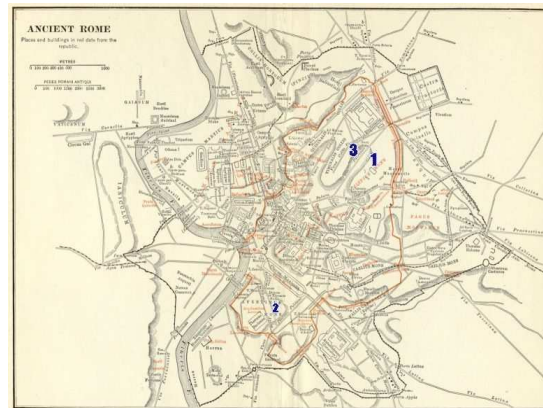
11. In the light of this evidence, we would expect there to be another early church in Roman tradition, apart from Santa Prisca (Aquila and Prisca's house-church) and Santa Pudenziana (the second house-church in Pudens' house), which would mark the site of this original Christian fellowship in Rome.

To recap, the community was founded, as seems most likely, by Andronicus and Junia during their earlier mission-work in Rome before the reign of Claudius, but subsequently, when its Jewish members were banished from the city, it fell into Gnostic error under the influence of Simon Magus. Another such house-church does appear in the old records, called Santa Prassede. It was located in the Subura district on the Vicus Lateranus (the modern Via S. Martino ai Monti and Via Santa Prassede near S. Maria Maggiore) and is one of the three house-churches said to have existed within the walls of Rome before the middle of the second century AD, these three being Santa Prisca, Santa Pudenziana, and Santa Prassede (14b): in Roman tradition Santa Prassede is also referred to as a sister-church of Santa Pudenziana, i.e. originally it was closely connected with Pudens' fellowship and its missionaries Junia and Andronicus. Furthermore, the later bishops of this church insisted that it was the FIRST and ORIGINAL church in Rome, and indeed it was. What they did not say is that it was hopelessly and irremediably backslidden from its original pure Christian faith. We shall see later >> how this church came to be named after one of Pudens' faithful daughters, whilst providing an ecclesiastical home for the Gnostic heretics.

12. Simon was a devotee of the religion of the Magi (15). The form of Magism practiced at Rome in that period was Mithraism, the worship of the god Mithras, >> and Mithras was one of the deities who was titled "Chrestos" (in Latin, "Chrestus"), the "Good One". Simon claimed to be the very embodiment of that "Good One" the Gnostics preached about (16), so the "Chrestus" or "Good" Christ that drove the Jews to riot in Rome and who the words of the Roman history imply was actually present in Rome at that time as a mover of sedition could well have been Simon Magus himself (12a). There had been bitter blood for centuries between Samaritans and Jews: it would not be at all surprising if in the time of Claudius Jews had been offended to the point of rioting by this Samaritan heretical form of Christianity. One obvious, public provocation, noted by later Christian historians, was the statue of the "god" Simon on the island in the Tiber, which was within sight of the main Jewish colony in Trastevere and stood like a malignant sentinel between the Jews and the city of Rome. Certainly Simon seems to have had quite an impact in the cities where he was active. The whole of Samaria, according to the *Acts of the Apostles*, was

stirred by his phenomenal demonstrations. Similar results were achieved in Rome, if we accept the account of Simon's fellow Samaritan (and learned heresy-hunter), Justin Martyr, who was well placed to know the facts, and other Christian writers who followed and amplified it (13). There is, in fact, evidence that a revival or, rather, a recreation of Mithraism occurred about this time: a "religious genius" (17) who lived no later than around AD 100 seems to have combined the ancient Mithraic cult with the popular, syncretic paganism of the early Empire, with Platonism and with themes apparently derived from Christianity in such a way that by the second century AD the new cult of Mithraism was widely accepted throughout the Roman world. Simon was a magus who fitted the bill precisely, operating in the very heart of the empire and combining the Magian cult with elements of Graeco-Roman paganism, philosophy and Christianity, exactly as this reconstruction requires. Mithraism was thereafter the deadly rival of Christianity. If the Roman Empire had not turned officially "Christian" in the time of Constantine, it almost certainly would have turned Mithraic.

13. The secondary effect of Simon's cultic activity was to cast in a false light the Christian faith preached by the original Jewish Christians. The followers of Simon were not correctable in Paul's judgment, so Aquila and Priscilla, on their return to Rome, set up their new house-church, in a different location from Simon's group, on a spur of the Aventine Hill near the Circus Maximus (Santa Prisca). The other group of Christians are found later conducting meetings likewise, at a separate location from the Simonians, in senator Pudens' house on the Viminal Hill >>> on the Vicus Patricius (now the church of Santa Pudenziana on the Via Urbana). This house-church was, however, much nearer the heretical school than Aquila and Priscilla's gathering, in the same district of the Subura. Later this proved a liability as some of the elders from the church in Pudens' house defected to the Gnostics; the geographical proximity perhaps facilitated fellowship between the two groups.



MAP OF ANCIENT ROME WITH EARLIEST HOUSE CHURCHES

(from *Lacus Curtius'* online edition of *Platner, Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, with modifications): Click the numbers to see the Churches in a street map of modern Rome. Click [here](#) to view a full-scale, higher-quality version of this map complete with ancient street and locality names.

- 1 = Santa Prassede, the earliest or First Church of Rome, on the Vicus Lateranus, in the Subura district, founded between AD 33 and 49, where Aquila and Priscilla fellowshipped after Pentecost, and which became a heretical Gnostic school in the time of Claudius (reigned AD 41-54), when they departed Rome.
- 2 = Santa Prisca, the second House Church of Aquila and Priscilla, dating from after the death of Claudius on their return to Rome (founded between AD 54 and 58).
- 3 = Santa Pudenziana, the House Church of Senator Pudens on the Vicus Patricius in the Subura district, founded shortly after the martyrdom of Paul, AD 64.

14. The heretics aped the Gentile, pagan, religions and combined Christianity with pagan cults. They were popular with their heathen neighbors and with the authorities of the city. They suffered no persecution (18). Popularity and acclaim was what they coveted. All the trappings of paganism, image-worship, multiplicity of gods and goddesses, rituals and sacrifices, they introduced into their "New Age" form of Christianity, retaining only the titles of the original faith and dispensing with the substance. Also they formed themselves into a philosophical "school" like the heathen philosophers. Schools of this kind were common throughout the Roman Empire. The Apostle Paul had taught in the school of one Tyrannus in Ephesus on the coast of Turkey, but he used it only as a place to preach and teach. The Church in Ephesus founded by Saint Paul was different altogether. Schools were academic institutions, the Church was led supernaturally by the Holy Spirit.



REMAINS OF SENATOR PUDENS' HOUSE

on the Vicus Patricius in the Subura district, Rome (from Lacus Curtius' online edition of Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*)

15. Simon Magus was succeeded as head of the Gnostic movement in Rome by another leader, or "Father" as they called him (a blasphemous assumption of God's paternal title) (19), who developed and modified the Gnostic teaching according to his own "inner light". With a head start from Simon and his immediate circle of disciples, a Syrian called Cerdon launched out on the Gnostic path and took up his residence in Rome (20). He taught that the Supreme God was higher than the Creator-god of the Old Testament, and was the ideal Ultimate Good to which the pagan philosophers aspired - if the aim was to seduce intellectuals - or otherwise was the Supreme Deity, the Beneficent or Good Being, of the idolatrous heathen. Spirit was good and was the essence of the Superior God. Matter was evil and was the creation of the inferior god. This doctrine was derived from the dualistic theories of the Zoroastrian Magians (15). He looked down on the Jewish Law and the Scriptures of the Old Testament, believing them to be inspired by the inferior Creator-god. Jesus was the Son of the Superior God, on his theory, and was consequently a pure Spirit-being, having no real, fleshly, body. He was not born in a literal sense from the Virgin and did not really suffer on the Cross (for how could a pure Spirit be born or die?). The kind of Gnostic theories to which Cerdon subscribed held that whilst the Supreme God appeared in an *apparitional* body as Jesus, his

proper, material, body was BREAD (!), the bread of the eucharist, and Gnostics of this stamp refused to hold communion with Bible-believing Christians who held otherwise (20b). Initiates were "born again" or "redeemed," not by faith in the risen Jesus and reception of the Holy Spirit as taught by the Apostles, but by the literal waters of baptism, or by sprinkling, followed by an anointing with oil and a benediction of "peace" – all these nonbiblical, magical, rites being performed with a strictly prescribed, liturgical, formula, in a language foreign to the hearers. In other forms of the Gnostic "rebirth" the initiate dressed up in bridal attire, or, if on the point of death, received an anointing with oil which was supposed to guarantee entrance into the realm of the Supreme God. Some believed, contrariwise, that the acceptance of the ridiculously complex theories of the Gnostic gurus was itself the true "rebirth" (20c). A literal Resurrection of the body Cerdon denied outright. At death, the human soul entered into eternal life, that being the "Resurrection" referred to in those Scriptures which he accepted as inspired by the Superior God. Being wholly averse to the Jewish Law, and imagining that the Apostle Paul sympathized with that viewpoint, (20a) Cerdon accepted only the *Gospel of Luke* (Paul's Gospel) as authentic. However, all the passages in that Gospel which contradicted his Gnostic theory he excised from the text. He treated the Epistles of Paul likewise. The *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Revelation* of John he rejected altogether. In the course of a long and prosperous career as head of the Roman school he managed to corrupt some eminent members of the rival, Bible-believing, fellowship and latterly, in a master stroke, retransformed his school into (the outward semblance of) a Christian Church. >> His group was known at first as the Cerdonian "heresy" by the Bible-believing Christians and only after its alleged transformation was it referred to as a "church". However, it was not long before the Bible teachers exposed Cerdon's ecclesiastical charade. Cerdon, in turn, was succeeded by the infamous archheretic, Marcion, in the first half of the second century AD. The modifications introduced by each successor resulted in further degradation of the original, Pentecostal, Christian, faith. Also splinter-groups broke away from Simon's school and formed schools of their own, aping once again the pagan philosophies. By AD 62 there were already seven sects of heretics (21), of which Simon's was the first (22). By the middle of the second century AD, a whole swarm of Gnostic heresies (23) had spread

over the Roman Empire from the breeding-ground in the capital, and principally from the school of Cerdo and Marcion. The demonic inspiration for these movements came from the East, and usually the founding gurus made their way from the East to Rome, from Alexandria in Egypt or from Antioch in Syria, but the whole movement began to center around Rome itself. These cult-leaders wanted to become famous in the capital city of the Empire. They hoped to rise up the social ladder by peddling their "Gnosis", or theological "Science", amongst the rich and idle upper classes of Rome. Lust for influence and wealth was what motivated them.

15a. From a letter of Emperor Hadrian, sent in AD 134 at the time of the Bar-Kokhba revolt to his brother-in-law Servianus, we obtain a glimpse of what the Gnostic gurus appeared like in their eastern homelands to well-informed contemporaries. (The letter was cited originally in a lost work of Phlegon, the freedman of Hadrian, from which, in turn, it was quoted by Vopiscus, in *Vita Saturnini VIII. 1-7*:) "Hadrian Augustus to Servianus, Consul, greetings! My dearest Servianus, I have now got the measure of Egypt, which you praised up to me. It is full of vanity, dependent on others to prop it up, and ready to fly at every rumor doing the rounds. The worshipers of Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops [Latin: episcopos] of Christ are under vow in the service of Serapis. There is not a leader of a Jewish synagogue, not a Samaritan, not a Christian presbyter [Latin: presbyter], who is not an astrologer [Latin: mathematicus], a diviner [Latin: aruspex] or anointer [Latin: aliptes]. The patriarch [Latin: patriarcha] himself, when he arrives in Egypt, by some is huddled off to worship Serapis, by others Christ. It is a social group always ready to promote seditions, full of empty boasting, and dangerous in the extreme ... They only have one god - money! The Christians worship him, the Jews worship him, and so do all the racial communities" (23a) Note that the fusion of the obscene cult of Serapis with that of Christ went hand in hand in Egypt with the affectation of hierarchical, non-Scriptural, titles, like "patriarch" (= "chief father"), by the leaders of the paganizing pseudo-Christians, which had the effect of elevating them above the ordinary members of their congregation. >>

16. When Paul arrived in Rome around AD 61, he

was a "house-prisoner" awaiting trial by Caesar. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem hoped he would be found guilty of causing public disturbances and punished (preferably executed) by the Roman authorities. The Jews in Rome had heard nothing from the religious authorities in Jerusalem about Paul and he was able to preach the Word amongst them for at least two years, according to Luke's account in the *Acts of the Apostles*. He used his hired accommodation in Rome as a meeting-house. At some point following that period he was transferred to the Praetorium, or Praetorian Camp, which was the military garrison and barracks of the Praetorian Guard which policed the city. His presence in Rome must have been a great encouragement to the Christians there. The modest gatherings of disciples mentioned in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* swelled to a "huge multitude" (24) (implying hundreds, if not thousands) >> while Paul was in the city, though their days were destined to be few in the "vale of tears".

17. Whilst under arrest, Paul also wrote letters to the churches he had helped to set up in Europe and Asia. In these letters we find Paul mentioning the heretical Christian sect. They were clearly still active in the city. In his letter from Rome to the Christian Church in Philippi in Macedonia (Northern Greece), around AD 63, Paul mentions a group of so-called Christians in Rome (25) who preached Christ, but with wrong motives. They were envious of the true believers and argued and disputed with them. Of false brethren like these Paul says in his letter, their god is their belly, they are proud of what they ought to be ashamed of, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, they are concerned with worldly affairs, and their end is destruction; he refers to "dogs" (religiously-motivated sodomites) and "evil-workers" and to the "concision" (meaning circumcised professors of Christianity - both Samaritans and Jews were circumcised and there were Gnostics who were also circumcised Jews); by contrast, true Christians, he says, belong to a heavenly Kingdom, waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus, and the transformation of the body He will effect at that time, and have nothing to do with secular politics. "Belly-worship" is the identical phrase Paul used to describe the Roman heretics in his earlier *Epistle to the Romans*. The phrase is not mere metaphor as some actually worshipped the phallic god Priapus under the title the "Good God" (16). These false brethren wanted to make Paul's situation worse, hoping that the

authorities would punish him with something more than imprisonment. Indeed, it is in this very letter, and immediately before his mention of the heretics' agitation against him, that Paul refers for the first time to his imprisonment in the Praetorian military garrison. Paul's penal conditions had deteriorated since the days of his house-arrest. The provocateurs were not Jews by religion, they were - nominally - Christians. Also they were active, spreading their propaganda around the city by public preaching. They were OF the world, not merely IN it. They wanted to obtain their objectives by USING THE SECULAR AUTHORITIES AGAINST THE TRUE CHRISTIANS. This was the technique of Simon and his Gnostic disciples.

who also were in Christ before me. 8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. 11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufius chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, *Hermas*, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. 16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. 17 ¶ Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* 18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words [chr̄stologia] and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* 19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. 20 And the God of peace shall bruise *Satan* under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

4. The beginning of the Gentile Church was held to have been the conversion of Cornelius and his friends: Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 10 (passim) and 15. 7: Acts 10. 45-48: "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, *because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.* For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." Acts 15. 7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, *ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.*"

5. Dion Cassius, LX. vi: "The Jews had by this time increased in numbers again and it would have been difficult to remove them from the city without a disturbance of their own people; so, he [Claudius] did not expel them, but brought in legislation forbidding them to assemble, whilst they continued to order their daily lives by their ancestral Law. The associations reintroduced by Gaius [Caligula], he dissolved." On the dating to AD 41 compare Dion Cassius LX. viii. 1-4: [A series of intervening acts] "Next [my emphasis, the decree of Claudius relating to the Jews being mentioned earlier in Dion's account] he [Claudius] restored Commagene to Antiochus, since Gaius, though he had himself given him the district, had taken it away again; and Mithridates the Iberian, whom Gaius had summoned and imprisoned, was sent home again to resume his throne. To another Mithridates, a lineal descendant of Mithridates the Great, he granted Bosphorus, giving to Polemon some land in Cilicia in place of it. He enlarged the domain of Agrippa [I] of Palestine, who, happening to be in Rome, had helped him to become emperor, and bestowed on him the rank of consul; and to his brother Herod he gave the rank of praetor and a principality. And he permitted them to enter the senate and to express their thanks to him in Greek. The acts I have named, now, were the acts of Claudius himself, and they were praised by everybody; but certain other things were done at this time of quite a different nature by his freedmen and by his wife Valeria Messalina" The decree of Claudius on the Jews preceded ["next" viii. 1] these acts but was effected at the same period ["at this time" viii. 4], according to the simple reading of Dion Cassius, and according to Josephus, Wars, II. xi. 5, the donation of Claudius to Agrippa happened "immediately" after and as a consequence of the help Agrippa gave to Claudius when he was raised to the imperial purple. This dates the decree to AD 41, as Claudius was made emperor at the very beginning of AD 41 on Jan 24th of that year. The decree of Claudius reads as follows: "Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, pontifex maximus, holding the tribunician power, proclaims: . . . Therefore it is right that also the Jews, who are in all the world under us, shall maintain their ancestral customs without hindrance and to them I now also command to use this my kindness rather reasonably and not to despise the religious rites of the other nations, but to observe their own laws." (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/roman-jews.html#EdictofClaudius>.)

Footnotes

1. Acts, 2. 1-13: ¶ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 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. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 ¶ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and *strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes*, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

2. On the date AD 33 rather than AD 30 and for other details about the events at the Crucifixion, see [Appendix 1](#).

3. In the following passage of Romans, we find Paul addressing a group of Christian believers, listed by name, amongst them Andronicus and Junia (v. 7), but no pastor or bishop is designated amongst that group. There is no indication that this group was divided into different fellowships. Paul also mentions (v. 3) a separate church (*ekklesia*) in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Here, then, in AD 58 we find two fellowships in Rome, one a church (*ekklesia*) so called under Paul's steadfast adherents, Aquila and Priscilla, and a second group, apparently forming a looser fellowship, who included the missionaries Andronicus and Junia, but were without a pastor. Finally, vv. 17-18, is mentioned a group of schismatics and heretics, who were a danger to the simple-hearted believers. Romans, 16. 1-20: "¶ I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. 3 Greet *Priscilla and Aquila* my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet *the church that is in their house*. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us. 7 Salute *Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles,*

16 The First Church of Rome

6. Suetonius, Life of Claudius, XXV. 4: Suetonius writes "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultantis Roma expulsi." "The Jews, who were persistently causing public disturbances because they were driven to do so by Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled from Rome."

6a. This word is used by the Apostle Paul regarding the new, Gentile, converts of Thessalonica in Macedonia (1 Thess. 2. 7: Gk. *ἑμεῖς δε ἀδελφοὶ ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν*, i.e. "We, brethren, having been separated from you like (parents from) orphans" Cp. *ibid.* 2. 7, 11. When Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Athens, he, Silvanus and Timothy had been compelled by circumstance to leave the new converts without spiritual guidance at a time when they were under persecution from the local authorities and Jewish radicals. A similar situation is envisaged here. In fact in 1 Thessalonians, Paul uses expressions in this connection almost identical to those in the first chapter of Romans, describing his great desire to see the "orphaned" brethren face to face and to supply any deficiency in their knowledge of Christ (cp. 1 Thess. 2. 17f. and 3. 10 with Romans 1. 10-13).

7. Romans, 15. 22-24: 22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now having no more place in these parts, and *having a great desire these many years to come unto you*; 24 Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

8. 1 Peter, 3. 20: "... Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein *few, that is, eight* souls were saved by water."

9. 1 Timothy, 6. 20f.: 20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of *science [Greek: gnosis] falsely so called*: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

10. Romans, 1: 18-32: 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 ¶ Because *that which may be known [Greek: to gnoston]* of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they *knew [Greek: gnotantes]* God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their *knowledge [Greek: epignosei]*, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who *knowing [Greek: epignotes]* the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

11. §1. The most reliable traditions relating to Simon Magus outside of the New Testament are those found in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, dating from around the middle of the second century AD, along with an account in

Josephus relating to Felix's associate, Simon. See further [note 12a](#). Justin, First Apology, 26: "... After Christ's ascension into heaven the devils put forward certain men who said that they themselves were gods; and they were not only not persecuted by you, but even deemed worthy of honors. There was a Samaritan, Simon, a native of the village called Gitto, who in the reign of Claudius Caesar, and in your royal city of Rome, did mighty acts of magic, by virtue of the art of the devils operating in him. He was considered a God, and as a God was honored by you with a statue, which statue was erected on the river Tiber, between the two bridges, and bore this inscription, in the language of Rome: — "Simoni Deo Sancto," "To Simon the holy God." And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first God; and a woman, Helena, who went about with him at that time, and had formerly been a prostitute, they say is the first idea generated by him. And a man, Menander, also a Samaritan, of the town Capparetaea, a disciple of Simon, and inspired by devils, we know to have deceived many while he was in Antioch by his magical art. He persuaded those who adhered to him that they should never die, and even now there are some living who hold this opinion of his. And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other God greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works. All who take their opinions from these men, are, as we before said, called Christians; just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them. And whether they perpetrate those fabulous and shameful deeds — the upsetting of the lamp, and promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh — we know not; but we do know that they are neither persecuted nor put to death by you, at least on account of their opinions. But I have a treatise against all the heresies that have existed already composed, which, if you wish to read it, I will give you." Also Dial. Tryph. cxx: "For I gave no thought to any of my people, that is, the Samaritans, when I had a communication in writing with Caesar, but stated that they were wrong in trusting to the magician Simon of their own nation, who, they say, is God above all power, and authority, and might." Irenaeus Adv. Haer. I. xxiii. 1-4: "CHAPTER 23 DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF SIMON MAGUS AND MENANDER 1. Simon the Samaritan was that magician of whom Luke, the disciple and follower of the apostles, says, "But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime used magical arts in that city, and led astray the people of Samaria, declaring that he himself was some great one, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This is the power of God, which is called great. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had driven them mad by his sorceries." This Simon, then — who feigned faith, supposing that the apostles themselves performed their cures by the art of magic, and not by the power of God; and with respect to their filling with the Holy Ghost, through the imposition of hands, those that believed in God through Him who was preached by them, namely, Christ Jesus — suspecting that even this was done through a kind of greater knowledge of magic, and offering money to the apostles, thought he, too, might receive this power of bestowing the Holy Spirit on whomsoever he would, — was addressed in these words by Peter: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God can be purchased with money: thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God; for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." He, then, not putting faith in God a whit the more, set himself eagerly to contend against the apostles, in order that he himself might seem to be a wonderful being, and applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art, that he might the better bewilder and overpower multitudes of men. Such was his procedure in the reign of Claudius Caesar, by whom also he is said to have been honored with a statue, on account of his magical power. This man, then, was glorified by many as if he were a God; and he taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. He represented himself, in a word, as being the loftiest of all powers, that is, the Being who is the Father over all, and he allowed himself to be called by whatsoever title men were pleased to address him. 2. Now this Simon of Samaria, from whom all sorts of heresies derive their origin, formed his sect out of the following materials: — Having redeemed from slavery at Tyre, a city of Phoenicia, a certain woman named Helena, he was in the habit of carrying her about with him, declaring that this woman was the first conception of his mind, the mother of all, by whom, in the beginning, he conceived in his mind [the thought] of forming angels and archangels.

For this Ennoea leaping forth from him, and comprehending the will of her father, descended to the lower regions [of space], and generated angels and powers, by whom also he declared this world was formed. But after she had produced them, she was detained by them through motives of jealousy, because they were unwilling to be looked upon as the progeny of any other being. As to himself, they had no knowledge of him whatever; but his Ennoea was detained by those powers and angels who had been produced by her. She suffered all kinds of contumely from them, so that she could not return upwards to her father, but was even shut up in a human body, and for ages passed in succession from one female body to another, as from vessel to vessel. She was, for example, in that Helen on whose account the Trojan war was undertaken; for whose sake also Stesichorus was struck blind, because he had cursed her in his verses, but afterwards, repenting and writing what are called palinodes, in which he sang her praise, he was restored to sight. Thus she, passing from body to body, and suffering insults in every one of them, at last became a common prostitute; and she it was that was meant by the lost sheep. 3. For this purpose, then, he had come that he might win her first, and free her from slavery, while he conferred salvation upon men, by making himself known to them. For since the angels ruled the world ill because each one of them coveted the principal power for himself, he had come to amend matters, and had descended, transfigured and assimilated to powers and principalities and angels, so that he might appear among men to be a man, while yet he was not a man; and that thus he was thought to have suffered in Judaea, when he had not suffered. Moreover, the prophets uttered their predictions under the inspiration of those angels who formed the world; for which reason those who place their trust in him and Helena no longer regarded them, but, as being free, live as they please; for men are saved through his grace, and not on account of their own righteous actions. For such deeds are not righteous in the nature of things, but by mere accident, just as those angels who made the world, have thought fit to constitute them, seeking, by means of such precepts, to bring men into bondage. On this account, he pledged himself that the world should be dissolved, and that those who are his should be freed from the rule of them who made the world. 4. Thus, then, the mystic priests belonging to this sect both lead profligate lives and practice magical arts, each one to the extent of his ability. They use exorcisms and incantations. Love-potions, too, and charms, as well as those beings who are called "Paredri" (familiaris) and "Oniropompi" (dream-senders), and whatever other curious arts can be had recourse to, are eagerly pressed into their service. They also have an image of Simon fashioned after the likeness of Jupiter, and another of Helena in the shape of Minerva; and these they worship. In fine, they have a name derived from Simon, the author of these most impious doctrines, being called Simonians; and from them "knowledge, falsely so called," received its beginning, as one may learn even from their own assertions."

§2. More detailed accounts of the background and history of Simon Magus are found in less reliable, but still rather circumstantial and, to that extent, creditworthy, heretical writings. The following are expurgated versions of an heretical tract of an Elkesaite tendency, dating from the first half of the third century AD. The underlying heretical tract was an adaptation of sub-apostolic traditions relating to Peter and Simon Magus. Clementine Homilies II. xxiii-xxv: "CHAPTER 23 SIMON A DISCIPLE OF THE BAPTIST "But that he came to deal with the doctrines of religion happened on this wise. There was one John, a day-baptist, who was also, according to the method of combination, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus; and as the Lord had twelve apostles, bearing the number of the twelve months of the sun, so also he, John, had thirty chief men, fulfilling the monthly reckoning of the moon, in which number was a certain woman called Helena, that not even this might be without a dispensational significance. For a woman, being half a man, made up the imperfect number of the triacontad; as also in the case of the moon, whose revolution does not make the complete course of the month. But of these thirty, the first and the most esteemed by John was Simon; and the reason of his not being chief after the death of John was as follows: - CHAPTER 24 ELECTIONEERING STRATAGEMS "He being absent in Egypt for the practice of magic, and John being killed, Dositheus desiring the leadership, falsely gave out that Simon was dead, and succeeded to the seat. But Simon, returning not long after, and strenuously holding by the place as his own, when he met with Dositheus did not demand the place, knowing that a man who has attained power beyond his expectations cannot be removed from it. Wherefore with pretended friendship he gives himself for a while to the second place, under Dositheus. But taking his place after a few days among the thirty fellow-disciples, he began to malign Dositheus as not delivering the instructions correctly. And this he said that he did, not through unwillingness to deliver them correctly, but through ignorance.

And on one occasion, Dositheus, perceiving that this artful accusation of Simon was dissipating the opinion of him with respect to many, so that they did not think that he was the Standing One, came in a rage to the same place of meeting, and finding Simon, struck him with a staff. But it seemed to pass through the body of Simon as if he had been smoke. Thereupon Dositheus, being confounded, said to him, 'If you are the Standing One, I also will worship you.' Then Simon said that he was; and Dositheus, knowing that he himself was not the Standing One, fell down and worshipped; and associating himself with the twenty-nine chiefs, he raised Simon to his own place of repute; and thus, not many days after, Dositheus himself, while he (Simon) stood, fell down and died. CHAPTER 25 SIMON'S DECEIT "But Simon is going about in company with Helena, and even till now, as you see, is stirring up the people. And he says that he has brought down this Helena from the highest heavens to the world; being queen, as the all-bearing being, and wisdom, for whose sake, says he, the Greeks and barbarians fought, having before their eyes but an image of truth; for she, who really is the truth, was then with the chiefest God. Moreover, by cunningly explaining certain things of this sort, made up from Grecian myths, he deceives many; especially as he performs many signal marvels, so that if we did not know that he does these things by magic, we ourselves should also have been deceived. But whereas we were his fellow-laborers at the first, so long as he did such things without doing wrong to the interests of religion; now that he has madly begun to attempt to deceive those who are religious, we have withdrawn from him." Clementine Recognitions II. vii-xv: CHAPTER 7 "This Simon's father was Antonius, and his mother Rachel. By nation he is a Samaritan, from a village of the Gettones; by profession a magician yet exceedingly well trained in the Greek literature; desirous of glory, and boasting above all the human race, so that he wishes himself to be believed to be an exalted power, which is above God the Creator, and to be thought to be the Christ, and to be called the Standing One. And he uses this name as implying that he can never be dissolved, asserting that his flesh is so compacted by the power of his divinity, that it can endure to eternity. Hence, therefore, he is called the Standing One, as though he cannot fall by any corruption. CHAPTER 8 SIMON MAGUS: HIS HISTORY "For after that John the Baptist was killed, as you yourself also know, when Dositheus had broached his heresy, with thirty other chief disciples, and one woman, who was called Luna - whence also these thirty appear to have been appointed with reference to the number of the days, according to the course of the moon - this Simon ambitious of evil glory, as we have said, goes to Dositheus, and pretending friendship, entreats him, that if any one of those thirty should die, he should straightway substitute him in room of the dead: for it was contrary to their rule either to exceed the fixed number, or to admit any one who was unknown, or not yet proved; whence also the rest, desiring to become worthy of the place and number, are eager in every way to please, according to the institutions of their sect each one of those who aspire after admittance into the number, hoping that he may be deemed worthy to be put into the place of the deceased, when, as we have said, any one dies. Therefore Dositheus, being greatly urged by this man, introduced Simon when a vacancy occurred among the number. CHAPTER 9 SIMON MAGUS: HIS PROFESSION "But not long after he fell in love with that woman whom they call Luna; and he confided all things to us as his friends: how he was a magician, and how he loved Luna, and how, being desirous of glory, he was unwilling to enjoy her ingloriously, but that he was waiting patiently till he could enjoy her honorably; yet so if we also would conspire with him towards the accomplishment of his desires. And he promised that, as a reward of this service, he would cause us to be invested with the highest honors, and we should be believed by men to be gods; 'Only, however, on condition,' says he, 'that you confer the chief place upon me, Simon, who by magic art am able to show many signs and prodigies, by means of which either my glory or our sect may be established CHAPTER 11 SIMON MAGUS, AT THE HEAD OF THE SECT OF DOSITHEUS "Meantime, at the outset, as soon as he was reckoned among the thirty disciples of Dositheus, he began to depreciate Dositheus himself, saying that he did not teach purely or perfectly, and that this was the result not of ill intention, but of ignorance. But Dositheus, when he perceived that Simon was depreciating him, fearing lest his reputation among men might be obscured (for he himself was supposed to be the Standing One), moved with rage, when they met as usual at the school, seized a rod, and began to beat Simon; but suddenly the rod seemed to pass through his body, as if it had been smoke. On which Dositheus, being astonished, says to him, 'Tell me if thou art the Standing One, that I may adore thee.' And when Simon answered that he was, then Dositheus, perceiving that he himself was not the Standing One, fell down and worshipped him, and gave up his own place as chief to Simon,

ordering all the rank of thirty men to obey him; himself taking the inferior place which Simon formerly occupied. Not long after this he died.

CHAPTER 12 SIMON MAGUS AND LUNA "Therefore, after the death of Dositheus Simon took Luna to himself; and with her he still goes about, as you see, deceiving multitudes, and asserting that he himself is a certain power which is above God the Creator, while Luna, who is with him, has been brought down from the higher heavens, and that she is Wisdom, the mother of all things, for whom, says he, the Greeks and barbarians contending, were able in some measure to see an image of her; but of herself, as she is, as the dweller with the first and only God, they were wholly ignorant. Propounding these and other things of the same sort, he has deceived many. But I ought also to state this, which I remember that I myself saw. Once, when this Luna of his was in a certain tower, a great multitude had assembled to see her, and were standing around the tower on all sides; but she was seen by all the people to lean forward, and to look out through all the windows of that tower. Many other wonderful things he did and does; so that men, being astonished at them, think that he himself is the great God.' CHAPTER 14 SIMON MAGUS, PROFESSES TO BE GOD "At those sayings of his Simon grew pale; but after a little, recollecting himself, he thus answered: 'Do not think that I am a man of your race. I am neither magician, nor lover of Luna, nor son of Antonius. For before my mother Rachel and he came together, she, still a virgin, conceived me, while it was in my power to be either small or great, and to appear as a man among men. Therefore I have chosen you first as my friends, for the purpose of trying you, that I may place you first in my heavenly and unspeakable places when I shall have proved you. Therefore I have pretended to be a man, that I might more clearly ascertain if you cherish entire affection towards me.' But when I heard that, judging him indeed to be a wretch, yet wondering at his impudence; and blushing for him, and at the same time fearing lest he should attempt some evil against us, I beckoned to Niceta to feign for a little along with me, and said to him: 'Be not angry with us, corruptible men, O thou incorruptible God, but rather accept our affection, and our mind willing to know who God is; for we did not till now know who thou art, nor did we perceive that thou art he whom we were seeking.'"

11a. John 1. 26-27

12. Acts, 8. 9-25: 9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 ¶ Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. 25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

12a. §1. On Felix: Ancient sources: Acts 23. 24-26, 24, 25. 14; Josephus, Antiquities 20.7.1-2, 20.8.5-7, 20.8.9; War 2.12.8, 2.13.2, 2.13.4-5, 2.13.7; Tacitus, Histories 5.9; Annals 12.54; Suetonius, Claudius 28. The earliest account in Acts (note [12](#)) locates Simon in Samaria but says nothing of his family or origin. The next account in Josephus (below) tells

us of a magus by the name of Simon who was an intimate associate of Antonius Felix the procurator of Judaea before whom Paul appeared in Caesarea c. AD 59. This Simon the magus was already a friend of Felix in the early years of his procuratorship during the latter part of the reign of Claudius. At the prompting of Felix, Simon won over the young and beautiful Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I and wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, and persuaded her to commit adultery and marry Felix (c. AD 54). Josephus says Simon was a Jew and by birth a Cypriot. (A scribal slip seems to have produced the impossible "Atomos" as the name of this magus in a couple of MSS., probably through the insertion and corruption of the name Antonius [Felix], and perhaps also through Simon's adoption of this, his Roman patron's, name. Note that in the pseudo-Clementine Recognitions the "father" of the Biblical Simon Magus is called Antonius and the magus denies this Antonius was his real father - though admittedly only to claim a virgin birth for himself! [Below](#).) Felix was one of the chief favorites of the Emperor Claudius (r. AD 41-54) amongst his freedmen, second only, if not equal, in Claudius' esteem, to the freedman Posides. Claudius granted the procuratorship of Judaea to Felix (c. AD 52-53) as an imperial favor. The close relationship between Felix and Claudius, on the one hand, and between Simon the magus and Felix, on the other, would have given Simon considerable influence in imperial circles in Rome. §2. The next account in Justin Martyr tells us that a magus called Simon, the one mentioned in Acts, came from Samaria to Rome in the days of Claudius and received great honors there. He was worshipped as a god and a statue of Simon, identifying him with the Roman deity Semo Sancus, was erected on the Isle in the Tiber. Simon Magus was the founder of a sect of heretics in Rome and founded a school which gave birth to a swarm of other Gnostic heresies. (The setting of the Dialogue with Trypho is Ephesus at some period near or just after the end of the Bar-Kokhba revolt c. AD 135-145, and the First Apology dates from around the third quarter of the second century AD.) Justin's account is corroborated by Irenaeus (c. AD 180), Adv. Haer. I. xxiii. 1. The likelihood is, as has frequently been observed, that Acts, Josephus and Justin are talking about the same magus. It would be highly improbable that there were two magi of the name Simon, both connected with the area of Judaea and Samaria in the days of Claudius, and, at the same time, having access to, and great influence with, the inner circles of the imperial court in Rome. (Scholars of both the conservative and the critical schools have accepted the identity of the two Simons; Waitz says the identification is "not improbable" in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol. X, col. 420a, s.v. Simon Magus.) We find that when Felix was made procurator of Judaea, towards the end of the reign of Claudius, he embarked on a policy of wicked aggravation of his Jewish subjects. His period in office marked, according to Tacitus and Josephus, a milestone in the deterioration of the relationship between the Jews and the Romans, which finally culminated in the disastrous Jewish revolt and the sacking of Jerusalem in AD 70. And the fault, Tacitus tells us, was on the part of Felix. Is it a coincidence that the Gnostic teaching of Simon Magus, Felix's close friend and spiritual advocate, was markedly anti-Semitic?

§3. But even before Felix arrived in Judaea, we find anti-Semitic policies being put into effect by Claudius, viz. the expulsion of Jews from Rome (c. AD 45-49). ([Dion Cassius tells us](#) that the earlier decree of AD 41, forbidding Jews to assemble, was Claudius' own. The earlier decree was moderate in tone and tolerant, the second decree draconian.) According to Suetonius, the reason for the expulsion was that the Jews were continually causing riots, "because they were driven to do so by Chrestus" (impulsore Chresto). "Chrestus" is a common, pagan, Roman way of spelling the name Christ (the Messiah), but was also a heathen divine name, meaning the "Good One". Seemingly there was someone in Rome stirring up Jewish riots who called himself the "Good One" or "Christ". Claudius' legislation, however, did not expel the alleged troublemaker, "Chrestus", but rather the Jews whom he provoked to riot. Suetonius also informs us (Claudius 25) that the inspiration for these and other legal pronouncements did not originate with Claudius himself but with his favorites. And we know that one of his chief favorites was Felix, with his anti-Semitic spiritual advocate, Simon Magus. Again, can it be coincidence that Simon Magus, according to the later Christian and apocryphal writers, called himself "Christ" (Christus or Chrestus) and also identified himself as the pagan supreme deity, the "Good One"? It would appear that these Jewish riots in Rome in the days of Claudius were stirred up by Felix's friend Simon Magus, who blasphemously assumed the titles of godhead and Messiahship, and used his influence with Felix to attack the Jews, first in Rome, then in Judaea, when Felix became procurator there. Simon's Gnostic followers are known to have adopted an identical policy of anti-Semitic provocation and aggravation in the reigns of the Emperors

Domitian and Trajan. >>

§4. The contradiction some have seen in the different accounts of Simon's background is illusory. Josephus says by BIRTH Simon was of Cypriot origin and that he was a Jew. The apocryphal Vercelli Acts of Peter (going back to a source c. AD 200), ch. vi., likewise call Simon - the biblical Simon Magus - a Jew. According to Justin, Simon was from the Samaritan village of Gitto. Samaria was a region populated by a rich mix of races. Because Simon's home was Gitto in Samaria, that need not mean that his parents were Samaritan. The "Samaritan" tag is linked with the village and is an indication of Simon's geographical origin, whilst Josephus is talking about his genetic origin. The next account in Irenaeus (c. AD 180) repeats and corroborates the account of Justin. The next account in the pseudo-Clementine Recognitions adds a few details about Simon's family, stating that the name of his father, or alleged father, was Antonius, and his mother's name, Rachel, and confirming that his home town was Gitto (called Gitthae in the Apostolic Constitutions, and the village of the Gettones or Gitthae or Gitthi in the pseudo-Clementines). Rachel could be either a Jewish or a Samaritan name (hence Simon could have been Jewish on his mother's side), whilst Antonius is non-Jewish, Roman in form, and is, perhaps, derived from Simon's Roman patron, Antonius Felix. When a foreigner became a Roman citizen, he adopted a new name which was formed like that of the freedman. He chose his own praenomen (Roman personal name); he received the nomen (Roman family or *gens* name) of his citizen sponsor; and he adopted his original name as cognomen. For example, when the Greek poet Archias became a citizen, his name changed to Aulus Licinius Archias. He'd been attached to the Luculli family so he adopted the nomen of his patron, L. Licinius Lucullus. In this case the nomen would be Antonius, taken from Antonius Felix, and the cognomen Simon. We can presume that Simon was the recipient of Roman citizenship, considering he was the recipient of Roman divinity! (For the later history of Simon Magus, after his adventures in Rome, see below, [n. 20 §3](#).)

§5. Jos. Ant XX vii. 2: But for the marriage of Drusilla with Azizus, it was in no long time afterward dissolved upon the following occasion: While Felix was procurator of Judea, he saw this Drusilla, and fell in love with her; for she did indeed exceed all other women in beauty; and he sent to her a person whose name was Simon, one of his friends; a Jew he was, and by birth [note] a Cypriot, and one who pretended to be a magician, and endeavored to persuade her to forsake her present husband, and marry him; and promised, that if she would not refuse him, he would make her a happy woman. Accordingly she acted ill, and because she was desirous to avoid her sister Bernice's envy, for she was very ill treated by her on account of her beauty, was prevailed upon to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix; and when he had had a son by her, he named him Agrippa. But after what manner that young man, with his wife, perished at the conflagration of the mountain Vesuvius, in the days of Titus Caesar, shall be related hereafter.

§6. For Justin Martyr's account, see note [11](#)

§7. Apost. Const. VI. 7. . Now the original of the new heresies began thus: the devil entered into one Simon, of a village [note] called Gitthae, a Samaritan, by profession a magician, and made him the minister of his wicked design.

§8. Rec. Clem II. 7: This Simon's father was Antonius, and his mother Rachel. By nation [note] he is a Samaritan, from a village [note] of the Gettones; by profession a magician yet exceedingly well trained in the Greek literature; desirous of glory, and boasting above all the human race, so that he wishes himself to be believed to be an exalted power, which is above God the Creator, and to be thought to be the Christ, and to be called the Standing One. And he uses this name as implying that he can never be dissolved, asserting that his flesh is so compacted by the power of his divinity, that it can endure to eternity. Hence, therefore, he is called the Standing One, as though he cannot fall by any corruption.

§9. Rec. Clem II. 14: "At those sayings of his Simon grew pale; but after a little, recollecting himself, he thus answered: 'Do not think that I am a man of your race. I am neither magician, nor lover of Luna ["Moon" = Helena], nor son of Antonius. For before my mother Rachel and he came together, she, still a virgin, conceived me, while it was in my power to be either small or great, and to appear as a man among men. Therefore I have chosen you first as my friends, for the purpose of trying you, that I may place you first in my heavenly and unspeakable places when I shall have proved you.

§10. For Claudius and his favorites: see Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars, Claudius, 25 ... The Jews, who were persistently causing public disturbances because they were driven to do so by Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled from Rome But in these and other things, and indeed the

greater part of his administration, he was directed not so much by his own judgment, as by the influence of his wives and freedmen; for the most part acting in conformity to what their interests or fancies dictated. ... 28.

Amongst his freedmen, the greatest favorite was the eunuch Posides, whom, in his British triumph he presented with the headless spear, classing him among the military men. Next to him, if not equal, in favor was Felix, whom he not only preferred to commands both of cohorts and troops, but to the government of the province of Judea; and he became, in consequence of his elevation, the husband of three queens.

§11. On Felix as a vexatious procurator who had a hand in stirring up the Jewish Revolt, cf. Tacitus Annals 12. 54: "Not equally moderate was his [Pallas'] brother, surnamed Felix, who had for some time been governor of Judaea, and thought that he could do any evil act with impunity, backed up as he was by such power. It is true that the Jews had shown symptoms of commotion in a seditious outbreak, and when they had heard of the assassination of Caius [Caligula], there was no hearty submission, as a fear still lingered that any of the emperors might impose the same orders. Felix meanwhile, by ill-timed remedies, stimulated disloyal acts; while he had, as a rival in the worst wickedness, Ventidius Cumanus, who held a part of the province, which was so divided that Galilea was governed by Cumanus, Samaria by Felix. The two peoples had long been at feud, and now less than ever restrained their enmity, from contempt of their rulers. And accordingly they plundered each other, letting loose bands of robbers, forming ambuscades, and occasionally fighting battles, and carrying the spoil and booty to the two procurators, who at first rejoiced at all this, but, as the mischief grew, they interposed with an armed force, which was cut to pieces. The flame of war would have spread through the province, but it was saved by Quadratus, governor of Syria. In dealing with the Jews, who had been daring enough to slay our soldiers, there was little hesitation about their being capitally punished. Some delay indeed was occasioned by Cumanus and Felix; for Claudius on hearing the causes of the rebellion had given authority for deciding also the case of these procurators. Quadratus, however, exhibited Felix as one of the judges, admitting him to the bench with the view of cowering the ardor of the prosecutors. And so Cumanus was condemned for the crimes which the two had committed, and tranquillity was restored to the province."

§12. Histories 5. 9: "Under Tiberius all was quiet. But when the Jews were ordered by Caligula to set up his statue in the temple, they preferred the alternative of war. The death of the Emperor put an end to the disturbance. The kings were either dead, or reduced to insignificance, when Claudius entrusted the province of Judaea to the Roman Knights or to his own freedmen, one of whom, Antonius Felix, indulging in every kind of barbarity and lust, exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave. He had married Drusilla, the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra, and so was the grandson-in-law, as Claudius was the grandson, of Antony. Yet the endurance of the Jews lasted till Gessius Florus was procurator. In his time the war broke out."

§13. Josephus, Ant. XX. viii. 5: "Felix also bore an ill-will to Jonathan, the high priest, because he frequently gave him admonitions about governing the Jewish affairs better than he did, lest he should himself have complaints made of him by the multitude, since he it was who had desired Caesar to send him as procurator of Judea. So Felix contrived a method whereby he might get rid of him, now he was become so continually troublesome to him; for such continual admonitions are grievous to those who are disposed to act unjustly. Wherefore Felix persuaded one of Jonathan's most faithful friends, a citizen of Jerusalem, whose name was Doras, to bring the robbers [the so-called *sicarii*] upon Jonathan, in order to kill him; and this he did by promising to give him a great deal of money for so doing. Doras complied with the proposal, and contrived matters so, that the robbers might murder him after the following manner: Certain of those robbers went up to the city, as if they were going to worship God, while they had daggers under their garments, and by thus mingling themselves among the multitude they slew Jonathan and as this murder was never avenged, the robbers went up with the greatest security at the festivals after this time; and having weapons concealed in like manner as before, and mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew certain of their own enemies, and were subservient to other men for money; and slew others, not only in remote parts of the city, but in the temple itself also; for they had the boldness to murder men there, without thinking of the impiety of which they were guilty. And this seems to me to have been the reason why God, out of his hatred of these men's wickedness, rejected our city; and as for the temple, he no longer esteemed it sufficiently pure for him to inhabit therein, but brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it; and brought upon us, our wives, and children, slavery, as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities."

§14. According to a passage of Josephus preserved in Eusebius Hist. Ecc. (see note [52](#)) the War was divine punishment for the Jews' murder of James the brother of Jesus, which murder was induced by heretics spawned by the school of Simon Magus. In this case, too, *impulsore Chresto*, Simon was the instigator of the Jews' misfortune.

§15. The role of the heretics in fomenting disturbances, war and captivity in Judaea is probably alluded to also in I Clement 3. 2, see note [48](#).

13. See [Appendix 2](#).

13a. The apocryphal Vercelli Acts of Peter, which go back to a Docetic heretical source *c.* AD 200, and draw on ancient ecclesiastical traditions, mixed with myth and legend, describe just such a situation in Rome (*op. cit.* chs. iv, v, vi and vii): "[IV.] And the brethren were not a little offended among themselves, seeing, moreover, that Paul was not at Rome, neither Timotheus nor Barnabas, for they had been sent into Macedonia by Paul [this dates the *terminus a quo* to the latter part of the reign of Claudius, as Timothy does not appear till then, in Acts 16], and that there was no man to comfort us, to speak nothing of them that had but just become catechumens. And as Simon exalted himself yet more by the works which he did, and many of them daily called Paul a sorcerer, and others a deceiver, of so great a multitude that had been established in the faith all fell away save Narcissus the presbyter and two women in the lodging of the Bithynians, and four that could no longer go out of their house, but were shut up (day and night): these gave themselves unto prayer (by day and night), beseeching the Lord that Paul might return [*sic* in these Acts] quickly, or some other that should visit his servants, because the devil had made them fall by his wickedness. [V.] And as they prayed and fasted, God was already teaching Peter at Jerusalem of that which should come to pass. For whereas the twelve years which the Lord Christ had enjoined upon him were fulfilled, he showed him a vision after this manner, saying unto him: Peter, that Simon the sorcerer whom thou didst cast out of Judaea, convicting him, hath again come before thee (prevented thee) at Rome. And that shalt thou know shortly (or, and that thou mayest know in few words): for all that did believe in me hath Satan made to fall by his craft and working: whose Power Simon approveth himself to be [VI] ... a certain Jew had broken into the city, named Simon, and with his charms of sorcery and his wickedness hath he made all the brotherhood fall away this way [VII.] if he [Satan] overthrew me [Peter] and persuaded me to flee as if I had put my trust in a man, what think ye will he do unto you [Roman believers deceived by Simon] which are but young in the faith?"

14. See [Appendix 3](#).

14a. There was little to choose morally between Drusilla and her sister Bernice. The latter was living in incestuous marriage with her brother Agrippa II when Festus had Paul testify before Agrippa II after two years' confinement in Caesarea! "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" said Agrippa II to Paul, but almost was not enough. (Acts 24. 24 - 26. 32).

14b. The traditional connection of these three, earliest, house-churches in Rome with the family of Pudens, with the earliest of the Roman Catacombs, and with the Christians greeted by Paul in Romans 16, is brought out in the online Catholic Encyclopedia's article "Early Roman Christian Cemeteries" at www.newadvent.org/cathen (Section "C"): "Cemetery of Priscilla. This is the oldest general cemetery of Early Christian Rome (Kaufmann) and in several respects the most important. It takes its name from Priscilla, the mother of the Senator Pudens in whose house St. Peter, according to ancient tradition, found refuge. The sepulchral plot (area) of Pudens on the New Salarian Way became the burial-place of Aquila and Prisca (Rom., xvi, 3), and of Sts. Pudentiana and Praxedes, daughters of Pudens. In this manner the history of the very ancient Roman churches of Santa Pudentiana and Santa Prassede, also that of Santa Prisca on the Aventine, being originally the meeting-places (domesticæ ecclesiæ, Rom., xvi, 5), of the little Christian community, became intimately connected with the burial-site of the family to which they originally belonged."

15. See [Appendix 4](#).

16. §1. Observation 1.: Simon's doctrine was built on earlier theories mixing paganism and Judaism like those of the Naassenes, the Peratae, the Sethians, and individual heretics like Justinus. The supreme "Good One" in the Naassene system was (in one of his principal manifestations) the Egyptian grain-god Osiris, whilst in the system of Justinus he was actually the pagan phallic deity Priapus (!) who, in turn, was identified with the Egyptian Osiris. Osiris was commonly titled "The Good or Beneficent Being" (*wnn nfr*). Simon Magus was educated in Egypt, in Alexandria, and so were many of the Gnostics who succeeded him. The High God, worshipped, under whatever name, by heathen idolaters and allegorized by heathen philosophers, retained his supremacy in Gnosticism and the God of the Jews was demoted to an inferior position under him: by this expedient paganism replaced Judaism. Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, V. 21: "[Hippolytus is in the middle of an account of the "pseudo-Gnostic" system of Justinus, having summarized before this the doctrines of the Naassenes, the astrological Peratae and the Sethians] 'Finally, however, in the days of Herod the king, Baruch is dispatched, being sent down once more by Elohim; and coming to Nazareth, he found Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary, a child of twelve years, feeding sheep. And he announces to him all things from the beginning, whatsoever had been done by Eden and Elohim, and whatsoever would be likely to take place hereafter, and spoke the following words: "All the prophets anterior to you have been enticed. Put forth an effort, therefore, Jesus, Son of man, not to be allured, but preach this word unto men, and carry back tidings to them of things pertaining to the Father, and things pertaining to the Good One, and ascend to the Good One, and sit there with Elohim, Father of us all." And Jesus was obedient unto the angel, saying that, "I shall do all things, Lord," and proceeded to preach. Naas therefore wished to entice this one also. (Jesus, however, was not disposed to listen to his overtures), for he remained faithful to Baruch. Therefore Naas, being inflamed with anger because he was not able to seduce him, caused him to be crucified. He, however, leaving the body of Eden on the (accursed) tree, ascended to the Good One; saying, however, to Eden, "Woman, thou retainest thy son," that is, the natural and the earthly man. But (Jesus) himself commending his spirit into the hands of the Father, ascended to the Good One. Now the Good One is Priapus [the phallic god], (and) he it is who antecedently caused the production of everything that exists. On this account he is styled Priapus, because he previously fashioned all things (according to his own design). For this reason, he says, in every temple is placed his statue, which is revered by every creature; and (there are images of him) in the highways, carrying over his head ripened fruits, that is, the produce of the creation, of which he is the cause, having in the first instance formed, (according to His own design), the creation, when as yet it had no existence' [end of explanation of system of Justinus] Since, then, we have explained the attempts (at a system) of the pseudo-gnostic Justinus, it appears likewise expedient in the following books to elucidate the opinions put forward in heresies following [in the way of consequence on the systems already described], and to leave not a single one of these (speculators) unrefuted. Our refutation will be accomplished by adducing the assertions made by them; such (at least of their statements) as are sufficient for making a public example (of these heretics). (And we shall attain our purpose), even though there should only be condemned the secret and ineffable (mysteries) practiced amongst them, into which, silly mortals that they are, scarcely (even) with considerable labor are they initiated. Let us then see what also Simon [Magus] affirms...."

§2. Observation 2.: Simon Magus identified himself with the so-called Supreme God (the Good One): Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I. xxiii. 1: "This man [Simon Magus], then, was glorified by many as if he were a God; and he taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. He represented himself, in a word, as being the loftiest of all powers, that is, the Being who is the Father over all, and he allowed himself to be called by whatsoever title men were pleased to address him." and *op. cit.*, II. ix. 1: "This God, then, being acknowledged, as I have said, and receiving testimony from all to the fact of His existence, that Father whom they conjure into existence is beyond doubt untenable, and has no witnesses [to his existence]. Simon Magus was the first who said that he himself was God over all, and that the world was formed by his angels. Then those who succeeded him, as I have shown in the first book, by their several opinions, still further depraved [his teaching] through their impious and irreligious doctrines against the Creator. These [heretics now referred to], being the disciples of those mentioned, render such as assent to them worse than the heathen. For the former "serve the creature rather than the Creator," and "those which are not gods," notwithstanding that they ascribe the first place in Deity to that God who was the Maker of

this universe. But the latter maintain that He, [i.e., the Creator of this world,] is the fruit of a defect, and describe Him as being of an animal nature, and as not knowing that Power which is above Him, while He also exclaims, "I am God, and besides Me there is no other God." Affirming that He lies, they are themselves liars, attributing all sorts of wickedness to Him; and conceiving of one who is not above this Being as really having an existence, they are thus convicted by their own views of blasphemy against that God who really exists, while they conjure into existence a God who has no existence, to their own condemnation. And thus those who declare themselves "perfect," and as being possessed of the knowledge of all things, are found to be worse than the heathen, and to entertain more blasphemous opinions even against their own Creator."

§3. *Observation 3.*: Simon Magus' doctrine represented the Apostles as under the influence of Judaism and its so-called inferior Creator-god. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III. xii. 12: "For all those who are of a perverse mind, having been set against the Mosaic legislation, judging it to be dissimilar and contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel, have not applied themselves to investigate the causes of the difference of each covenant. Since, therefore, they have been deserted by the paternal love, and puffed up by Satan, being brought over to the doctrine of Simon Magus, they have apostatized in their opinions from Him who is God, and imagined that they have themselves discovered more than the apostles, by finding out another God; and [maintained] that the apostles preached the Gospel still somewhat under the influence of Jewish opinions, but that they themselves are purer [in doctrine], and more intelligent, than the apostles. Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and, curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they have themselves thus shortened. In another work, however, I shall, God granting [me strength], refute them out of these which they still retain. But all the rest, inflated with the false name of "knowledge," do certainly recognize the Scriptures; but they pervert the interpretations, as I have shown in the first book. And, indeed, the followers of Marcion do directly blaspheme the Creator, alleging him to be the creator of evils, [but] holding a more tolerable theory as to his origin, [and] maintaining that there are two beings, gods by nature, differing from each other, – the one being good, but the other evil. Those from Valentinus, however, while they employ names of a more honorable kind, and set forth that He who is Creator is both Father, and Lord, and God, do [nevertheless] render their theory or sect more blasphemous, by maintaining that He was not produced from any one of those Aeons within the Pleroma, but from that defect which had been expelled beyond the Pleroma. Ignorance of the Scriptures and of the dispensation of God has brought all these things upon them. And in the course of this work I shall touch upon the cause of the difference of the covenants on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of their unity and harmony."

17. Britannica.com (1999-2000), s.v. Mithraism: "There is little notice of the Persian god in the Roman world until the beginning of the 2nd century, but, from the year AD 136 onward, there are hundreds of dedicatory inscriptions to Mithra. This renewal of interest is not easily explained. The most plausible hypothesis seems to be that Roman Mithraism was practically a new creation, wrought by a religious genius who may have lived as late as c. AD 100 and who gave the old traditional Persian ceremonies a new Platonic interpretation that enabled Mithraism to become acceptable to the Roman world."

18. Justin, *First Apology*, 26: "All who take their opinions from these men [Simon, Menander, Marcion and the Gnostics], are, as we before said, called Christians; just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them. And whether they perpetrate those fabulous and shameful deeds — the upsetting of the lamp, and promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh — we know not; but we do know that they are neither persecuted nor put to death by you, at least on account of their opinions. But I have a treatise against all the heresies that have existed already composed, which, if you wish to read it, I will give you." Also, e.g., pseudo-Tertullian, *Against All Heresies*, 1: "Afterwards broke out the heretic Basilides. ...Martyrdoms, he says, are not to be endured. The resurrection of the flesh he strenuously impugns, affirming that salvation has not been promised to bodies."

19. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III. iv. 3: "But the rest, who are called

Gnostics, take rise from Menander, Simon's disciple, as I have shown; and each one of them appeared as both the father and the high priest of that doctrine into which he has been initiated." Op. cit., I. xliii. 1: "This man [Simon Magus], then, was glorified by many as if he were a God; and he taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. He represented himself, in a word, as being the loftiest of all powers, that is, the Being who is the Father over all, and he allowed himself to be called by whatsoever title men were pleased to address him." (On the last assertion, compare Simon's teaching in the so-called "Great Announcement" apud Hippolytus, *Refutation*, VI. 14: "And so [it was that Jesus] appeared as man, when in reality he was not a man. And [so it was] that likewise he suffered - though not actually undergoing suffering, but appearing to the Jews to do so - in Judea as 'Son,' and in Samaria as 'Father,' and among the rest of the Gentiles as 'Holy Spirit.'" And [Simon alleges] that Jesus tolerated being styled by whichever name [of the three just mentioned] men might wish to call him." This shows that, according to Irenaeus' account, Simon assumed any and all the titles of divinity that belonged to Jesus.) On the proper Scriptural use of the word "father" see further §54 >>.

20. §1. *Quotation 1.*: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III. iv. 3 (Greek in Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* IV. xi. 1): "For, prior to Valentinus [another notorious Gnostic heretic], those who follow Valentinus had no existence; nor did those from Marcion exist before Marcion; nor, in short, had any of those malignant-minded people, whom I have above enumerated, any being previous to the initiators and inventors of their perversity. For Valentinus came to Rome in the time of Hyginus, flourished under Pius, and remained until Anicetus. Cerdon, too, himself, Marcion's predecessor, having come [Gk. *elthōn*] into the church and (now) professing true faith [Gk. *exomologoumenos*], continued on in this fashion in the time of Hyginus, who was the ninth bishop, being at one time [Gk. *pote men*] a secret teacher [viz. of heresy, Gk. *lathrodidaskalōn*], then again [Gk. *pote de palin*] a professor of the true faith [Gk. *exomologoumenos*], and then [Gk. *pote de*] denounced for corrupt teaching and separated from communion with [Gk. *aphistamenos*] the assembly [Gk. *synodia*] of the brethren. Now, Marcion, succeeding him, flourished under Anicetus, who held the tenth place of the episcopate. But the rest, who are called Gnostics, take rise from Menander, Simon's disciple, as I have shown; and each one of them appeared as both the father and the high priest of that doctrine into which he has been initiated. But all these [the Marcionians, another group of heretics] broke out into their apostasy much later, even during the intermediate period of the Church [i.e. the period between Anicetus and Eleutherus, the bishop whom Irenaeus was writing this account]."

§2. *Quotation 2.*: Ibid. I. xxvii. 1 (Greek in Eusebius *Hist. Ecc.* IV. x. 2): A certain Cerdon received from Simon and his immediate circle the wherewithal to launch out, and came to live at Rome. In the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards, he taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent. 2. Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and increased the school, blaspheming unblushingly. [The following concerns Marcion but illustrates the common ground between him and Cerdon, whose particular theories are outlined in the next quotation from pseudo-Tertullian] In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself. But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God that made the world, and coming into Judaea in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Caesar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judaea, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all the works of that God who made the world, whom also he calls Cosmocrator. Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it. In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic

writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord. 3. Salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation. In addition to his blasphemy against God Himself, he advanced this also, truly speaking as with the mouth of the devil, and saying all things in direct opposition to the truth, — that Cain, and those like him, and the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, and others like them, and, in fine, all the nations who walked in all sorts of abomination, were saved by the Lord, on His descending into Hades, and on their running unto Him, and that they welcomed Him into their kingdom. But the serpent which was in Marcion declared that Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and those other righteous men who sprang from the patriarch Abraham, with all the prophets, and those who were pleasing to God, did not partake in salvation. For since these men, he says, knew that their God was constantly tempting them, so now they suspected that He was tempting them, and did not run to Jesus, or believe His announcement: and for this reason he declared that their souls remained in Hades. 4. But since this man is the only one who has dared openly to mutilate the Scriptures, and unblushingly above all others to inveigh against God, I purpose specially to refute him, convicting him out of his own writings; and, with the help of God, I shall overthrow him out of those discourses of the Lord and the apostles, which are of authority with him, and of which he makes use. At present, however, I have simply been led to mention him, that thou mightest know that all those who in any way corrupt the truth, and injuriously affect the preaching of the Church, are the disciples and successors of Simon Magus of Samaria. Although they do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy.

§3. *Observations:* The second quotation from Irenaeus has been interpreted (first in Cyprian's Latin adaptation of Irenaeus' words, Ep. 74 ad Pompeium) in the sense that Cerdon arrived in Rome in the time of Hyginus. That this is a mistake is shown 1) by the fact that it was "Simon and his immediate circle" (this is the proper meaning of the Greek idiom *tôn peri ton Simōna*) who provided Cerdon with the "wherewithal to launch out" (Gk. *aphormas*) — the former phrase asserting, and the word *aphormas* suggesting, immediate succession from Simon — and this latter phase of Simon's career must be dated to the second half of the first century AD and certainly no later than the first few years of the second century AD. Simon is not otherwise known to have been alive beyond the reign of Nero in the 60s of the first century, and then only apocryphal legends connect him with Nero rather than Claudius. However, this quotation of Irenaeus — an historical, not a legendary source — implies he was (back) in the area of Syria when he commissioned/prompted Cerdon to head the Gnostic movement in Rome. That Cerdon arrived in Rome before the time of Hyginus is demonstrated further 2) by the first quotation from Irenaeus which states that Cerdon *continued* as a professing Christian in the days of Hyginus (whose episcopate was short [trad. c. AD 136-140]), which means he already professed orthodox Christianity before the episcopate of Hyginus at least as early as the days of Telesphorus (trad. c. AD 125-136), and prior to that he is stated to have been a secret teacher of heresy. (On secret teaching see para. 19 >>) Some time between the late 60s of the first century AD and the episcopate of Telesphorus (trad. c. AD 125-136), Cerdon switched from being a Simonian Gnostic to being, professedly, a Christian. The evidence cited in note 67 >> indicates the time of Telesphorus' predecessor, Sixtus (trad. c. AD 115-125), as the point when Cerdon "joined the Church". According to the third-century Anti-Marcionite poem, Cerdon arrived in Rome in the time of Telesphorus, but only to afflict *new wounds* on the church there at that time, having been *prior* to that involved in secret teaching, and therefore expelled from communion. (See note 67 §7 >>.) This implies that Cerdon's teaching in the time of Telesphorus and his successor, Hyginus, referred to by Irenaeus, viz. the two-gods doctrine commonly associated with the name of Cerdon, was propagated by him after he had temporarily left Rome and returned, at the latest in the time of Telesphorus. The period of secret teaching, of his nominal acceptance of orthodox Christianity and of his exposure by the orthodox Bible-teachers preceded that, and the last event, as is implied by the Anti-Mrcionite poem, led to his temporary departure from Rome. (Simon's follower Cerdon could have lived on well on into the second century AD, even as late the second half of that century, on the analogy of John the Apostle's disciple, Polycarp, John himself being a

contemporary of Simon Magus. Polycarp was martyred as late as AD 177, according to the most probable chronology, or in AD 156 on the usual, modern, dating. For example, if Cerdon was a young man of 20 in the latter phase of the career of Simon Magus c. AD 65, he would have been an old man of 99 when Marcion succeeded him c. AD 144 (note 75 §2 >>). For comparison, Symeon son of Clopas, the natural cousin of Jesus, was 120 years old, Polycarp a minimum of 86 years, and Pothinus over 90 years, at the time they were martyred, Eusebius Hist. Ecc. III. xxxii. 6, IV. xv. 20, V. i. 29.)

Note: The history of Simon reconstructed here, including a return of Simon to the area of Syria in the second half of the first century AD, most probably explains the Kabbalistic tradition that Jewish magic was based on the teaching of a Rabbi called Shimeon (Simon), who visited Rome and was patronized there by a noble Roman *imperator* called "Antoninus" (*sic*, presumably Antonius [Felix], rather than the emperor Antoninus Pius), and who was present in Palestine between the First and the Second Jewish Revolts against Rome. The Kabbalah has strong affinities to Mandaeism, which, in turn, goes back to first century Gnosis of a kind similar to that espoused in the second and third centuries by the Elkesaites. It is this very same form of Gnosis which underlies the third-century, pseudo-Clementine, traditions relating to Simon Magus and his supposed dealings with Peter in Rome. In the native Jewish tradition Shimeon is called Bar (son of) Yohai, and Yohai is reminiscent of the name of the great Mandaean prophet Yahya (John the Baptist). Simon Magus was a "son of John the Baptist" in the Jewish idiomatic sense that he was his disciple. Furthermore, the Kabbalistic tradition is that Shimeon Bar Yohai was present in the area of Palestine (Syria), or, more specifically in Galilee, living as an ascetic in a cave and teaching in his own school there, in the second half of the first century and in the early years of the second century AD, where he was involved, with Rabbi Aqiba, in the disastrous uprising of Bar Kokhba against the Romans. This resulted in the utter extirpation of the Jews from their homeland and is precisely the kind of role we would expect Simon Magus to have taken if he did indeed return to the area of Syria in the second half of the first century AD. It could be that Justin Martyr is referring to Simon's recent participation in the second Jewish revolt in the following passage of the Dialogue with Trypho, the setting of which is Ephesus, shortly after the Bar Kokhba debacle referred to elsewhere in the work (*ibid.* i): Dial.Tryph. cxx: "For I [Justin] gave no thought to any of my people, that is, the Samaritans, when I had a communication in writing with Caesar, but stated that they were wrong in trusting to the magician Simon of their own nation, who, they say, is God above all power, and authority, and might." It is also possible that a break in the text of Hippolytus' Refutation, in a passage relating to Simon Magus' travels after leaving Rome, which presently reads "*elhōn en t . . . tē*," covers an original reading "*elhōn en tē Sebastēi*," i.e. "repairing to Sebaste [the city of Samaria]," which would likewise indicate a return of Simon to his homeland. The passage reads as follows: Hippolytus, Refut. VI. xv. = ed. Miller VI. 20 (67r) (for the Greek, click [here](#)): "This Simon, deceiving many in Samaria by his sorceries, was reproved by the Apostles, and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts. But he afterwards abjured the faith, and attempted these (aforesaid practices). And journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles; and to him, deceiving many by his sorceries, Peter offered repeated opposition. This man, ultimately repairing to <Sebas?>te (and) sitting under a plane tree, continued to give instruction (in his doctrines). And in truth at last, when conviction was imminent, in case he delayed longer, he stated that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They, then, executed the injunction given; whereas he remained (in that grave) until this day, for he was not the Christ." It is remarkable that the corruption of all three monotheistic faiths, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, in that case resulted specifically from the admixture of Simonian Gnosis in an Elkesaite form, Christianity from the kind of Gnosis adopted by the First Church of Rome, Judaism from Kabbalistic Gnosis and Islam from the Gnosis of the Subba, or Mandaeans, who are treated with special favor in the Koran, along with Christians and Jews, as "people of the Book".)

§4. *Quotation 3:* As regards Cerdon's teaching, and his pre-Marcionite attack on the Canon of Scripture, the following quotation is illuminating. Pseudo-Tertullian, Against All Heresies, Ch. 6. 1-2: "To this is added one Cerdo. He introduces two first causes, that is, two Gods — one good, the other cruel: the good being the superior; the latter, the cruel one, being the creator of the world. He repudiates the prophecies and the Law; renounces God the Creator; maintains that Christ who came was the Son of the superior God; affirms that He was not in the substance of flesh; states Him

to have been only in a phantasmal shape, to have not really suffered, but undergone a quasipassion, and not to have been born of a virgin, nay, really not to have been born at all. A resurrection of the soul merely does he approve, denying that of the body. The Gospel of Luke alone, and that not entire, does he receive. Of the Apostle Paul he takes neither all the epistles, nor in their integrity. The Acts of the Apostles and the Apocalypse he rejects as false. After him emerged a disciple of his, one Marcion by name, a native of Pontus, son of a bishop, excommunicated because of a rape committed on a certain virgin. He, starting from the fact that it is said, "Every good tree beareth good fruit, but an evil evil," attempted to approve the heresy of Cerdo; so that his assertions are identical with those of the former heretic before him." Latin: "VI. [1] Accedit his Cerdon quidam. Hic introducit initia duo, id est duos deos, unum bonum, et alterum saevum, bonum superiorem, saevum hunc mundi creatorem. Hic prophetias et legem repudiat, deo creatori renuntiat, superioris dei filium Christum venisse tractat, hunc in substantia carnis negat, in phantasmate solo fuisse pronuntiat, nec omnino passum, sed quasi passum, nec ex virgine natum, sed omnino nec natum. Resurrectionem animae tantummodo probat, corporis negat. Solum evangelium Lucae, nec tamen totum recipit. Apostoli Pauli neque omnes neque totas epistolas sumit. Acta Apostolorum et Apocalypsim quasi falsa reicit. [2] Post hunc discipulus ipsius emerit Marcion quidam nomine, Ponticus genere, episcopi filius, propter stuprum cuiusdam virginis ab ecclesiae communicatione abiectus. Hic ex occasione qua dictum sit, Omnis arbor bona fructus facit, mala autem malos, haeresim Cerdonis approbare conatus est, ut eadem diceret quae ille superior haereticus ante dixerat."

§5. *Quotation 4:* According to Hippolytus, Refutation VII. xxiv-xxv, Cerdon followed in the footsteps of the Nicolaitans and Simon, the Nicolaitans encouraging the spread of the Gnostic movement by advocating indifference as regards the eating of meat sacrificed to idols and participation in forbidden sexual relationships: "There are, however, among the Gnostics diversities of opinion; but we have decided that it would not be worth while to enumerate the silly doctrines of these (heretics), inasmuch as they are (too) numerous and devoid of reason, and full of blasphemy. Now, even those (of the heretics) who are of a more serious turn in regard of the Divinity, and have derived their systems of speculation from the Greeks, must stand convicted (of these charges). But Nicolaus has been a cause of the widespread combination of these wicked men. He, as one of the seven (that were chosen) for the diaconate, was appointed by the Apostles. (But Nicolaus) departed from correct doctrine, and was in the habit of inculcating indifference of both life and food. And when the disciples (of Nicolaus) continued to offer insult to the Holy Spirit, John reproved them in the Apocalypse as fornicators and eaters of things offered unto idols. CHAPTER 25 THE HERESY OF CERDON But one Cerdon himself also, receiving occasion in like manner from these (heretics) and Simon, affirms that the God preached by Moses and the prophets was not Father of Jesus Christ. For (he contends) that this (Father) had been known, whereas that the Father of Christ was unknown, and that the former was just, but the latter good. And Marcion corroborated the tenet of this (heretic) in the work which he attempted to write, and which he styled Antitheses. And he was in the habit, (in this book,) of uttering whatever slanders suggested themselves to his mind against the Creator of the universe. In a similar manner likewise (acted) Lucian, the disciple of this (heretic)."

§6. *Observations:* This notice takes us back to the early Apostolic era (another indicator of Cerdon's early date), when the problem of meat sacrificed to idols and fornication was addressed by the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem. This issue was a point of debate between those Christians who adhered overenthusiastically to the Jewish Law and those who advocated leniency in an attempt to more easily absorb Gentile converts. Nicolaus seems to have tended in the latter direction (he was a proselyte from a Gentile background in Antioch and was involved in the distribution of food to the Hellenist or Greek-speaking members of the Church in Jerusalem shortly after Pentecost, Acts 6. 1-5), but according to Clement of Alexandria (Strom. III. xxv, xxvi, Eusebius Hist. Ecc. III. xxix) he himself and his children were orthodox in faith and morally blameless, though some, including Hippolytus, thought he departed in some way from orthodox doctrine. His avowed followers, the "Nicolaitans", evidently took an extreme position and thus encouraged the development of Gentile Gnosticism which pandered to Gentile idolatry and the sexual immorality associated with it. It is not surprising to find that Cerdon rejected utterly the Apocalypse of the Apostle John which rebuked the Nicolaitans by name. In fact there does not appear to have been a Nicolaitan sect as such. The testimony of Clement of Alexandria (Strom. III. xxv, xxvi), suggests that the Nicolaitans were actually the Carpocratians of Asia, who

improperly adduced the example of Nicolaus' selfless, though, perhaps reckless, submission to the will of God in his marital relations to justify their own antinomianism. Their presence in Asia brought these Carpocratian "Nicolaitans" to the notice of the Apostle John in his message to the Seven Asian Churches. Later the name "Nicolaitans" became attached to a sect originating from the Carpocratians, called Caimites (Tertullian, Praescr. 33, Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. XXXVIII, ii, ed. Migne, XLI, col. 656C), who believed that all the figures in the Old and New Testament castigated by the God of the Jews (i.e., on their theory, by the wicked Creator-god), viz. Cain, the Sodomites, Judas etc., must, necessarily, be held up as examples of moral rectitude, and their practices emulated! For why, otherwise, they reasoned, would the wicked Creator-god be so antagonistic to such? Note that Hippolytus says Cerdon drew for his heresy on two sources: 1) the Gnosis of the Nicolaitans (i.e. Carpocratians) and 2) the Gnosis of Simon himself. See further on this the following subsection.

§7. Cerdon, according to Irenaeus (a reliable witness) received the wherewithal to launch out on the Gnostic path from Simon and his immediate circle, whilst, according to Epiphanius (Panarion, XLI [XXI]. i.), a less reliable witness, but one who preserved much circumstantial detail about the heretics from earlier sources, Cerdon was a successor of Heracleon, being of the school of Simon and Saturninus (otherwise, Saturnilus). Saturninus is doubtless one of the "immediate circle of Simon" referred to by Irenaeus. Syrian Gnosticism was formed principally out of the teachings of Simon, Simon's successor, Menander and Menander's twin scions, Saturninus (whose residence was Antioch in Syria) and Basilides (who subsequently migrated to Egypt). Again, according to Epiphanius (ibid., agreeing with Irenaeus), Cerdon migrated from Syria to Rome and preached his Gnostic gospel there during the episcopate of Hyginus. Heracleon himself was a successor of Colorbasus (Epiphanius ibid. XXXVI [XVI]. i.), whilst the roots of the Gnosticism of Colorbasus were the same as those of the Valentinian Ptolemaeus (ibid. XXXV [XV]. i.) and the doctrine of both Valentinus (Epiphanius, Haer. XXXVIII, ii, ed. Migne, XLI, col. 656C, and the following citation) and Ptolemaeus was derived ultimately from the school of Secundus and Epiphanius, the son of Carpocrates (XXXIII [XIII]. i.). Heracleon is usually dated some time in the second century AD, and belonged to what is known as the Italian or Western branch of Valentinian Gnosis. The details of his life are, however, obscure. It is probable that Cerdon's contact with and adoption of Heracleon's Gnosis occurred after he had migrated to Rome, and were superadded to his foundational Syrian beliefs. Cerdon's career had, indeed, as we have seen, two main phases. In the earlier phase he taught his Syrian Gnostic theories secretly (like his precursor Simon). It was during this phase that he "came into" the Catholic communion. Bishop Sixtus seems to have provided him an ecclesiastical umbrella. After his exposure by the orthodox Bible-teachers, he left Rome temporarily and then returned to afflict "new wounds" on the church in the city during the episcopate of Telesphorus, the successor of Sixtus and precursor of Hyginus. In this phase he taught his Gnosticism publicly. This is most likely the period when he adopted and adapted the theories of the Italian Gnosis of Heracleon, with its roots in the teaching of Carpocrates, since the school of Carpocrates (that of the "Nicolaitans") seems to have practiced its Gnostic occultism openly from the beginning (see further on Carpocrates' public teaching, [note 28](#).)

20a. Paul addressed this problem himself in his *Epistle to the Romans* 3. 5-8, where he denounced the teaching that was circulating at that time that God was unjust to punish sin if he predestinated all things, and which led, as he pointed out, to an antinomian perversion of his own Gospel of Grace. That was c. AD 58. Similarly, Peter, a few years thereafter (in II Peter 3. 16), rebuked the unstable ones (*asteriktoi*) who twisted the writings of Paul, and also referred to such (in v. 17) as lawless ones (*athesmoi*). Both of these words are used in the preceding chapter (vv. 7 and 14) of the type of people involved in the heresies of the false teachers and false prophets operating at that time within the nominal Church. The reference here, at least in part, is to the antinomian, Carpocratian, form of Gnosticism. Cerdon is known to have wrested Paul's writings and is dateable likewise within the first generation of heretics contemporary with Simon Magus, though he belonged originally to the pseudo-ascetic school of Syrian Gnosticism, not the antinomian. Cerdon may be one, perhaps the chief, target of Ignatius' attacks on Docetism (the belief that Jesus' body was not real flesh and blood) in his Epistles (Trallians ix-xi, Smyrnaeans i-vii), and his followers the target of his condemnation of heretics who disputed what was and what was not in the true Scriptures (Philadelphians viii. 2) .

Cerdon, like Ignatius, originated from Syria, and no doubt Ignatius was familiar with other and similar forms of Syrian Gnosticism. Compare also Polycarp's denunciation (Philippians 7. 1) of any such teacher as "the firstborn of Satan" – a phrase which Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. III. iii. 4) states he used later to describe Marcion, Cerdon's successor.

20b. Ignatius, Letter to the Smyrnaeans, VII. 1: "They abstain from Thanksgiving [Gk. *eucharistia*, eucharist] and prayer, because of a failure to agree that the Thanksgiving [eucharist] is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins, which the Father raised up by His goodness." A common misinterpretation of this passage is that the Docetists abstained from the eucharist because they did not agree that the bread was the body of Jesus (period). This interpretation can be shown to be erroneous. Cerdon (see the previous note), and Gnostics like Cerdon, are probably the Docetists Ignatius is referring to in this passage. Yet Marcion, the Docetist *par excellence*, who adopted the Gnostic theories of Cerdon wholesale, we know had a eucharist with literal bread. (Wine was excluded because of his otherworldly, pseudo-ascetic, principles.) Furthermore, he considered the bread to be the *proper body* of the Supreme Good God who manifested himself as Jesus, whilst Jesus' human body was a mere apparition (see the quotations from Tertullian below). This suggests that the statement of Ignatius should be interpreted otherwise, and with proper emphasis given to all the phrases in the statement: that the Docetists abstained from eucharist because they did not agree that the bread was *that* body of Jesus *which the orthodox held had suffered and was then raised up by God* (as the Docetists did not believe in a physical, human, body of Jesus that had so suffered and been resurrected). Similarly, in the disputes over transubstantiation between Protestants and Roman Catholics, the Protestants affirmed that the eucharist could not be the literal body of Jesus because that had been raised up by God and was now seated in glory. Docetists of the earliest period believed that Jesus' human body was a mere *apparition*, that it was a phantasmic manifestation of the highest God, and yet also believed that that same supreme Deity did have a *proper material body* by which he was exhibited to the world - and *that was the bread of the eucharist!* This inevitably led to a separation between the bread-body of Jesus and the human body of Jesus, which the doctrine of transubstantiation in later Roman Catholicism was concocted to address. The thought suggests itself: why should the Docetists have held so dogmatically to the idea that the proper material body of the supreme God was BREAD *if it was not because their supreme God, the "Good One", was, in fact, as in the system of the Naassenes, just the fertility-god of the pagan mysteries, the GRAIN-GOD OSIRIS (identified with SERAPIS and PRIAPUS etc.), THE "GOOD GOD" OF EGYPTIAN PAGANISM?* The following quotations are from Tertullian's Five Books Against Marcion (Adv. Marc.) and refer to Marcion's eucharistic beliefs and practices: Tertullian Adv. Marc. I. xiv. 3: "Indeed, up to the present time, he [Marcion's highest or Good God] has not disdained the water which the Creator [Marcion's inferior god] made wherewith he washes his people; nor the oil with which he anoints them; nor that union of honey and milk wherewithal he gives them the nourishment of children; nor the bread by which he represents his own proper body [lit. presents in manifest form his own very body, ipsum corpus suum repraesentat], thus requiring in his very sacraments the "beggarly elements" of the Creator." (Sed ille quidem usque nunc nec aquam reprobativatoris qua suos abluit, nec oleum quo suos unguunt, nec mellis et lactis societatem qua suos infantat, nec panem quo ipsum corpus suum repraesentat, etiam in sacramentis propriis egens mendicitatibus creatoris.) Ibid. III. xix. 3-4: "This tree [the Cross] it is which Jeremiah likewise gives you intimation of, when he prophesies to the Jews, who should say, 'Come, let us destroy the tree with the fruit, (the bread) thereof,' that is, His body. For so did God in your [Marcion's] own gospel even reveal the sense, when He called His body bread; so that, for the time to come, you may understand that He has given to His body the figure [note Tertullian emphatically states the *figurative* interpretation] of bread, whose body the prophet of old figuratively [note] turned into bread, the Lord Himself designing to give by and by an interpretation of the mystery." (Hoc lignum et Hieremias tibi insinuat, dicturis praedicans Iudaeis, Venite, inciamus lignum in panem eius, utique in corpus. [4] Sic enim deus in evangelio quoque vestro revelavit, panem corpus suum appellans, ut et hinc iam eum intellegas corporis sui figuram panis dedisse, cuius retro corpus in panem prophetes figuravit, ipso domino hoc sacramentum postea interpretaturo.) Ibid. IV. xxxiv. 5: [Marcion had a eucharist and strict admission rules to it] "If, however, you [Marcion] deny that divorce is in any way permitted by Christ, how is it that you on your side destroy

marriage, not uniting man and woman, nor admitting to the sacrament of baptism and of the eucharist those who have been united in marriage anywhere else, unless they should agree together to repudiate the fruit of their marriage, and so the very Creator Himself?" (Aut si omnino negas permitti divortium a Christo, quomodo tu nuptias dirimis, nec coniungens marem et feminam, nec alibi coniunctos ad sacramentum baptismatis et eucharistiae admittens nisi inter se coniuraverint adversus fructum nuptiarum, ut adversus ipsum creatorem?) (Ibid. IV. xl. Tertullian offers arguments from the eucharist against Marcion's theory of an apparitional body of Christ, implying throughout Marcion's literal eucharist.) For an example of the striking perpetuation in Roman Catholicism of Gnostic theory, and even terminology, in the matter of the Eucharist, consider the following quotation (one amongst many that could be cited) from a book about the convent experiences of a nun: "The old priest to whom I applied was Father Rocque. He is still [1836] alive. He was, at that time, the oldest priest in the seminary, and *carried the Bon Dieu, Good God, as the sacramental wafer is called*. When going to administer it in any country place, he used to ride with a man before him, who rang a bell as a signal. When the Canadians heard it, whose habitations he passed, they would *come and prostrate themselves to the earth, worshipping it as a God.*" (The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, Milner and Company, Manchester, 1836, p. 19.)

20c. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I. xxi: "1. It happens that their tradition respecting redemption is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes of "redemption" as there are teachers of these mystical opinions. And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith. 2. They maintain that those who have attained to perfect knowledge must of necessity be *regenerated* [= "born again"] into that power which is above all. For it is otherwise impossible to find admittance within the Pleroma, since this [regeneration] it is which leads them down into the depths of Bythus. For the baptism instituted by the visible Jesus was for the remission of sins, but the redemption brought in by that Christ who descended upon Him, was for perfection; and they allege that the former is animal, but the latter spiritual. And the baptism of John was proclaimed with a view to repentance, but the redemption by Jesus was brought in for the sake of perfection. And to this He refers when He says, "And I have another baptism to be baptized with, and I hasten eagerly towards it." Moreover, they affirm that the Lord added this redemption to the sons of Zebedee, when their mother asked that they might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom, saying, "Can ye be baptized with the baptism which I shall be baptized with?" Paul, too, they declare, has often set forth, in express terms, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and this was the same which is handed down by them in so varied and discordant forms. 3. For some of them prepare a nuptial couch, and perform a sort of mystic rite (pronouncing certain expressions) with those who are being initiated, and affirm that it is a spiritual marriage which is celebrated by them, after the likeness of the conjunctions above. Others, again, lead them to a place where water is, and baptize them, with the utterance of these words, "Into the name of the unknown Father of the universe — into truth, the mother of all things — into Him who descended on Jesus — into union, and redemption, and communion with the powers." Others still repeat certain Hebrew words, in order the more thoroughly to bewilder those who are being initiated, as follows: "Basema, Chamosse, Baenaora, Mistadia, Ruada, Kousta, Babaphor, Kalachthei." The interpretation of these terms runs thus: "I invoke that which is above every power of the Father, which is called light, and good Spirit, and life, because Thou hast reigned in the body." Others, again, set forth the redemption thus: The name which is hidden from every deity, and dominion, and truth which Jesus of Nazareth was clothed with in the lives of the light of Christ — of Christ, who lives by the Holy Ghost, for the angelic redemption. The name of restitution stands thus: Messia, Uphareg, Namempsoeman, Chaldoeaur, Mosomedoea, Acphranoe, Psaua, Jesus Nazaria. The interpretation of these words is as follows: "I do not divide the Spirit of Christ, neither the heart nor the supercelestial power which is merciful; may I enjoy Thy name, O Savior of truth!" Such are words of the initiators; but he who is initiated, replies, "I am established, and I am redeemed; I redeem my soul from this age (world), and from all things

connected with it in the name of Iao, who redeemed his own soul into redemption in Christ who liveth." Then the bystanders add these words, "Peace be to all on whom this name rests." After this they anoint the initiated person with balsam; for they assert that this unguent is a type of that sweet odor which is above all things. 4. But there are some of them who assert that it is superfluous to bring persons to the water, but mixing oil and water together, they place this mixture on the heads of those who are to be initiated, with the use of some such expressions as we have already mentioned. And this they maintain to be the redemption. They, too, are accustomed to anoint with balsam. Others, however, reject all these practices, and maintain that the mystery of the unspeakable and invisible power ought not to be performed by visible and corruptible creatures, nor should that of those [beings] who are inconceivable, and incorporeal, and beyond the reach of sense, [be performed] by such as are the objects of sense, and possessed of a body. These hold that the knowledge of the unspeakable Greatness is itself perfect redemption. For since both defect and passion flowed from ignorance, the whole substance of what was thus formed is destroyed by knowledge; and therefore knowledge is the redemption of the inner man. This, however, is not of a corporeal nature, for the body is corruptible; nor is it animal, since the animal soul is the fruit of a defect, and is, as it were, the abode of the spirit. The redemption must therefore be of a spiritual nature; for they affirm that the inner and spiritual man is redeemed by means of knowledge, and that they, having acquired the knowledge of all things, stand thenceforth in need of nothing else. This, then, is the true redemption. 5. Others still there are who continue to redeem persons even up to the moment of death, by placing on their heads oil and water, or the pre-mentioned ointment with water, using at the same time the above-named invocations, that the persons referred to may become incapable of being seized or seen by the principalities and powers, and that their inner man may ascend on high in an invisible manner, as if their body were left among created things in this world, while their soul is sent forward to the Demiurge." The "Redemption" or "Rebirth" in its bridal form was followed, in some cases at least, by a literal carnal connexion between the female initiates and their Gnostic instructors: *Ibid.* I. xiii: "6. Some of his [Marcus'] disciples, too, addicting themselves to the same practices, have deceived many silly women, and defiled them. They proclaim themselves as being "perfect," so that no one can be compared to them with respect to the immensity of their knowledge, nor even were you to mention Paul or Peter, or any other of the apostles. They assert that they themselves know more than all others, and that they alone have imbibed the greatness of the knowledge of that power which is unspeakable. They also maintain that they have attained to a height above all power, and that therefore they are free in every respect to act as they please, having no one to fear in anything. For they affirm, that because of the "Redemption" it has come to pass that they can neither be apprehended, nor even seen by the judge. But even if he should happen to lay hold upon them, then they might simply repeat these words, while standing in his presence along with the "Redemption:" "O thou, who sittest beside God, and the mystical, eternal Sige, thou through whom the angels (mightiness), who continually behold the face of the Father, having thee as their guide and introducer, do derive their forms from above, which she in the greatness of her daring inspiring with mind on account of the goodness of the Propator, produced us as their images, having her mind then intent upon the things above, as in a dream, — behold, the judge is at hand, and the crier orders me to make my defense. But do thou, as being acquainted with the affairs of both, present the cause of both of us to the judge, inasmuch as it is in reality but one cause." Now, as soon as the Mother hears these words, she puts the Homeric helmet of Pluto upon them, so that they may invisibly escape the judge. And then she immediately catches them up, conducts them into the bridal chamber, and hands them over to their consorts." The ritual of the bridal chamber continued and continues to be practiced in closed orders of the First Church of Rome: "The Christian homes of England and America may be pointed out, thank God, as illustrating the divine wisdom; while the degraded monasteries of Italy and Spain and South America, with the horrible history of enforced celibacy in the Latin priesthood, are proofs of the unwisdom of those who imported into the Western churches the very heresies and abortive argumentations which Clement [of Alexandria] disdains [in his denunciation in the Stromata Book III of Carpocratian Gnostics and related groups], while he pulverizes them and blows them away, thoroughly purging his flour, and burning up this chaff." A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Church Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 808, *Stromata Book III*, Elucidation 6. For the practice in the 19th and 20th centuries see the testimonies of escaped closed order nuns Maria Monk and Charlotte Keckler at <http://www.christianhospitality.org/archives.htm>.

21. Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* II. xxiii. 8-9, quoting Hegesippus, in a passage describing how members of the seven Gnosticizing sects acted as *agents-provocateurs* to bring about the death of James the brother of the Lord in Jerusalem in AD 62: "Now some of the seven [Gnostic] sects [see next note], which existed among the people and which have been mentioned by me in the Memoirs, asked him [James], 'What is the gate of Jesus? and he replied that he was the Savior. On account of these words some believed that Jesus is the Christ. But the sects mentioned above did not believe either in a resurrection or in one who is coming to give to every man according to his works.'"

22. Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* IV. xxii. 4-6, quoting Hegesippus: "HEGESIPPUS in the five books of Memoirs "And after James the Just had suffered martyrdom [AD 62], as the Lord had also on the same account, Symeon, the son of the Lord's uncle, Clopas, was appointed the next bishop. All proposed him as second bishop because he was a cousin of the Lord. Therefore, they called the Church a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. But Thebuthis, because he was not made bishop, began to corrupt it from the seven sects among the people, amongst whose numbers he was included, (namely) from those who included Simon, from whom came Simonians, and Cleobius, from whom came Cleobians, and Dositheus, from whom came Dositheans, and Gortheus, from whom came Goratheni, and Masbothaeans {five sects are named here out of the seven that existed in the time of James and were the source of errors introduced by Thebuthis into the virgin Church}. From these sprang the Menandrianists, and Marcionists, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and Saturnilians. Each introduced privately and separately his own peculiar opinion. From them came false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, who divided the unity of the Church by corrupt doctrines uttered against God and against his Christ." The earlier generation of Gnostics (which did not include Marcion) often claimed to be following the teaching of the Apostles as transmitted to them through certain ones who were personal hearers of the Apostolic preaching: Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VII. xvii: "For the teaching of our Lord at His advent, beginning with Augustus and Tiberius, was completed in the middle of the times of Tiberius. And that of the apostles, embracing the ministry of Paul, ends with Nero. It was later, in the times of Hadrian the king, that those who invented the heresies arose; and they extended to the age of Antoninus the elder, as, for instance, Basilides, though he claims (as they boast) for his master, Glaucias, the interpreter of Peter. Likewise they allege that Valentinus was a hearer of Theudas. And he was the pupil of Paul. (For Marcion, who arose in the same age with them, lived as an old man with the younger [heretics].) And after him [viz., presumably, Theudas] Simon heard for a little the preaching of Peter." The Theudas who heard Paul must have done so before Simon Magus went to Rome (c. AD 45), as Simon is said here to have heard Peter after Theudas heard Paul and there is no reliable evidence that Simon met Peter outside of Samaria and Caesarea. This would probably date Theudas' meeting with Paul in the early years of Paul's conversion, before Paul left for Tarsus, where he remained c. AD 37-43 (Acts 9. 30 and 11. 25). It was during Paul's absence that Cornelius was converted in Caesarea through the ministry of Peter (Acts 10) and an early sub-Apostolic tradition represents Peter as disputing with Simon Magus in Caesarea at that period. Theudas, therefore, seems to have heard Paul around AD 35-37 either in Damascus (Acts 9. 20-22) or in Jerusalem (Acts 9. 28), and Simon Magus seems to have heard Peter in Caesarea some time between AD 41 and AD 45. Like the elders in Ephesus, Theudas himself may have drifted into heresy, or Valentinus distorted Theudas' teaching. (On the Ephesian elders see Acts 20. 29: "For I [Paul] know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.") Since nothing is known of Theudas elsewhere in the literature of Gnosticism, the latter is the more probable hypothesis, particularly as Valentinus is said to have originally been orthodox, falling into heresy because he did not receive the bishopric in some orthodox church (Tertullian *Adv. Val.* I. 4). Cerdon, according to Irenaeus (a reliable witness) received the wherewithal to launch out on the Gnostic path from Simon and his immediate circle, and Simon was a "hearer" of Peter. As the Apostle John said (1 John 2. 19): "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

23. See [Appendix 5](#).

23a. VII. 1 Saturninus oriundo fuit Gallus, ex gente hominum inquietissima et avida semper vel faciendi principis vel imperii. 2 huic inter ceteros duces, quod vere summus vir esset, certe videretur, Aurelianus limitis orientalis ducatum dedit, sapienter praecipiens, ne umquam Aegyptum videret. 3 cogitabat enim, quantum videmus, vir prudentissimus Gallorum naturam et verebatur, ne, si praeturbidam civitatem vidisset, quo eum natura ducebat, e<o> societate quoque hominum duceretur. 4 sunt enim Aegyptii, ut satis nosti, <in>venti ventosi, furibundi, iactantes, iniuriosi atque adeo vani, liberi, novarum rerum usque ad cantilenas publicas cupientes, versificatores, epigrammatarii, mathematici, haruspices, medici. 5 nam <in> eis C<h>ristiani, Samaritae et quibus praesentia semper tempora cum enormi libertate displiceant. 6 ac ne quis mihi Aegyptiorum irascatur et meum esse credat, quod in litteras rettuli, Hadriani epistolam, <p>romam ex libris Flegontis liberti eius proditam, ex qua penitus Aegyptiorum vita detegatur. VIII. 1 Hadrianus Augustus Serviano consuli salutem. Aegyptum, quam mihi laudabas, Serviane carissime, totam didici levem, pendulam et ad omnia fama momenta volitantem. 2 illic qui Serapem colunt, C<h>ristiani sunt et devoti sunt Serapi, qui se C<h>risti episcopos dicunt, nemo illic archisynagogus Iud<a>eorum, nemo Samarites, nemo C<h>ristianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non aliptes. 4 ipse ille patriarcha cum Aegyptum venerit, ab aliis Serapidem adorare, ab aliis cogitur Christum. 5 genus hominum seditiosissimum, vanissimum, iniuriosissimum, civitas opulenta, dives, fecunda, in qua nemo vivat otiosus. 6 alii vitrum, conflant, aliis c<h>arth[h] a conficitur, omnes certe linifones <aut> cuiuscumque artis et <professionis> videntur; et habent podagrosi, quod agant, habent <prae>cisi, quod agant, habent caeci, quod faciant, ne chiragrici quidem apud eos otiosi vivunt. unus illis deus nummus est. 7 hunc Christiani, hunc Iud<a>ei, hunc omnes venerantur et gentes. et utinam melius esset morata civitas, digna profecto, quae pro sui f<ec>unditate, quae pro sui magnitudine totius Aegypti tene[n]t principatum. 8 huic ego cuncta concessi, vetera privilegia reddidi, nova sic addidi, ut praesenti gratias agerent. denique ut primum inde discessi, et in filium meum Verum multa dixerint, et de Antin[io]o<o> quae dixerint, comperisse te credo. 9 nihil illis opto, nisi ut suis pullis alantur, quos quem ad modum fecundant, pudet dicere. 10 calices tibi allascentes <di>versi coloris transmisi, quos mihi sacerdos templi obtulit, tibi et sorori meae specialiter dedicatos, quos tu velim festis diebus convivii adhibeas. caveas tamen, ne his Africanus noster indulgenter utatur.'

Translation (Lacus Curtius): "VII. 1 Saturninus was a Gaul by birth, one of a nation that is ever most restless and always desirous of creating either an emperor or an empire. 2 To this man, above all the other generals, because it seemed certain that he was truly the greatest, Aurelian had given the command of the Eastern frontier, wisely charging him never to visit Egypt. 3 For, as we see, this far-sighted man was well acquainted with the Gallic character and feared that if Saturninus visited this turbulent land he might be drawn by association with the inhabitants to a course toward which he was by nature inclined. 4 For the Egyptians, as you know well enough, are puffed up, madmen, boastful, doers of injury, and, in fact, liars and without restraint, always craving something new, in their popular songs, writers of verse, makers of epigrams, astrologers, soothsayers, quacksalvers. 5 Among them, indeed, are Christians and Samaritans and those who are always ill-pleased by the present, though enjoying unbounded liberty. 6 But, lest any Egyptian be angry with me, thinking that what I have set forth in writing is solely my own, I will cite one of Hadrian's letters, taken from the works of his freedman Phlegon, which fully reveals the character of the Egyptians. VIII. 1 From Hadrian Augustus to Servianus the consul, greeting. The land of Egypt, the praises of which you have been recounting to me, my dear Servianus, I have found to be wholly light-minded, unstable, and blown about by every breath of rumour. 2 There those who worship Serapis are, in fact, Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are, in fact, devotees of Serapis. 3 There is no chief of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer, or an anointer. 4 Even the Patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is forced by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ. 5 They are a folk most seditious, most deceitful, most given to injury; but their city is prosperous, rich, and fruitful, and in it no one is idle. 6 Some are blowers of glass, others makers of paper, all are at least weavers of linen or seem to belong to one craft or another; the lame have their occupations, the eunuchs have theirs, the blind have theirs, and not even those whose hands are crippled are idle. 7 Their only god is money, and this the Christians, the Jews, and, in fact, all nations adore. And would that this city had a better character, for indeed it is worthy by reason of its richness and by reason of its size to hold the chief place in the whole of Egypt. 8 I granted it every favour, I restored to it all its ancient

rights and bestowed on it new ones besides, so that the people gave thanks to me while I was present among them. Then, no sooner had I departed thence than they said many things against my son Verus, and what they said about Antinous I believe you have learned. 9 I can only wish for them that they may live on their own chickens, which they breed in a fashion I am ashamed to describe. [According to Aristotle, Hist. Anim. vi.2, they hatched the eggs by burying them in dung-heaps.] 10 I am sending you over some cups, changing colour and variegated, presented to me by the priest of a temple and now dedicated particularly to you and my sister. I should like you to use them at banquets on feast-days. Take good care, however, that our dear Africanus does not use them too freely." This letter has been thought by some to be spurious, but Lightfoot, amongst the more reputable critics, accepted it as genuine.

24. This is the "great multitude" martyred under Nero, I Clement, 6 and Tacitus, Annals, XV. 44 >>

25. Philippians, 1. 12-18: "12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Ibid., 3. 2-3, 17-21: "2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. 17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Compare Romans, 16. 18: "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words (CHRESTOLOGIA) and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

The First Three Persecutions

The First Persecution under Nero

Revelation 2:2 "I know thy works, and thy LABOR, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars ..."

18. It was not long before the Gnostic heretics were able to accomplish their aims. The wicked Emperor Nero (AD 54-68) came to power in Rome and in

Emperors of Rome -
Augustus to Domitian

Augustus BC 27-A.D. 14
Tiberius A.D. 14-37
Caius Caligula 37-41
Claudius 41-54
Nero 54-68
Galba 68-69
Otho 69
Vitellius 69
Vespasian 69-79
Titus 79-81
Domitian 81-96

AD 64 turned his attention on the humble disciples of Jesus (26). They were accused of "malevolence against the human race", and their religion was classed as "maleficent" *i.e.* black magic. This accusation had been thrown at Jesus Himself. His Jewish enemies claimed He was a demon-possessed occultist

who cast out spirits by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus said His disciples would be accused of the same thing. In Nero's Rome that is what happened. A great fire had recently swept through the city and the rumor began to circulate that it had been started by Nero himself. Nero deflected these suspicions by stirring up a pogrom against the new and alien "doomsday-cult" which had sprung up so suddenly in their midst. The Christians' prophecies of the end of the world by fire and of the four world-empires - Rome being the last which was destined to be destroyed by God - provided evidence sufficient for a fanatical or prejudiced adversary that the Christians were plotting to destroy Rome. Similar accusations are used against Bible-believing Christianity to this day to justify State action against it. AND IT IS THE SAME PSEUDO-CHRISTIAN ROMAN CULT BEHIND THE ACCUSATIONS.

19. According to the Roman history, Nero's persecution went through two phases. First, those Christians who ADMITTED the charge of "malevolence against the human race" were arrested, then *on their evidence* a VAST NUMBER of disciples - mostly Paul's converts (27) - were identified, arrested and punished with death in the most horrible fashion Nero could dream up. Many were set alight as human torches in Nero's gardens on the Vatican Hill, as Nero mingled with his party guests dressed as a charioteer. Notice the two groups again. There were the Christians who ADMITTED they participated in occult practices (like the Gnostics). They were happy to INFORM on the others (who were innocent of the charge, like the disciples of Paul). There were differences amongst the Gnostics themselves with regard to the public practice of their, often gruesome, magic rites,

which were classed here as *malevolent*. Some, including Simon Magus and Cerdon, practiced their occult mysteries in secret; others, including the followers of Carpocrates, indulged overtly in occultism (28). The latter type were the ones who would be noticed by the ordinary citizens of Rome. In this instance in Nero's time, the real Christians tried unsuccessfully to disassociate their religious practices from those of the Gnostics (29). In fact, what mattered to Nero was not the actual occultism alleged against the Bible-believing Christians, but their unsocial behavior and their unwillingness to participate in the pagan Roman cult. This made them an excellent scapegoat for the unpopular Emperor. It also marked their religion as *malevolent* (capable of religiously-motivated arson) and by the same token absolved the Gnostic pseudo-Christians, because they happily participated in the pagan social and religious culture.

20. A contemporary witness, Clement (30), later a pastor in the Roman Church, states that Nero's persecution was the result of sectional strife within the Christian community >> of the same kind Clement's church itself was suffering when he wrote this account in the time of Domitian. The Bible-believing Christian writer Melito of Sardis confirms (31) that it was a group of informers, sorcerers in fact (32), who stirred up Nero's persecution, as they did later in the reign of Domitian; >> and in the latter case we know that these were Gnostic heretics, belonging to seven heretical sects of which Simon's group was the first, and that their antagonism towards the Bible-believers went back to an incident which occurred in Jerusalem in AD 62 during the reign of Nero (33) and which also brought about the death of James the brother of the Lord, the leader of the Christians in Jerusalem. The agitation first evidenced in Jerusalem quickly spread to Rome, where the heretics had some credit with the imperial authorities. Nero was, in historical fact, a devotee of the Magian cult of Mithras, a member of the same religious circle as Simon Magus. Therefore, he would have had ulterior motives for supporting the Simonian Gnostics against the Bible-believing Catholics. The memory of Simon's role in the persecution is preserved with legendary accretions in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter and Paul*: a dispute between Simon and the Apostles is held in the presence of Nero, and Simon attempts to rival the supernatural power of Peter and Paul; destroying himself in this attempt, Nero

avenges him by executing the Apostles.

21. Many fine Christians perished in the Neronian holocaust. Paul was martyred at that time also, according to the contemporary evidence of the *Letter of Clement* and other reliable witnesses. The tradition is that he was martyred in Rome by Nero, in fact, that he was decapitated - a "more humane" execution reserved for Roman citizens like Paul - and that his remains were eventually interred at *Aquae Salviae*, the modern Tre Fontane, near the Ostian Way about three miles from the city. Paul was certainly in Rome when he wrote his last extant letter. In that (34), the *Second Epistle to Timothy*, Paul looked ahead to his next appearance before the court of Caesar with the knowledge that the time of his "departure" was at hand. Thinking of the welfare of the disciples in the East, Paul prepared Timothy to take up his mantle as pastor of the Church in Ephesus on the coast of Turkey, and instructed him to hand on his commission, in turn, to faithful, capable ministers. He sent final greetings to Timothy from the brethren in Rome, among them one called Linus. This Linus also received a commission at some point to be the first bishop ("overseer") of an assembly in Rome (35).

22. There is no historical evidence that Peter was ever personally present in Rome (36). The earliest nonpartisan traditions claim that he was martyred by Nero at the same time as Paul, but the location is not named in these traditions, and other evidence must be adduced. We know from the *Acts of the Apostles* and from his own epistles that Paul came to Rome; however, the same biblical records do not support the notion that Peter was ever personally present there. On the other hand, Peter's evangelistic companion, John Mark, whose written Gospel was based on the reminiscences of Peter, was present in Rome towards the end of Paul's confinement, and seems to have composed his Gospel in the capital. There were also memorials (*tropaia*) on the Vatican Hill and the Ostian Way to the "apostles who founded" the First Church of Rome at the turn of the third century AD; but this begs the question as to who these apostolic founders actually were (Andronicus and Junia would be the obvious choice on the evidence of Paul's *Letter to the Romans*); and, even if we were to accept the Roman Catholic guess that the founders referred to in this instance were Peter and Paul, the mere existence of memorials would not prove that

martyrdoms had occurred at these sites or that Peter as well as Paul had been personally present in the city.



BUST OF NERO

(from the *Lacus Curtius* online edition of Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*)

23. It is, however, quite possible, indeed highly likely, that the remains of Peter were transferred to Rome long after his decease when the legend connecting him with the Roman Church assumed such abnormal ecclesiastical importance. There is a curious and otherwise hardly explicable tradition that the remains of Peter and Paul were immediately after their martyrdom in the possession of *Greek-speaking easterners*, or, in the case of Peter, of *men from Jerusalem*, and that later they were seized by the people of Rome and deposited in a place called *Ad Catacumbas* on the Appian Way two miles from the city (now the shrine called the *Platonica* at S. Sebastian); they remained there for forty years before being finally moved to the Vatican (Peter) and the Ostian Way (Paul). This tradition receives confirmation from an ecclesiastical calendrical notice dating from around AD 354 (the "Philocalian" Calendar) which commemorates the deposition of the remains of Peter at that very location *Ad Catacumbas* on the Appian Way in AD 258, and from a codex of the Hieronymian

Martyrology which preserves the same notice in a fuller form, referring to the deposition of the remains of both Peter and Paul that same year in the same location, (36c) as well as from a verse of Pope Damasus (AD 366-384) originally inscribed in the shrine there stating that the (Greek) "East" (*oriens*) sent Peter and Paul to "dwell" in that tomb - a fact "freely acknowledged" - though Rome, as Damasus saw it, was more deserving of the privilege of now defending these her sainted "citizens" (36b). Also, the San Sebastian shrine has numerous votive inscriptions to Peter and Paul dating from precisely the middle of the third century on.

24. According to the *Book of Popes* it was bishop Cornelius (AD 251-253) who arranged for the Apostle Peter's remains to be taken away (but from where?) (36a) and relocated in Rome, with the involvement in the process of a rich Roman lady, Lucina. Lucina initially provided some land of her own on the Ostian Way for Paul's remains near the site of his execution, and Peter's were placed by Cornelius in the first instance, likewise, near the site of his martyrdom (for which see on). According to the apocryphal *Acts of Peter and Paul* certain mysterious "men from Jerusalem" first brought Peter's body to the Vatican and placed it there with the help of one Marcellus. Marcellus is the reputed author of the apocryphal *Acts of Peter and Paul* and is thought by some to be the later pope of that name (AD 306-309), who would have been in his prime in the second half of the third century. A delay seems to have occurred, however, in securing these locations as the final Roman resting-places - the *Acts of Peter and Paul* claim that an earthquake occurred just then in the city - and the easterners who had possession of the remains prepared and actually proceeded to transport them to the East. Referring to this notorious episode a few centuries later, Pope Gregory relates (37) that the easterners called the Apostles "their citizens" and on that basis *reclaimed* them. As the easterners processed out of the city with their sacred relics, a thunderstorm held them up, and the Romans intervened, seizing the bodies and depositing them temporarily in the nearby cemetery *Ad Catacumbas* on the Appian Way, two miles out of Rome. It was found necessary to maintain a military guard at this tomb as long as one year and seven months after the deposition of the bodies; evidently there was a real possibility that the easterners would use violence to regain possession of them. Some time still within the episcopate of Cornelius (*i.e.* no later than AD

253), Lucina had the bishop take up the saints' bodies from their temporary resting-place *Ad Catacumbas* by night, and Cornelius then placed them *in a shrine of Apollo* (!), on the Vatican Hill, where Apollo (who was commonly identified with Mithras) was worshipped by the pagans along with the Mother-goddess Cybele. Other bodies of the bishops of the First Church were already located in this pagan shrine. However, the Apostles' remains were back at the site *Ad Catacumbas* in AD 258, according to the Calendrical notice, perhaps because this was the time of the persecution instigated by Emperor Valerian. There they remained, in the shrine known as the *Platonica*, for forty years. The remains were translated to their first intended, and now their final, Roman resting-places on the Vatican and the Ostian Way in AD 298 or thereabouts (*i.e.* AD 258 + 40), just before Marcellus became Pope. The shrine of Peter in the sanctuary of Apollo on the Vatican was subsequently converted into a Christian basilica (the first St. Peter's) by Constantine in the time of Pope Silvester (AD 314-355), Constantine himself being a devotee of the syncretistic sun-god, Apollo, now identified with Jesus.

25. The vagueness and confusion of the traditions regarding the easterners who originally held the bodies seems to be covering up an illegal seizure of the Apostles' remains by the Romans: hence also Pope Damasus' anxiety as early as the second half of the fourth century AD to justify Rome's claims to be their keeper and defender, whilst "freely acknowledging" the prior claims of the East. There would be no question of Rome's rights if the remains had always and ever been in Rome.

26. Another hint that Peter suffered in the Greek-speaking East, and more specifically in the area of Judaea, is found in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*. This work incorporates items of historical value amongst a worthless mass of legend, and names the representatives of the Roman authorities at the time of Peter's decease as Albinus and Agrippa. There were no such magistrates in the reign of Nero at Rome where these *Acts of Peter* locate the martyrdom, but Albinus and Agrippa were the procurator and king respectively of Judaea (38) at the very time when James the brother of the Lord and his companions were martyred by stoning (James himself finally by impaling through the head) on the instructions of the High Priest Ananus

(AD 62) and at the instigation of the Gnostic heretical sects including the Simonians - an event which forms the background of the Neronian persecution in Rome. It is highly likely that Peter was one of these martyred companions of James (39a). The mysterious "men from Jerusalem" mentioned in the *Acts of Peter and Paul* who brought the Apostle's body to the Vatican would then be connected with the original location of Peter's tomb in Jerusalem, or at least in the "East".

27. It is a commonplace of the advocates of the "Peter in Rome" theory that no other theory has any support from the sources. This bald assertion ignores the witness of the archaeology and traditions relating to the transference of Peter's remains to Rome by easterners and men from Jerusalem, as well as the circumstantial evidence provided by the apocryphal *Acts*. But what evidence could be adduced in favor of the hypothesis suggested here stronger than *contemporary evidence of one of Peter's closest companions*? In the haste to discover what later ecclesiastical writers have to say on the subject of Peter's martyrdom, a little reference to that event in the New Testament itself has been overlooked. Much is made of the Apostle's statement in the *First Epistle of Peter* (5. 13) that "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son," and the question is debated at length whether "Babylon" here means literal Babylon on the Euphrates, or is an allusion to the much smaller town called Babylon in Egypt, or is a mystical designation for Rome. Even if we were to take this to be a reference to Rome (though Babylon on the Euphrates is a likelier location for Peter's ministry to the Jews, in view of its much greater Jewish population), the passage does not claim that Peter was actually present in Babylon. Peter merely passes on greetings from the Church (or "co-elect lady") in Babylon, and from his spiritual son, Mark, who had, we may suppose, recently been present in that city, and forwards them to the Christian Jews of the dispersion in Asia to whom he addresses his epistle. Perhaps it has been the emphasis on this somewhat irrelevant discussion which has diverted the attention of scholars away from the passage in the *Gospel of John* which has a more direct bearing on the location of Peter's martyrdom.

28. The passage reads as follows (*Gospel of John* 21. 15-19) "15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith

to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: *but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.* 19 *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."

29. This is the Apostle John's testimony of what the Lord prophesied in relation to Peter's martyrdom. It is prime, contemporary, and, more than that, inspired, evidence on the subject in hand. And this evidence REFERS TO THE LOCATION OF PETER'S MARTYRDOM: "... another shall gird thee [Peter], and carry thee WHITHER THOU WOULDST NOT." It does not seem to have occurred to commentators what an unusual assertion this is, if it is taken to refer to Peter's FUTURE or PROPHESED attitude to his martyrdom. Does the passage really mean that the lion-like Apostle Peter, after his infilling by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when he is known to have lost all fear of persecution and to have boldly preached the Word in public in the streets of Jerusalem, even in the face of the very Council that had so recently condemned his Master Jesus to a horrible death on the Cross, that this same Apostle was prophesied to face his martyrdom with fear and trembling, carried by another whither he would not want to be carried? Would he not rather, like his fellow Apostle, Paul, go to his execution, crying, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" According to Clement of Alexandria (apud Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III. xxx. 2) Peter watched as his own wife was dragged away to martyrdom and cried out to her to be brave and "remember the Lord" because she was "going home". How does that square with the cowering Peter the common reading sees in this passage from John? And if the place whither he was to be carried refers to the

other world, the assertion would be even more ridiculous, upon that interpretation. What saint would not WISH to go to the heavenly mansions with King Jesus? In any case, the internal structure of the sentence, the comparison and contrast of the location Peter is said to have liked to walk in as a young man, that is, clearly, a physical location, presumably on the shores of Galilee, with the undesirable location where it is prophesied he will meet his end, implies that the latter, too, is a physical location. These interpretations, therefore, are untenable.

30. When the Greek is examined, the conundrum is solved, and, with it, the debate as to where Peter suffered martyrdom. The second "wouldest" is not FUTURE tense, but PRESENT. "... Another will carry thee WHITHER THOU WOULDST [NOW] NOT [GO]" (39). The location of Peter's martyrdom, according to this contemporary record of Jesus' prophecy just after His resurrection, was to be somewhere Peter did not AT THAT TIME wish to go. Naturally, Rome, at that time, was not anywhere in his thoughts. In fact, there is no record that the disciples frequented any place outside of the limited territory of Israel and parts of Syria before, during and immediately subsequent to the earthly ministry of Jesus. Within that small circle of land in the Near East, there was only one place Peter and the other disciples felt fear at that period, before their empowerment on the Day of Pentecost, and THAT WAS JERUSALEM. The same Gospel writer specifically notes that, just a few days before this episode, IN JERUSALEM, the disciples had huddled together in a room with the doors locked, out of fear of the Jews who had crucified Jesus (20. 19). A second reference is made to the locked doors a little further on in the same account (20. 26). In that context, the passage is as clear a statement as one could wish, that Peter was martyred in Jerusalem.

30a. Now consider the phrase "another shall GIRD thee [Peter]". The martyrdom of James in Jerusalem in AD 62 was accomplished by means of a FULLER's stake driven into his head. And Peter perished at the same time, seemingly on the same occasion, and by identical means, with a stake - presumably the same stake - (according to a tradition first recorded by Eusebius) (39a) driven into his head. A fuller was a dresser of cloth and used the stake to pound his material. Was not Jesus'

reference to Peter's GIRDING by ANOTHER a prophetic adumbration, not only of the fact that he was to be tied up in preparation for his murder, but also of the fact that a fuller, precisely a GIRDER OF OTHERS, was to be involved in his martyrdom?

30b. Did this great event in Jerusalem leave any archaeological trace? It seems so. The following passage is found in the writings of the sectarian lawyer, Tertullian (Scorpiace, xv. 1-3): "And yet, that the apostles endured such sufferings, we know: the teaching is clear. This only I perceive in running through the Acts. I am not at all on the search. The prisons there, and the bonds, and the scourges, and the big stones, and the swords, and the onsets by the Jews, and the assemblies of the heathen, and the indictments by tribunes, and the hearing of causes by kings, and the judgment-seats of proconsuls and the name of Caesar, do not need an interpreter. That Peter is struck, that Stephen is overwhelmed by stones, that James is slain as is a victim at the altar, that Paul is beheaded has been written in their own blood. And if a heretic wishes his confidence to rest upon a public record, the archives of the empire will speak, *as, for instance, the stones of Jerusalem*. We read the lives of the Caesars: At Rome Nero was the first who stained with blood the rising faith. Then is Peter girt by another, when he is fixed immobile to the stake. Then does Paul obtain a birth suited to Roman citizenship, when in Rome he springs to life again ennobled by martyrdom."

30c. This is another early witness that Peter suffered under Nero. Note, however, that Tertullian does not specify, as he does in Paul's case, that Peter was martyred in Rome. He merely says, "THEN ["tunc," viz. in the reign of Nero] is Peter girt by another ..." This confirms the tradition that Peter and Paul were martyred at the same time. The mode of Peter's death is also confirmed, viz. crucifixion or impaling. The word "caeditur" (translated "is struck" above) used of Peter has a general and a more specific meaning. The general meaning is "he is slain", but the more specific and proper meaning is "he is *felled, cudgelled*." This is a word used somewhat more appropriately to describe Peter's impalement by a stake than crucifixion by suspension on a stake, whilst the other word used by Tertullian, "adstringitur," is ambiguous (*fixed or bound to*). Tertullian further claims that these facts were recorded in the "archives of the empire ... as,

for instance, the stones of Jerusalem," or "the Lives of the Caesars." Such public records would seem to be the most likely source of the historical names Agrippa and Albinus which are found in the apocryphal Acts as the names of the Roman authorities under whom Peter suffered, though in the Apocrypha they have been plucked out of their proper, historical, context, viz. Judaea in AD 62. The mention of these "imperial archives" ("instrumenta imperii"), and "stones of Jerusalem" ("lapides Hierusalem"), is, in fact, immediately followed by references to the martyrdoms of Paul and Peter in the reign of Nero, it being implied that these events can be thus confirmed. There would be no reason at all for Paul's martyrdom, traditionally, credibly, and by Tertullian himself, located in Rome, to be commemorated on a stone inscription in or from Jerusalem, but there would for Peter's, if, indeed, he was martyred, as suggested here, along with James the brother of the Lord in Jerusalem in AD 62. It is possible, furthermore, that such a stone inscription, describing, or even depicting, Peter's martyrdom, was transferred later to the Vatican, and there provided public evidence of the mode of Peter's death and of the officials who presided over it.

The Second Persecution under Domitian

Revelation 2:2-3: "I know ... thou ... hast BORNE, and hast patience ..."

31. When Paul was no longer with them, the faithful few who had survived Nero's slaughter continued to serve the Lord in the capital, supported and comforted by their devoted pastors. Even the pagans sympathized with the Christians. They admired their heroic stand for their beliefs and were well aware that they had been victims of the insanity of the Emperor. On the death of Nero, the persecution ceased. The horrific tortures inflicted on the Christians and the mockery added to their deaths show that they were of the lower classes and not Roman citizens (40). It is noticeable that when the Church began to recover, it is found centered

around the household of Pudens >> who is thought to be the senator of that name, and who must therefore have survived the slaughter. Linus was followed as pastor of this assembly of Roman Christians by Anencletus, and Anencletus by Clement. Several "elders" or "pastors" (41) are mentioned, but not named, as leaders of the Christians in Rome at this time, so there may well have been a number of small gatherings in the environs of the city.

32. As the political climate improved, the Christian churches flourished, and a measure of laxity, along with the prosperity, crept in. The old restraints became irksome to the younger generation. Some wanted to compromise with the secular world, being unable to endure any longer the reproach of the Cross. Around the Christians was always that pressure to conform, not to be different and peculiar, to condone, at least not condemn, their neighbors' pleasure-loving lifestyle and heathen entertainments. That was especially true for the few upper-class Romans who became attracted to the Gospel. There were, too, in many cities at the turn of the second century of the Christian era varieties of the Christian religion which tolerated laxity of this kind: the Gnostic sects felt no compunction in combining Christianity with paganism and the mixed religion which resulted was more pagan than Christian. Satan had not won the war: now he fought hard to win the peace.

33. While the Apostle John was still alive (up to about AD 110) there was little chance that the Gnostics could induce the mass of Christian believers to accept their perverted gospel. The Holy Spirit worked powerfully through John and his disciples, exposing error, restoring the backslidden and confirming the Word with signs following. The true Christians did not fellowship (42) with the hardened heretics (43). It was difficult enough for them to maintain a faithful Christian witness in a generally hostile pagan environment, without having their message confused by association with the semi-paganism of the Gnostics. However, as the age went on, and Christ's return was delayed, many began to lower their guard. Young leaders arose who were less keenly aware of the dangers of compromise.

34. Around the time that Clement was pastor of that congregation in Rome, a young prophet in the

assembly called Hermas, a slave of a wealthy woman of Rome, began to experience visions from God. He was warned of a Beast (44), representing tribulation, on its way to the Christians of Rome. This tribulation would purge the faithful. They, like Hermas himself, were beginning to drift on the way of worldly comfort and slack morality (45). He was specifically instructed to give this message to Clement, and Clement was commissioned to pass the message on to churches abroad (46). The pastors and elders (47) in Rome, as well as the laity, were challenged to repent by the prophet. The result of the pastors' backsliding was division in the Christian Body, of a kind which could threaten their lives in the coming tribulation. Ravenous beasts always target the stragglers in the herd.

35. The same life-threatening danger, unbeknown to them, hung over the Christians of Corinth in Southern Greece. A particularly bitter schism had arisen in the Corinthian Church (48). One or two headstrong young leaders turned their faction against the established eldership of the Church. The dispute was over inessentials and sprang from personality conflicts and rivalries between the younger and the older generations. The young troublemakers despised the simple ways of the older, faithful pastors and wanted a more dynamic or progressive leadership. This was the kind of trouble in the churches abroad that Hermas had been warned about and which Pastor Clement had been commissioned to address.

Emperors of Rome - Nero to Hadrian

Nero 54-68
Galba 68-69
Otho 69
Vitellius 69
Vespasian 69-79
Titus 79-81
Domitian 81-96
Nerva 96-98
Trajan 98-117
Hadrian 117-138

Emperor and laid accusation against the Jewish descendants of Jude (49), the foster-brother of Jesus and author (50) of the *Epistle of Jude* in the Bible.

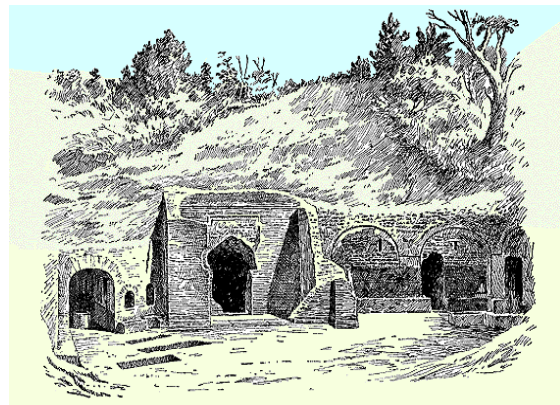
These Christian members of the House of David were the spiritual leaders of the Messianic Jews. The Church in Jerusalem had until shortly before the destruction of the city in AD 70 been headed up by Jude's brother James (the author of the *Epistle of James*), and these "brethren of the Lord" were well known in the New Testament Church, being mentioned by the Gospel-writers, by Luke in the *Acts of the Apostles* and by Paul (51). They were honored by all Jews as members of the royal house of Judah and by Christians as members of the family of Jesus. After James, the Lord's brother, was martyred by fanatical Jews in Jerusalem, a new Christian leader was elected, Symeon son of Clopas, also a member of Jesus' natural family, as head of the Messianic community in Jerusalem. However, this choice was resented by the Gnostic heretics, divided at that time into seven heretical sects, of which the school of Simon Magus was the first. It was members of these same sects who had brought about James' death in the first place (52), by demanding a public declaration from James about the Messiahship of Jesus which they must have known would bring him into conflict with the Jewish authorities. After the crushing of the Jewish revolt against Rome and with James out of the way, one of the Gnostic leaders, Thebuthis, made a play for the leadership of the Christian community in Jerusalem. However, throngs of Bible-believers and all the surviving apostles and members of Jesus' natural family who were able to gathered to Jerusalem (53) to ward off the danger. Symeon, son of Clopas, was elected, and from this rivalry and jealousy in Jerusalem developed a bitter antagonism on the part of the Gnostic heretics to the Messianic Jews (54). Through their contacts with the Gnostic groups in Rome and the contacts of the latter with the Roman authorities, the heretics hoped to accomplish by force what they were unable to accomplish by persuasion. Already the Gnostic-Jewish divide had fueled the madness of Nero to bring about the martyrdom of thousands of ordinary believers in Rome, now under Domitian the Gnostics closed in on the Jewish leadership.



THE CAPTURE OF THE MENORAH BY THE ROMANS
AD 70, as depicted on the Arch of Titus, Rome
Credit: FreeStock Photos.com

37. In attacking the grandchildren of Jude, the anti-Semitic heretics were striking at the root of Jewish Christianity in Rome and throughout the Empire. The heretics alleged that these Messianic Jews were plotting to set up a political, this-worldly kingdom which would sweep away the Roman Empire. No charge was more calculated to enrage the Emperor. The unsuccessful Jewish revolt against Rome in the earlier reign of Vespasian, which resulted in the utter destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple (AD 70), had not cooled the ardor of the Jewish nationalists and Messianic expectations were still high. The threat of a Messianic plot against the Empire was a real one. Domitian acted swiftly to round up any surviving members of the House of David. Clearly the connection of these Messianic Jews with the Gnostics' great adversary, the Apostle John, had also been pointed out to Domitian, because the Apostle was arrested far away in Turkey and banished to the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. It must be remembered that Mary the mother of Jesus is said to have lived for some time at Ephesus under the care of the Apostle John. >> Here was the very mother of the Messiah of the House of David! According to a tradition current in the second century AD and recorded by the sectarian lawyer Tertullian, John was first thrown into boiling oil (55) by his persecutors, but remained unharmed by the experience. Only after this demonstration of miraculous preservation was he banished to the island of Patmos. ("If I will that he [John] tarry till I come," said Jesus to Peter, "what is that to thee?" (56)) John himself informs us that he was exiled "for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" (56b), i.e. for the

already-existing revealed Word, contained in what we call the Old Testament (Word of God), and the testimony of Jesus contained in what we now call the New Testament. This is that combination of the revelation of God to the Jews and the new revelation of Jesus which the Gnostics hated. Hence also their hatred of John. There in his exile, towards the end of the reign of Domitian, John was vouchsafed his mighty Revelation of the end-time. A greater Beast than Domitian was unveiled in this vision, the very Antichrist, whose reign truly would terminate world-systems and usher in the Messianic millennium-kingdom. However, as soon as Domitian had personally interviewed two grandsons of Jude he realized he had been misled by his Gnostic informers. He saw for himself the callouses on the hands of these faithful members of the House of David who worked their own lands to support their Gospel work. The Kingdom they were fervently expecting he discovered was a spiritual Kingdom, to be established supernaturally on earth at the Second Advent of the Messiah. He issued a decree terminating the persecution.



ENTRANCE TO THE CRYPT OF THE FLAVIANS
on the Via Ardeatina (from the Lacus Curtius online edition of
Lanciani, Pagan and Christian Rome)

38. A limited number of upper-class Romans - whom, in any case, the jealous Domitian wanted to humble for personal reasons - suffered in this persecution. The chief were the members of the households of the Glabrones and of the consul Flavius Clemens, Domitian's own close relative. Amongst the latter was Flavius Clemens' niece, Domitilla. (The pastor Clement or Clemens is associated in later legend with this family and may

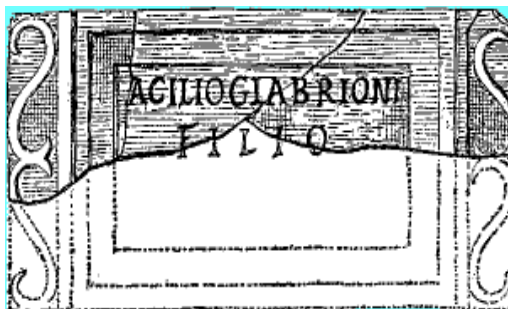
well have been a freed slave of the household of Flavius Clemens. There were several devoted Christians amongst his domestics.) The charge against them was atheism, i.e. refusal to worship the Roman idols. Submission to the images of the imperial gods and, particularly, to the "divine" Emperor's statue signified subjection to the authority of Rome. "Atheism" was therefore tantamount to treason, and was punished as a capital offense. The members of the household of Flavius Clemens were interred in a special group of tombs off the Via Ardeatina. There were laid to rest Achilleus and Nereus, Domitilla's faithful Christian servants, in crypts built on the family's land half a mile from Rome. A column dug up from the church later built on the site shows Ac[h]illeus, so named, tied to a stake surmounted by a crossbeam, assaulted by a soldier, dressed in a tunic and mantle, who seizes the prisoner with the right hand and raises a cutlass in his left to stab him in the neck. There also lay Petronilla, the martyred relative of Domitilla.



THE MARTYRDOM OF
ACILLEUS

(from the *Lacus Curtius*
online edition of Lanciani,
Pagan and Christian Rome)

sensation of Rome for many years thereafter - earned him only the opprobrious epithet of *stupidity* in the sycophantic circle around Domitian. The Emperor executed him regardless. He was buried in the Catacombs of Priscilla on the Via Salaria. These Catacombs were the property of the Acilian family, to which Acilius Glabrio belonged, and in which the name Prisca and Priscilla were common. Paul's



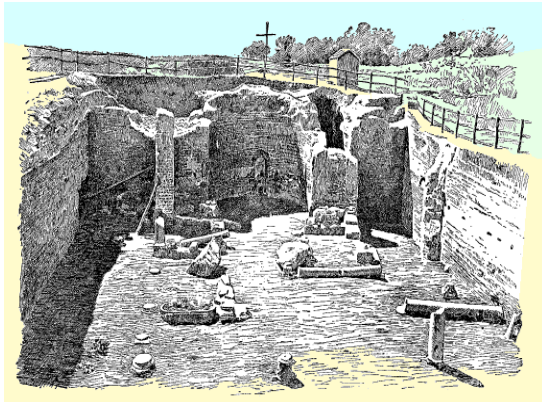
THE ACILIUS GLABRIO INSCRIPTION

from the *Catacomb of Priscilla on the Via Salaria* (from the *Lacus Curtius* online edition of Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*)

companions Aquila and Prisca themselves were interred there, and it is thought for that reason that Prisca was a probably a daughter of a freedman of that noble family and Aquila a freedman or client of theirs, as such dependents were commonly named after their noble benefactors. (The family name Acilii was derived from the Latin Aquila, "Eagle".) In fact, there was a tradition in the Roman Church that these Catacombs of Priscilla were founded by and named after a certain Roman lady Priscilla (presumably of the Acilian family) who had considerable property, but was a faithful Christian and ministered out of her wealth to the saints. She was also, according to this tradition, the mother of Pudens whose house was converted into the church on the Vicus Patricius (Santa Pudenziana). And if, as seems probable, the Rufus who is mentioned in the last Chapter of Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, is indeed this Pudens (Rufus Pudens), then we can see why Paul greeted Pudens' mother, Priscilla, as "his mother and mine". The noble Priscilla was the grand old lady of the Roman Church, the spiritual mother and guardian of the poorer brethren's welfare (56a).

40. These sudden troubles took the Roman Christians by surprise. They had not taken sufficient heed to the warning of the prophet Hermas. Pastor Clement - whose own household had been one of Domitian's chief targets - hurriedly wrote and dispatched the letter to the turbulent Corinthian Church, as the heavenly vision had instructed him. He said that the schism in Corinth had come to the attention of a group unconnected with his fellowship, of a different faith from themselves, and

that they were in danger as a result (57). Hermas had warned of the very same thing (58). It is obvious where the danger lay. Since Clement blames the same kind of schismatic jealousies as the Corinthians were experiencing both for the Neronian martyrdoms earlier in his own generation and for the persecution the Roman Church was currently enduring (59), he must be referring here to the Gnostic heretics of Rome as the parties interested in this division in the Corinthian Church. They might be expected to flatter and seduce the younger party in its conflict against the faithful eldership, in the same way that they promoted conflict in the Church at Jerusalem. Any division in the Body was exploitable by the heretics. This reference in Clement's letter also hints that the Gnostic agitation, in Jerusalem as in Corinth, was orchestrated from Rome.



THE BASILICA OF NEREUS, ACHILLEUS AND PETRONILLA
on the Via Ardeatina (from the Lacus Curtius online edition of
Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*)

The Third Persecution under Trajan

Revelation 2:2-3: "I know ... thou ... for My Name's sake hast LABORED, and hast not fainted."

41. The heretics did not abandon their aim to enlist the imperial authorities against the Jewish leaders of the Bible-believing Christians. After the death of

Domitian and the short reign of Nerva, the Empire fell into the capable hands of Trajan (AD 98-117). Under normal conditions it would have been difficult for the Gnostic cult-leaders to persuade this strong and sensible man to persecute Christians, peaceable and productive members of society as, in the majority, they were. However, the threat of Jewish nationalism once again tipped the balance against the Christian Jews of the House of David, and therefore against the churches throughout the world, especially the eastern churches, which looked up to them for spiritual guidance. As the Messianic redemption lingered, those Jews who trusted to the sword rather than the Spirit of God, became more desperate for a political solution to reverse the disastrous consequences of their earlier revolt against Rome. Riots by Jewish nationalists in Africa and the East plagued the reign of Trajan (especially AD 115-117). With the threat of Messianic agitation hanging over him, Trajan was more open than he otherwise would have been to the Gnostics' siren song.

42. The apostates informed Trajan against Symeon son of Clopas (60), the second bishop of Jerusalem following James, the foster-brother of Jesus. Under Trajan, the heretic informers got more than they bargained for because they were also put under arrest: it was a common practice of the Romans to subject detainees to torture to ensure they told the truth! Symeon's father, called Clopas, Cleopas or Cleophas, was of the House of David also, a brother of Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus. Clopas' wife, Mary, was standing present by the cross of Jesus (61), when He pointed to the young Apostle John and to His own blessed mother, Mary, and said, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to John, "Behold thy mother!" (For that reason Mary lived thenceforth in the house of the Apostle John and is said to have lived with him (62), after the Jewish revolt, in Ephesus in Turkey.) On the day of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the same Clopas was walking with a friend to Emmaus (63) near Jerusalem and the risen Lord drew near, unrecognized at first even by his natural uncle because he was "in another form", and explained to them from His own precious lips the prophecies of the Old Testament which showed that the Messiah should suffer death and be raised again from the dead. Clopas' son Symeon was an outstanding witness to the truth of the Gospel and had the prestige, spiritual and natural, that went with membership of the royal foster-family of Jesus. The

Gnostic heretics hated everything he and his kind represented. Their poisoned accusations against him led to his torture and death by crucifixion at the venerable age of 120 years. Even the Roman executioners were astounded at his courage and endurance.

43. Trajan set on course a witch-hunt for the surviving members of the Jewish royal house. To ensure the eradication was complete, Christians under the leadership of these brethren of the Lord were rounded up throughout the East and forced to sacrifice to the imperial gods. Failure to comply was taken as a sign of rebellion against the Emperor. The slaughter spread into Turkey, where a new center of Jewish Christianity had sprung up since the revolt. The cultured Roman governor, Pliny (Plinius Secundus), became concerned (64) at the huge number of victims and the malicious slander which in too many cases sealed their conviction. He wrote (c. AD 112) to Trajan expressing his reservations. Trajan replied (65) that these, the ordinary run of Christians, should not be hunted out, but, if they came to public notice, they should be punished if they refused to worship the imperial gods.

44. In Antioch in Syria, another and earlier great center of Jewish Christianity, one of the old disciples of the Apostle John, the venerated leader of the eastern Church, Ignatius, was brought to Rome in chains (c. AD 110) to be fed to the lions in the arena. His call to his Christian brethren in the cities along his tortured path to Rome echoed what was widely felt to be the need of the hour, "Stay faithful to your pastor!", "Listen to your bishop!", "Beware of the heretics and let your spiritual shepherd protect you from the wolves!" There was a danger in this line of advice, namely that the disciples would begin to look to their pastors rather than to the Word of God and the Spirit to keep them from error. There were precipices on each side of the highway. On one side was the abyss of Gnosticism, on the other the pit of dependence on the bishop as a man. Avoiding one, many fell into the other. Ignatius' advice would have been fine if all bishops were as devoted and holy as he. But the schism in Corinth and Hermas' rebuke of the Roman elders prove that a new generation was rising (66) which was not as dependable as that which had heard the Word from the lips of the Apostles of Jesus.



THE COLISSEUM ROME

the probable site of Ignatius' martyrdom

Credit: FreeStock Photos.com

Footnotes

26. Publius Cornelius Tacitus, Annals, Book XV. 44: "But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the Emperor [Nero], and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty [first group]; then, upon their information, an immense multitude [second group] was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind [= malevolent occult practices]. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his Gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the Circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed." Suetonius, Life of Nero, xvi. 2: "... afflicti Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae et maleficae". "... the Christians were afflicted [by Nero], a social group with a novel and maleficent belief-system."

27. This is the "great multitude" martyred under Nero, I Clement, 6 (see [Appendix 6, Secondary Quotations 1](#)) and Tacitus, Annals, XV. 44 (previous note).

28. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. IV. vii. 1-2, 9-11: "1 As the churches throughout the world were now shining like the most brilliant stars, and faith in our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ was flourishing among the whole human race, the demon who hates everything that is good, and is always hostile to the truth, and most bitterly opposed to the salvation of man, turned all his arts against the Church. In the beginning he armed himself against it with external persecutions. 2 But now, being shut off from the use of such

means, he devised all sorts of plans, and employed other methods in his conflict with the Church, using base and deceitful men as instruments for the ruin of souls and as ministers of destruction. Instigated by him, impostors and deceivers, assuming the name of our religion, brought to the depth of ruin such of the believers as they could win over, and at the same time, by means of the deeds which they practiced, turned away from the path which leads to the word of salvation those who were ignorant of the faith" 9. Irenaeus also writes that Carpocrates was a contemporary of these men, and that he was *the father of another heresy, called the heresy of the Gnostics*, who did not wish to transmit any longer the magic arts of Simon, as that one had done, in secret, but openly. For they boasted - as of something great - of love potions that were carefully prepared by them, and of certain demons that sent them dreams and lent them their protection, and of other similar agencies; and in accordance with these things they taught that it was necessary for those who wished to enter fully into their mysteries, or rather into their abominations, to practice all the worst kinds of wickedness, on the ground that they could escape the cosmic powers, as they called them, in no other way than by discharging their obligations to them all by infamous conduct. 10 Thus it came to pass that the malignant demon, making use of these ministers, on the one hand enslaved those that were so pitifully led astray by them to their own destruction, while on the other hand he furnished to the unbelieving heathen abundant opportunities for slandering the divine word, inasmuch as the reputation of these men brought infamy upon the whole race of Christians. 11 In this way, therefore, it came to pass that there was spread abroad in regard to us among the unbelievers of that age, the infamous and most absurd suspicion that we practiced unlawful commerce with mothers and sisters, and enjoyed impious feasts." Note Carpocrates is here called by Irenaeus (a reliable witness) the "father" of the heresy of the Gnostics, so called. Carpocrates is dateable to the earlier Apostolic era, as is demonstrated by the fact that, according to Ps.-Tertullian, Against All Heresies 3, he was the precursor of Cerinthus, whilst Cerinthus was a contemporary of John the Apostle in Ephesus some time after the Jewish revolt (between c. AD 70-110). On Carpocrates and Cerinthus ps.-Tertullian: "Carpocrates, furthermore, introduced the following sect. He affirms that there is one Virtue, the chief among the upper (regions): that out of this were produced angels and Virtues, which, being far distant from the upper Virtues, created this world in the lower regions: that Christ was not born of the Virgin Mary, but was generated — a mere human being — of the seed of Joseph, superior (they admit) above all others in the practice of righteousness and in integrity of life; that He suffered among the Jews; and that His soul alone was received in heaven as having been more firm and hardy than all others: whence he would infer, retaining only the salvation of souls, that there are no resurrections of the body. After him brake out the heretic Cerinthus, teaching similarly. For he, too, says that the world was originated by those angels; and sets forth Christ as born of the seed of Joseph, contending that He was merely human, without divinity; affirming also that the Law was given by angels; representing the God of the Jews as not the Lord, but an angel." "III. [1] Carpocrates praeterea hanc tulit sectam: Unam esse dicit virtutem in superioribus principalem, ex hac prolatus angelos atque virtutes, quos distantes longe a superioribus virtutibus mundum istum in inferioribus partibus condidisse; Christum non ex virgine Maria natum, sed ex semine Ioseph hominem tantummodo genitum, sane prae ceteris iustitiae cultu, vitae integritate meliorem; hunc apud Iudaeos passum, solam animam ipsius in caelo receptam, eo quod et firmior et robustior ceteris fuerit; ex quo colligeret, retentata animarum sola salute, nullas corporis resurrectiones. [2] Post hunc Cerinthus haereticus erupit, similia docens. Nam et ipse mundum institutum esse ab illis dicit; Christum ex semine Ioseph natum proponit, hominem illum tantummodo sine diuinitate contendens, ipsam quoque legem ab angelis datam perhibens, Iudaeorum deum non dominum, sed angelum promens." See para. 46 and note 69 *ibid.* Since Carpocrates is called by Irenaeus the originator of the Gnostic heresy, under that name, and operated in Asia (Epiphanius, Panarion, Bk. I Tom. ii, Anakephalaiosis vii) and since his follower Cerinthus operated in Ephesus, it is likely Carpocrates and/or his immediate circle were the very heretics denounced by Paul, when writing to Timothy in Ephesus (I Timothy, this letter fitting chronologically into the scheme of Acts at ch. 20. 1, 3, cf. I Tim. 1. 3), who are said to have been advocates of the *Gnosis* (theological science) falsely so called (I Tim. 6. 20). These heretics are likely to have sprung from the throngs of occultists in Ephesus (Acts 19. 19) who had recently been converted (or half-converted) through the ministry of Paul. Paul warned that predatory cultists would attack the Christians of the area around Ephesus after his departure and that even some of the elders of that region would fall away from the faith (Acts 20. 29f.). Cerinthus and his ilk were Judaizing heretics, and the

name Gnostic seems originally to have been derived from Jewish Sabazius syncretists in Asia (note 92a). Any or all the related heresies which spread amongst the early Christian community, originating from cults connected with these Jewish Sabazius syncretists, seem later to have been designated "Gnostic" by the disciples of John, presumably because that was the form of the heresy best known to them in Ephesus. Simon Magus himself seems to have been acquainted with, and to have absorbed tenets from, the Sabazius cult (*ibid.*), and chronologically he preceded Paul's mission in Ephesus and the presumed date of Carpocrates' adherence to Christianity. Hence the idea that Simon was the founding father of Gnosticism, even though in the earliest period, the name only properly belonged to the Carpocratians. Note that the Carpocratians differed from Simon in their open practice of occult rites. This is understandable given their different points or origin - the Carpocratians in Graeco-Roman Ephesus, a great Gentile emporium, where Jews were present but had no say in the running of the city, and Simon in Samaria and Judaea, where the all-pervasive atmosphere of Jewish orthodoxy will have made occultists more circumspect. That faithful Jewish Christians could be confused with Sabazius cultists is suggested by the incident described in Acts (16. 16) where, in Philippi in Macedonia, on Paul's first missionary excursion into Europe, a girl possessed with a *serpentine* spirit of divination proclaimed Paul as a preacher of the God *Hupsistos*, "Most High", this title of the divinity being favored in Jewish syncretistic circles in Asia. The Serpent was the particular emblem of the Jewish syncretistic god, Sabazius. At the time, Paul was attended by a woman called Lydia, who came from the city of Thyatira in Asia. This city was the site of an oracle of Sambeth, the legendary prophetess of the Sabazius cultists. Lydia is likely, therefore, to have been acquainted with Jewish Sabazius syncretism and may even have been originally a devotee of the Sabazius cult. Hence, perhaps, the special interest of the female soothsayer in Paul's dealings with Lydia. (On the various assertions here regarding the Sabazius cult, see further note 92a.)

29. Hippolytus, Refutation, VII. 20: "But (they [the Carpocratians] also contend) that some enjoy an excellence above the disciples of that (Redeemer), for instance Peter and Paul, and the rest of the Apostles, and that these are in no respect inferior to Jesus. And (Carpocrates asserts) that the souls of these have originated from that supernal power, and that consequently they, as equally despising the world-making (angels), have been deemed worthy of the same power, and (of the privilege) to ascend to the same (place). If, however, any one would despise earthly concerns more than did that (Savior, Carpocrates says) that such a one would be able to become superior to (Jesus). The followers of this heretic) practice their magical arts and incantations, and spells and voluptuous feasts. And (they are in the habit of invoking the aid of) subordinate demons and dream-senders, and (of resorting to) the rest of the tricks (of sorcery), alleging that they possess power for now acquiring sway over the Archons and makers of this world, nay, even over all the works that are in it. (Now these heretics) have themselves been sent forth by Satan, for the purpose of slandering before the Gentiles the divine name of the Church. (And the devil's object is,) that men hearing, now after one fashion and now after another, the doctrines of those (heretics), and thinking that all of us are people of the same stamp, may turn away their ears from the preaching of the truth, or that they also, looking, (without abjuring,) upon all the tenets of those (heretics), may speak hurtfully of us."

30. See notes 48 and 59 for relevant quotations from Clement's own Letter. This Clement of Rome, according to early Church tradition, was Paul's fellow-worker, "whose name is in the Book of Life", mentioned in Philippians 4. 3. He was the author, in the name of the Roman Church, of the Epistle of Clement (I Clement), a magnificent exhortation, dating from some time in the reign of Domitian, to the errant Church in Corinth. He seems to have been ordained originally, on the evidence of a tradition preserved by Tertullian, as pastor of the First Church in Rome by Peter, probably in Caesarea some time in the reign of Claudius, but evidently was prevented from taking up his post by the expulsion of the Jews from the city. By the time he returned to Rome after the death of Claudius, the church he had been set over had fallen into heresy under Simon Magus and another Bible-believing fellowship had been formed in the meantime under pastor Linus, some time towards the end of Paul's ministry or shortly thereafter. Clement later became pastor of this latter church, the third in succession from Linus, some time about the reign of Domitian. Hence in some lists Clement appears as the first bishop of the Church in Rome, in others as the third bishop. For further information and details, see [Appendix 6 \(Secondary Quotations 5\)](#). The confusion in the order of

Roman bishops was addressed by Epiphanius, who favored an explanation along the lines adopted here: that Clement had been ordained by Peter but failed to take up his ministry at first (he cites an excerpt from a lost letter of Clement to corroborate this suggestion); then, some time later, he took up the pastoral position in Rome: Panarion, Haer. XXVII (VII). vi., Migne PG XLI, 372-3, "... Linus, then Cletus, then Clement, who was a contemporary of Peter and Paul, and whom Paul mentions in the letter to the Romans [mistake for Philipppians?]. And let no-one wonder that before him others received the episcopacy from the apostles, whilst he himself was a contemporary of Peter and Paul. For this one too [presumably Linus] was a contemporary of the apostles. It was, in fact, whilst they were still alive, that he [Clement] received the ordination [lit. laying-on-of-hands] for the episcopacy from Peter, but he neglected to take it up and left it vacant. (He actually says in one of his letters, "I am withdrawing, I am away, let the people of God stand in the breach" – so he advised his correspondents. I found this extract quoted in some Commentaries.) We cannot clearly determine whether he was appointed by bishop Cletus subsequent to the succession from the apostles. What we can say is that it was quite possible, whilst the apostles were still alive, I mean Peter and Paul and their immediate circle, for other bishops to be appointed, for the reason that frequently the apostles needed to direct their journey to other lands for the sake of the Gospel of Christ, and it was not possible for the city of the Romans to be without a bishop. In fact Paul got as far as Spain, whilst Peter frequently took pastoral care of Pontus and Bithynia. So it comes about that after the appointment of Clement and his failure to take that appointment up (if that is actually what took place: I suspect so, but make no definitive assertion on the matter), subsequently, after the death of Linus and Cletus, who served as bishops for up to 12 years, each of them subsequent to the deaths of Peter and Paul, which occurred in the 12th year of Nero, he [Clement] was now compelled to take up the episcopacy again."

31. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. IV. xxvi. 2, 5-11: "2. ... Of Melito [c. AD 177] ... the book addressed to Antoninus [= Marcus Aurelius] ... 5. But in his book addressed to the emperor he records that the following events happened to us under him: "For, what never before happened, the race of the pious is now suffering persecution, being driven about in Asia by new decrees. For the shameless calumniating informers [Gk. *sukophantai*] and coveters of the property of others, taking occasion from the decrees, openly carry on robbery night and day, despoiling those who are guilty of no wrong." 6. And a little further on he says: "If these things are done by thy command, well and good. For a just ruler will never take unjust measures; and we indeed gladly accept the honor of such a death. But this request alone we present to thee, that thou wouldst thyself first examine the authors of such strife, and justly judge whether they be worthy of death and punishment, or of safety and quiet. But if, on the other hand, this counsel and this new decree, which is not fit to be executed even against barbarian enemies, be not from thee, much more do we beseech thee not to leave us exposed to such lawless plundering by the populace." 7. Again he adds the following: "For our philosophy formerly flourished among the Barbarians; but having sprung up among the nations under thy rule, during the great reign of thy ancestor Augustus, it became to thine empire especially a blessing of auspicious omen. For from that time the power of the Romans has grown in greatness and splendor. To whom thou, in partnership with thy son [= Lucius otherwise known as Commodus], both art now become and art to be hereafter the prayed for successor [Gk. *'ou su diadochos euktaios gegonas te kai esēi meta tou paidos*], if thou guardest the philosophy which grew up with the empire and which came into existence with Augustus; that philosophy which thy ancestors also honored along with the other religions. 8. And a most convincing proof that our doctrine flourished for the good of an empire happily begun, is this - that there has no evil happened since Augustus' reign, but that, on the contrary, all things have been splendid and glorious, in accordance with the prayers of all. 9. Nero and Domitian, alone, persuaded by certain malignant persons [or, more specifically, sorcerers, Gk. *baskanōn anthrōpōn*, viz. the Gnostic heretics] have wished to slander our doctrine, from whose time it has come about, on occasion, that the lie of the calumny [viz. of the sorcerers] has spewed forth, by an irrational habit of mind regarding such people (as are at present under consideration). [Gk. *aph' 'on kai to tēs sukophantias alogōi sunēthētai peri toiotoutous 'ruēnai sumbebēken pseudos*]. 10. But thy pious fathers corrected the ignorance of the former [the previous Emperors], having frequently rebuked in writing many who dared to attempt new measures against the latter [the Christians]. Among them thy grandfather Hadrian appears to have written to many others, and also to

Fundanus, the proconsul and governor of Asia. And thy father, when thou also wast ruling with him, wrote to the cities, forbidding them to take any new measures against us; among the rest to the Larissaeans, to the Thessalonians, to the Athenians, and to all the Greeks. 11. And as for thee, – since thy opinions respecting the Christians are the same as theirs, and indeed much more benevolent and philosophic, – we are the more persuaded that thou wilt do all that we ask of thee." The words *sukophantai* and *sukophantia* here (the slander and calumny of informers) are the same words used of the accusation brought against Symeon son of Clopas in the reign of Trajan by the Gnostic heretics in Hegesippus, apud Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. III. xxxii. 6 [Gk. *sukophantētheis upo tōn 'aireseōn*].

32. Greek *baskanoi*, malignant sorcerers: Melito of Sardis, apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. IV. xxvi. 9 [see the previous note for the context] "Nero and Domitian, alone, persuaded by certain malignant persons [or, more specifically, sorcerers, Gk. *baskanōn anthrōpōn*, viz. the Gnostic heretics] have wished to slander our doctrine."

33. see notes [52](#) and [54](#) for full details.

34. II Timothy, 4. 6-22: "6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 9 ¶ Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. 16 ¶ At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. 21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time."

35. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III. iii. 2-3: (See further on this passage, [Appendix 6. Quotation 2b](#)) "Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the most ancient [Church], and [that which was] accredited to all by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, founded and organized at Rome; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For the whole Church is bound to agree with this Church on account of its more authoritative primacy, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere. 3. The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone [in this], for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles. In the time of this Clement, no

small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome dispatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another God beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things. To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telesphorus, who was apparently [usually translated "gloriously"] martyred [the word "martyr" was used in the First Church of Rome of those who had suffered some kind of persecution for their beliefs (or their crimes!), but not necessarily suffered capital punishment, see Eusebius Hist. Ecc. V. xxviii. 11 and on "apparent" martyrs in the First Church, cp. Hippolytus, Ref. IX. vi, *sub fin.* and vii]; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth."

36. See [Appendix 6](#).

36a. Liber Pontificalis (6th century AD), 22: Cornelius [Pope 251-3]: "In his time, at the request of a certain lady Lucina, he took away the bodies of the apostles Saints Peter and Paul up out of the Catacombs [i.e. the spot Ad Catacumbas, where they had hurriedly been deposited after the fracas with the easterners] at night (in fact first of all [i.e. before their placement in the cemetery Ad Catacumbas] the blessed Lucina took the body of St Paul [qu. from where?] and put it on her estate on the Ostian Way close to the place where he was beheaded; the blessed bishop Cornelius took the body of St Peter [qu. from where?] and put it close to the place where he was impaled [meaning originally, in Jerusalem, but later the location was understood to be Rome]), to among the bodies of the holy bishops at the temple of Apollo on the Mons Aureus, on the Vatican at Nero's palace, on 29th June." This translation presumes the words inter corpora "to among the bodies" etc. at the end of the entry complement the verb levavit "took away ... up out of" earlier in the passage and that the phrase primum quidem ... crucificus est "in fact first of all ... where he was impaled" is either an original or a later interpolation. Any other understanding leaves it unexplained whether the bodies were taken after they were removed from Ad Catacumbas. "IV. Hic temporibus suis, rogatus a quadam matrona Lucina, corpora apostolorum beati Petri et Pauli de Catacumbas levavit noctu: primum quidem corpus beati Pauli accepto beata Lucina posuit in praedio suo, via Ostense, iuxta locum ubi decollatus est; beati Petri accipit corpus beatus Cornelius episcopus et posuit iuxta locum ubi crucificus est, inter corpora sanctorum episcoporum, in templum Apollinis, in monte Aureum, in Vaticanum palatii Neroniani, III kal. iul."

36b. Damasi Epigrammata 19: Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognoscere debes, nomina quisque Petri pariter Paulique requiris. discipulos oriens misit, quod sponte fatemur: sanguinis ob meritum (Christumque per astra secuti aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum) Roma suos potius meruit defendere cives. haec Damasus vestras referat nova sidera laudes. "Here, you should know, in earlier times saints had their habitation: should anyone further inquire their names - Peter and Paul. The East sent the disciples [to us], a fact we freely acknowledge: [but] for the merits of their shed blood (for they also followed Christ through the stars in quest of the heavenly shores and the realms of the just) Rome was more deserving to defend [these] her citizens. May Damasus now bring your praises before these new stars."

36c. Feriale Philocalianum (Philocalian Calendar AD 354) under the heading Depositio Martyrum: "III. Kal. Iul. Petri in Catacumbas et Pauli

Ostense - Tusco et Basso cons. "III Kalends July. (Deposition) of Peter in Catacumbas and of Paul in the Ostian Way - in the consulship of Tuscus and Bassus". The names of the Consuls fixes the date to AD 258. Berne codex of the Martirologium Hieronymianum (Hieronymian Martyrology): "III. Kal. Iul. Romae natale apostolorum sanctorum Petri et Pauli - Petri in Vaticano via Aurelia Pauli vero in Via Ostensi, utrumque in Catacumbis, passi sub Nerone, Basso et Tusco consulibus". "III Kalends July. At Rome, the Birth-Feast (of the Deposition) of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, Peter in the Vatican Hill, on the Via Aurelia, and Paul in the Ostian Way, and of both in Catacumbis, having suffered martyrdom in the reign of Nero - in the consulship of Bassus and Tuscus". The way the phrase *passi sub Nerone* is juxtaposed to the date AD 258 (the consulship of Bassus and Tuscus) suggests that the redating of Marcellus and his deposition of the martyrs' bodies to the era of Nero, when the proper historical period was the second half of the third century AD, arose from a misunderstanding of some such festal, calendar, entry.

37. Letter of Gregory the Great SANCTI GREGORII MAGNI EPISTOLAE AD CONSTANTINAM AVGUSTAM (IV.30) "Concerning the corpses of the Blessed Apostles, however, what am I to say? For it is well known that at that season when they suffered martyrdom, faithful ones came from the East, to reclaim their corpses on the grounds that they were their citizens. They were carried forth as far as two miles out of the city and placed down in the spot called Catacumbas. But when the whole throng of them gathered together and attempted to take them away from that place, the power of a peal of thunder and a flash of lightning so terrified them with sheer panic and scattered them that they never dared again to attempt such things. Upon which the people of Rome came forth, who deserved this because of their piety towards the Lord, and took them away, laying them in the locations where they are found now." In the original Latin: "De corporibus vero beatorum apostolorum quid ego dicturus sum, dum constet quia eo tempore quo passi sunt ex Oriente fideles venerunt, qui eorum corpora sicut civium suorum repeterent? Quae ducta usque ad secundum urbis milliarium in loco qui dicitur Catacumbas collocata sunt. Sed dum ea exinde levare omnis eorum multitudo conveniens niteretur, ita eos vis tonitruum atque fulguris nimio metu terruit atque dispersit, ut talia denuo nullatenus attentare praesumerent. Tunc autem exeuntes Romani eorum corpora, qui hoc ex Domini pietate meruerunt, levaverunt, et in locis quibus nunc sunt condita posuerunt."

38. Josephus, Antiquities, XX. ix. 1: "CHAPTER 9 CONCERNING ALBINUS UNDER WHOSE PROCURATORSHIP JAMES WAS SLAIN; AS ALSO WHAT EDIFICES WERE BUILT BY AGRIPPA. 1. AND now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and who had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, high priest."

41 The First Church of Rome

39. For the Greek click [here](#).

39a. See [Appendix 6, Primary Quotations \(7\)](#) = Eusebius Hist. Ecc. III. i. 1-3. It is there stated that Peter was "impaled down through his head" (the identical expression used of the fuller's stake in Hegesippus' account of the martyrdom of James, apud Eusebius, Hist Ecc. II. xxiii. 17-18). The phrase in the case of Peter is often incorrectly translated "crucified head-downwards".

40. Roman citizens got better treatment than foreigners, even when they were guilty of a capital crime.

41. The Shepherd of Hermas VIS. II. ii. 6, "You will tell, therefore, those who preside over the Church, to direct their ways in righteousness." Also VIS. III. ix. 7-8: "Wherefore I now say to you who preside over the Church and love the first seats, "Be not like to sorcerers. For the sorcerers carry their drugs in boxes, but ye carry your drug and poison in your heart. Ye are hardened, and do not wish to cleanse your hearts, and to add unity of aim to purity of heart, that you may have mercy from the great King."

42. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I. xxv. 3: "They practice also magical arts and incantations; philters, also, and love-potions; and have recourse to familiar spirits, dream-sending demons, and other abominations, declaring that they possess power to rule over, even now, the princes and formers of this world; and not only them, but also all things that are in it. These men, even as the Gentiles, have been sent forth by Satan to bring dishonor upon the Church, so that, in one way or another, men hearing the things which they speak, and imagining that we all are such as they, may turn away their ears from the preaching of the truth; or, again, seeing the things they practice, may speak evil of us all, who have in fact no fellowship with them, either in doctrine or in morals, or in our daily conduct. But they lead a licentious life, and, to conceal their impious doctrines, they abuse the name [of Christ], as a means of hiding their wickedness; so that "their condemnation is just," when they receive from God a recompense suited to their works."

43. Hermas, MAN. xi. 4-5: "As many, then, as are strong in the faith of the Lord, and are clothed with truth, have no connection with such spirits [viz. of the false prophet who sits on the *kathedra* or episcopal chair, leading astray the true servants of Christ], but keep away from them; but as many as are of doubtful minds and frequently repent, betake themselves to soothsaying, even as the heathen, and bring greater sin upon themselves by their idolatry. For he who inquires of a false prophet in regard to any action is an idolater, and devoid of the truth, and foolish. For no spirit given by God requires to be asked; but such a spirit having the power of Divinity speaks all things of itself, for it proceeds from above from the power of the Divine Spirit. But the spirit which is asked and speaks according to the desires of men is earthly, light, and powerless, and it is altogether silent if it is not questioned"

44. The Shepherd of Hermas, VIS. IV. i. 1 - iii. 6: CHAPTER I "Twenty days after the former vision I saw another vision, brethren — a representation of the tribulation that is to come. I was going to a country house along the Campanian road. Now the house lay about ten furlongs from the public road. The district is one rarely traversed. And as I walked alone, I prayed the Lord to complete the revelations which He had made to me through His holy Church, that He might strengthen me, and give repentance to all His servants who were going astray, that His great and glorious name might be glorified because He vouchsafed to show me His marvels. And while I was glorifying Him and giving Him thanks, a voice, as it were, answered me, "Doubt not, Hermas;" and I began to think with myself, and to say, "What reason have I to doubt — I who have been established by the Lord, and who have seen such glorious sights?" I advanced a little, brethren, and, lo! I see dust rising even to the heavens. I began to say to myself, "Are cattle approaching and raising the dust?" It was about a furlong's distance from me. And, lo! I see the dust rising more and more, so that I imagined that it was something sent from God. But the sun now shone out a little, and, lo! I see a mighty beast like a whale, and out of its mouth fiery locusts proceeded. But the size of that beast was about a hundred feet, and it had a head like an urn. I began to weep, and to

call on the Lord to rescue me from it. Then I remembered the word which I had heard, "Doubt not, O Hermas." Clothed, therefore, my brethren, with faith in the Lord and remembering the great things which He had taught me, I boldly faced the beast. Now that beast came on with such noise and force, that it could itself have destroyed a city. I came near it, and the monstrous beast stretched itself out on the ground, and showed nothing but its tongue, and did not stir at all until I had passed by it. Now the beast had four colors on its head — black, then fiery and bloody, then golden, and lastly white. CHAPTER 2. Now after I had passed by the wild beast, and had moved forward about thirty feet, lo! a virgin meets me, adorned as if she were proceeding from the bridal chamber, clothed entirely in white, and with white sandals, and veiled up to her forehead, and her head was covered by a hood. And she had white hair. I knew from my former visions that this was the Church, and I became more joyful. She saluted me, and said, "Hail, O man!" And I returned her salutation, and said, "Lady, hail!" And she answered, and said to me, "Has nothing crossed your path?" I say, "I was met by a beast of such a size that it could destroy peoples, but through the power of the Lord and His great mercy I escaped from it." "Well did you escape from it," says she, "because you cast your care on God, and opened your heart to the Lord, believing that you can be saved by no other than by His great and glorious name. On this account the Lord has sent His angel, who has rule over the beasts, and whose name is Thegri, and has shut up its mouth, so that it cannot tear you. You have escaped from great tribulation on account of your faith, and because you did not doubt in the presence of such a beast. Go, therefore, and tell the elect of the Lord His mighty deeds, and say to them that this beast is a type of the great tribulation that is coming. If then ye prepare yourselves, and repent with all your heart, and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it, if your heart be pure and spotless, and ye spend the rest of the days of your life in serving the Lord blamelessly. Cast your cares upon the Lord, and He will direct them. Trust the Lord, ye who doubt, for He is all-powerful, and can turn His anger away from you, and send scourges on the doubters. Woe to those who hear these words, and despise them: better were it for them not to have been born." CHAPTER 3. I asked her about the four colors which the beast had on his head. And she answered, and said to me, "Again you are inquisitive in regard to such matters." "Yea, Lady, said I, "make known to me what they are." "Listen," said she: "the black is the world in which we dwell: but the fiery and bloody points out that the world must perish through blood and fire: but the golden part are you who have escaped from this world. For as gold is tested by fire, and thus becomes useful, so are you tested who dwell in it. Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire, will be purified by means of it. For as gold casts away its dross, so also will ye cast away all sadness and straitness, and will be made pure so as to fit into the building of the tower. But the white part is the age that is to come, in which the elect of God will dwell, since those elected by God to eternal life will be spotless and pure. Wherefore cease not speaking these things into the ears of the saints. This then is the type of the great tribulation that is to come. If ye wish it, it will be nothing. Remember those things which were written down before.""

45. The Shepherd of Hermas, VIS. III. viii. 11: "I command you to speak all the words which I am to say to you into the ears of the saints, that hearing them and doing them, they may be cleansed from their iniquities, and you along with them." (See also VIS. I. i. 9, and iii, II. ii-iii and IV. i. 4, SIM. I, where the multiplication of lands, houses and excessive wealth by the Roman Christians is attacked, and passim. According to VIS. III. i. 2 Hermas himself was a farmer and, according to VIS. III. vi. 7, he was at one time rich in material goods and useless to God, but now, after repentance, he had become profitable in the service of Christ. Similarly in VIS. III. xi. 3 Hermas and his fellow Christians are described as having been weakened spiritually by worldly business, though they afterwards recovered through repentance.)

46. The Shepherd of Hermas, VIS. II. iv. 1-4: "Now a revelation was given to me, my brethren, while I slept, by a young man of comely appearance, who said to me, "Who do you think that old woman is from whom you received the book?" And I said, "The Sibyl." "You are in a mistake," says he; "it is not the Sibyl." "Who is it then?" say I. And he said, "It is the Church." And I said to him, "Why then is she an old woman?" "Because," said he, "she was created first of all. On this account is she old. And for her sake was the world made." After that I saw a vision in my house, and that old woman came and asked me, if I had yet given the book to the presbyters. And I said that I had not. And then she said, "You have done

well for I have some words to add. But when I finish all the words, all the elect will then become acquainted with them through you. You will write therefore two books, and you will send the one to Clemens [= Clement] and the other to Grapte. And Clemens will send his to foreign countries, for permission has been granted to him to do so. And Grapte will admonish the widows and the orphans. But you will read the words in this city, along with the presbyters who preside over the Church."

47. The Shepherd of Hermas, VIS. II. ii. 6: "... You will tell, therefore, those who preside over the Church, to direct their ways in righteousness, that they may receive in full the promises with great glory." Op. cit. VIS. III. ix. 6-10: "Give heed, therefore, ye who glory in your wealth, lest those who are needy should groan, and their groans should ascend to the Lord, and ye be shut out with all your goods beyond the gate of the tower. Wherefore I now say to you who preside over the Church and love the first seats [Gk. *protokathedritai*, from the Gospels, Mtt. 23.6, Mk. 12. 39, Lk. 11. 43, 20. 46], "Be not like to sorcerers [Gk. *pharmakoi*]. For the sorcerers carry their drugs in boxes, but ye carry your drug and poison in your heart. Ye are hardened, and do not wish to cleanse your hearts, and to add unity of aim to purity of heart, that you may have mercy from the great King. Take heed, therefore, children, that these dissensions of yours do not deprive you of your life. How will you instruct the elect of the Lord, if you yourselves have not instruction? Instruct each other therefore, and be at peace among yourselves, that I also, standing joyful before your Father, may give an account of you all to your Lord." Ibid. MAN. XI: "He pointed out to me some men sitting on a seat, and one man sitting on a chair [Gk. *kathedra*, lit. throne, a word used in the early Church as a title of honor of the pastor's position, but clearly abused in this context and given a monarchical twist by the "false prophet": compare the use of the word *protokathedritai*, "people who take the prime seat (*kathedra*)" in the section above, referring to backsliding Christians who are likened to sorcerers. This "false prophet" is an actual example of the latter class. In the first vision of Hermas the Church appears sitting on a *kathedra*, I. ii. 2, which she afterwards abandons, this being interpreted to mean that the Church was at first *spiritually weak and unhealthy*, and hence had to be seated, though afterwards, having repented, she recovered her health, III. xi. 2-4. In the symbolism of Hermas the *kathedra*, therefore, represents backsliding and worldliness, especially of the leadership of the Church.]. And he says to me, "Do you see the persons sitting on the seat?" "I do, sir," said I. "These," says he, "are the faithful, and he who sits on the chair is a false prophet, ruining the minds of the servants of God. [Note: this false prophet, taking the prime seat (see above) is operating within a circle frequented by believing, but weak, Christians, whereas the strong believers do not fellowship with the false prophets and keep their assembly separate, see notes 42 and 43. The vision seems to be exposing the activity of a particular false prophet in Rome, and is, most probably, a reference to the sorcerer Cerdon, who occupied the *kathedra* of the First Church of Rome at this time.] It is the doubters, not the faithful, that he ruins. These doubters then go to him as to a soothsayer, and inquire of him what will happen to them; and he, the false prophet, not having the power of a Divine Spirit in him, answers them according to their inquiries, and according to their wicked desires, and fills their souls with expectations, according to their own wishes. For being himself empty, he gives empty answers to empty inquirers; for every answer is made to the emptiness of man. Some true words he does occasionally utter; for the devil fills him with his own spirit, in the hope that he may be able to overcome some of the righteous. As many, then, as are strong in the faith of the Lord, and are clothed with truth, have no connection with such spirits, but keep away from them; but as many as are of doubtful minds and frequently repent, betake themselves to soothsaying, even as the heathen, and bring greater sin upon themselves by their idolatry. For he who inquires of a false prophet in regard to any action is an idolater, and devoid of the truth, and foolish. For no spirit given by God requires to be asked; but such a spirit having the power of Divinity speaks all things of itself, for it proceeds from above from the power of the Divine Spirit. But the spirit which is asked and speaks according to the desires of men is earthly, light, and powerless, and it is altogether silent if it is not questioned." "How then, sir," say I, "will a man know which of them is the prophet, and which the false prophet?" "I will tell you," says he, "about both the prophets, and then you can try the true and the false prophet according to my directions. Try the man who has the Divine Spirit by his life. First, he who has the Divine Spirit proceeding from above is meek, and peaceable, and humble, and refrains from all iniquity and the vain desire of this world, and contents himself with fewer wants than those of other men, and when asked he makes no reply; nor

does he speak privately, nor when man wishes the spirit to speak does the Holy Spirit speak, but it speaks only when God wishes it to speak. When, then, a man having the Divine Spirit comes into an assembly of righteous men who have faith in the Divine Spirit, and this assembly of men offers up prayer to God, then the angel of the prophetic Spirit, who is destined for him, fills the man; and the man being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the multitude as the Lord wishes. Thus, then, will the Spirit of Divinity become manifest. Whatever power therefore comes from the Spirit of Divinity belongs to the Lord. Hear, then," says he, "in regard to the spirit which is earthly, and empty, and powerless, and foolish. First, the man who seems to have the Spirit exalts himself, and wishes to have the first seat, and is bold, and impudent, and talkative, and lives in the midst of many luxuries and many other delusions, and takes rewards for his prophecy; and if he does not receive rewards, he does not prophesy. Can, then, the Divine Spirit take rewards and prophesy? It is not possible that the prophet of God should do this, but prophets of this character are possessed by an earthly spirit. Then it never approaches an assembly of righteous men, but shuns them. And it associates with doubters and the vain, and prophesies to them in a corner, and deceives them, speaking to them, according to their desires, mere empty words: for they are empty to whom it gives its answers. For the empty vessel, when placed along with the empty, is not crushed, but they correspond to each other. When, therefore, it comes into an assembly of righteous men who have a Spirit of Divinity, and they offer up prayer, that man is made empty, and the earthly spirit flees from him through fear, and that man is made dumb, and is entirely crushed, being unable to speak. For if you pack closely a storehouse with wine or oil, and put an empty jar in the midst of the vessels of wine or oil, you will find that jar empty as when you placed it, if you should wish to clear the storehouse. So also the empty prophets, when they come to the spirits of the righteous, are found [on leaving] to be such as they were when they came. This, then, is the mode of life of both prophets. Try by his deeds and his life the man who says that he is inspired. But as for you, trust the Spirit which comes from God, and has power; but the spirit which is earthly and empty trust not at all, for there is no power in it: it comes from the devil. Hear, then, the parable which I am to tell you. Take a stone, and throw it to the sky, and see if you can touch it. Or again, take a squirt of water and squirt into the sky, and see if you can penetrate the sky." "How, sir," say I, "can these things take place? for both of them are impossible." "As these things," says he, "are impossible, so also are the earthly spirits powerless and pitiless. But look, on the other hand, at the power which comes from above. Hail is of the size of a very small grain, yet when it falls on a man's head how much annoyance it gives him! Or, again, take the drop which falls from a pitcher to the ground, and yet it hollows a stone. You see, then, that the smallest things coming from above have great power when they fall upon the earth. Thus also is the Divine Spirit, which comes from above, powerful. Trust, then, that Spirit, but have nothing to do with the other.""

48. I Clement, 1, 3: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied. Owing, dear brethren, to the sudden and successive calamitous events which have happened to ourselves, we feel that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the points respecting which you consulted us; and especially to that shameful and detestable sedition, utterly abhorrent to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-confident persons have kindled to such a pitch of frenzy, that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be universally loved, has suffered grievous injury. For who ever dwelt even for a short time among you, and did not find your faith to be as fruitful of virtue as it was firmly established? Who did not admire the sobriety and moderation of your godliness in Christ? Who did not proclaim the magnificence of your habitual hospitality? And who did not rejoice over your perfect and well-grounded knowledge? For ye did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honor to the presbyters among you. Ye enjoined young men to be of a sober and serious mind; ye instructed your wives to do all things with a blameless, becoming, and pure conscience, loving their husbands as in duty bound; and ye taught them that, living in the rule of obedience, they should manage their household affairs becomingly, and be in every respect marked by discretion [3] Every kind of honor and happiness was bestowed upon you, and then was fulfilled that which is written, "My beloved did eat and drink, and was enlarged and became fat, and kicked." Hence flowed emulation and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and discord, war and

captivity [this is probably a reference to the Jewish Revolt crushed in AD 70 by Titus, which was stirred up by the heretics, through the influence Simon Magus had with the Roman procurator, Felix >>]. So the worthless rose up against the honored, those of no reputation against such as were renowned, the foolish against the wise, the young against those advanced in years. For this reason righteousness and peace are now far departed from you, inasmuch as every one abandons the fear of God, and is become blind in His faith, neither walks in the ordinances of His appointment, nor acts a part becoming a Christian, but walks after his own wicked lusts, resuming the practice of an unrighteous and ungodly envy, by which death itself entered into the world.

49. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc., III. xvii-xx: CHAPTER 17. THE PERSECUTION UNDER DOMITIAN. DOMITIAN, having shown great cruelty toward many, and having unjustly put to death no small number of well-born and notable men at Rome, and having without cause exiled and confiscated the property of a great many other illustrious men, finally became a successor of Nero in his hatred and enmity toward God. He was in fact the second that stirred up a persecution against us, although his father Vespasian had undertaken nothing prejudicial to us. CHAPTER 18. THE APOSTLE JOHN AND THE APOCALYPSE. IT is said that in this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word. Irenaeus, in the fifth book of his work Against Heresies, where he discusses the number of the name of Antichrist which is given in the so-called Apocalypse of John, speaks as follows concerning him: "If it were necessary for his name to be proclaimed openly at the present time, it would have been declared by him who saw the revelation. For it was seen not long ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian." To such a degree, indeed, did the teaching of our faith flourish at that time that even those writers who were far from our religion did not hesitate to mention in their histories the persecution and the martyrdoms which took place during it. And they, indeed, accurately indicated the time. For they recorded that in the fifteenth year of Domitian Flavia Domitilla, daughter of a sister of Flavius Clement, who at that time was one of the consuls of Rome, was exiled with many others to the island of Pontia in consequence of testimony born to Christ. CHAPTER 19. DOMITIAN COMMANDS THE DESCENDANTS OF DAVID TO BE SLAIN. BUT when this same Domitian had commanded that the descendants of David should be slain, an ancient tradition says that some of the heretics brought accusation against the descendants of Jude (said to have been a brother of the Savior according to the flesh), on the ground that they were of the lineage of David and were related to Christ himself. Hegesippus relates these facts in the following words. CHAPTER 20. THE RELATIVES OF OUR SAVIOR. "OF the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh. Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming of Christ as Herod also had feared it. And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had only nine thousand denarii, half of which belonged to each of them; and this property did not consist of silver, but of a piece of land which contained only thirty-nine acres, and from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor." Then they showed their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies and the callousness produced upon their hands by continuous toil as evidence of their own labor. And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works. Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass judgment against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church. But when they were released they ruled the churches because they were witnesses and were also relatives of the Lord. And peace being established, they lived until the time of Trajan. These things are related by Hegesippus. Tertullian also has mentioned Domitian in the following words: "Domitian also, who possessed a share of Nero's cruelty, attempted once to do the same thing that the latter did. But because he had, I suppose, some intelligence, he very soon ceased, and even recalled those whom he had banished." But after Domitian had reigned fifteen years, and

Nerva had succeeded to the empire, the Roman Senate, according to the writers that record the history of those days, voted that Domitian's honors should be canceled, and that those who had been unjustly banished should return to their homes and have their property restored to them. It was at this time that the apostle John returned from his banishment in the island and took up his abode at Ephesus, according to an ancient Christian tradition."

50. Clement of Alexandria, Comments on the Epistle of Jude, *init.*, "COMMENTS ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE: Jude, who wrote the Catholic Epistle, the brother of the sons of Joseph, and very religious, whilst knowing the near relationship of the Lord, yet did not say that he himself was His brother. But what said he? "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ," – of Him as Lord; but "the brother of James." For this is true; he was His brother, (the son) of Joseph." Origen, Commentary on Matthew, 10. 17, commenting on Matt. 13. 55: ".... And His brethren, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?" They thought, then, that He was the son of Joseph and Mary. But some say, basing it on a tradition in the Gospel according to Peter, as it is entitled, or "The Book of James," that the brethren of Jesus were sons of Joseph by a former wife, whom he married before Mary. Now those who say so wish to preserve the honor of Mary in virginity to the end, so that that body of hers which was appointed to minister to the Word which said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee," might not know intercourse with a man after that the Holy Ghost came into her and the power from on high overshadowed her. And I think it in harmony with reason that Jesus was the first-fruit among men of the purity which consists in chastity, and Mary among women; for it were not pious to ascribe to any other than to her the first-fruit of virginity. And James is he whom Paul says in the Epistle to the Galatians that he saw, "But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." And to so great a reputation among the people for righteousness did this James rise, that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the "Antiquities of the Jews" in twenty books, when wishing to exhibit the cause why the people suffered so great misfortunes that even the temple was razed to the ground, said, that these things happened to them in accordance with the wrath of God in consequence of the things which they had dared to do against James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ. And the wonderful thing is, that, though he did not accept Jesus as Christ, he yet gave testimony that the righteousness of James was so great; and he says that the people thought that they had suffered these things because of James. And Jude, who wrote a letter of few lines, it is true, but filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace, said in the preface, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James." With regard to Joseph and Simon we have nothing to tell; but the saying, "And His sisters are they not all with us," seems to me to signify something of this nature - they mind our things, not those of Jesus, and have no unusual portion of surpassing wisdom as Jesus has. And perhaps by these things is indicated a new doubt concerning Him, that Jesus was not a man but something diviner, inasmuch as He was, as they supposed, the son of Joseph and Mary, and the brother of four, and of the others - the women - as well, and yet had nothing like to any one of His kindred, and had not from education and teaching come to such a height of wisdom and power. For they also say elsewhere, "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" which is similar to what is here said. Only, though they say these things and are so perplexed and astonished, they did not believe, but were offended in Him; as if they had been mastered in the eyes of their mind by the powers which, in the time of the passion, He was about to lead in triumph on the cross."

51. I Cor. 9. 5: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" and Gal. 1. 19: "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." cf. Acts 1. 14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." On these brethren in their unbelieving days see Matt. 12. 46, 13. 55, Mk. 6. 3, John 2. 12, 7. 3 and 5. On James and Jude [Judas] see Matt. 13. 55: "Is not this [Jesus] the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"

52. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc., II. xxiii: "CHAPTER 23. THE MARTYRDOM OF JAMES, WHO WAS CALLED THE BROTHER OF THE LORD. BUT after Paul, in consequence of his appeal to Caesar, had been sent to

Rome by Festus, the Jews, being frustrated in their hope of entrapping him by the snares which they had laid for him, turned against James, the brother of the Lord, to whom the episcopal seat at Jerusalem had been entrusted by the apostles. The following daring measures were undertaken by them against him. Leading him into their midst they demanded of him that he should renounce faith in Christ in the presence of all the people. But, contrary to the opinion of all, with a clear voice, and with greater boldness than they had anticipated, he spoke out before the whole multitude and confessed that our Savior and Lord Jesus is the Son of God. But they were unable to bear longer the testimony of the man who, on account of the excellence of ascetic virtue and of piety which he exhibited in his life, was esteemed by all as the most just of men, and consequently they slew him. Opportunity for this deed of violence was furnished by the prevailing anarchy, which was caused by the fact that Festus had died just at this time in Judea, and that the province was thus without a governor and head. The manner of James' death has been already indicated by the above-quoted words of Clement, who records that he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, and was beaten to death with a club. But Hegesippus, who lived immediately after the apostles, gives the most accurate account in the fifth book of his *Memoirs*. He writes as follows: "James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles. He has been called the Just by all from the time of our Savior to the present day; for there were many that bore the name of James. He was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh. No razor came upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not use the bath. He alone was permitted to enter into the holy place; for he wore not woolen but linen garments. And he was in the habit of entering alone into the temple, and was frequently found upon his knees begging forgiveness for the people, so that his knees became hard like those of a camel, in consequence of his constantly bending them in his worship of God, and asking forgiveness for the people. Because of his exceeding great justice he was called the Just, and Oblias, which signifies in Greek, Bulwark of the people' and 'Justice,' in accordance with what the prophets declare concerning him. Now some of the seven [Gnostic] sects [see note 54 below], which existed among the people and which have been mentioned by me in the *Memoirs*, asked him, 'What is the gate of Jesus?' and he replied that he was the Savior. On account of these words some believed that Jesus is the Christ. But the sects mentioned above did not believe either in a resurrection or in one's coming to give to every man according to his works. But as many as believed did so on account of James. Therefore when many even of the rulers believed, there was a commotion among the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees, who said that there was danger that the whole people would be looking for Jesus as the Christ. Coming therefore in a body to James they said, 'We entreat thee, restrain the people; for they are gone astray in regard to Jesus, as if he were the Christ. We entreat thee to persuade all that have come to the feast of the Passover concerning Jesus; for we all have confidence in thee. For we bear thee witness, as do all the people, that thou art just, and dost not respect persons. Do thou therefore persuade the multitude not to be led astray concerning Jesus. For the whole people, and all of us also, have confidence in thee. Stand therefore upon the pinnacle of the temple, that from that high position thou mayest be clearly seen, and that thy words may be readily heard by all the people. For all the tribes, with the Gentiles also, are come together on account of the Passover.' The aforesaid Scribes and Pharisees therefore placed James upon the pinnacle of the temple, and cried out to him and said: 'Thou just one, in whom we ought all to have confidence, forasmuch as the people are led, astray after Jesus, the crucified one, declare to us, what is the gate of Jesus.' And he answered with a loud voice, 'Why do ye ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? He himself sitteth in heaven at the right hand of the great Power, and is about to come upon the clouds of heaven.' And when many were fully convinced and gloried in the testimony of James, and said, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' these same Scribes and Pharisees said again to one another, 'We have done badly in supplying such testimony to Jesus. But let us go up and throw him down, in order that they may be afraid to believe him.' And they cried out, saying, 'Oh! oh! the just man is also in error.' And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah, 'Let us take away the just man, because he is troublesome to us: therefore they shall eat the fruit of their doings.' So they went up and threw down the just man, and said to each other, 'Let us stone James the Just.' And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall; but he turned and knelt down and said, 'I entreat thee, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests [Symeon son of Clopas, according to Epiphanius, *Haer.* lxxviii. 14] of the sons of Rechab, the son of the Rechabites, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet,

cried out, saying, 'Cease, what do ye? The just one prayeth for you. And one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the just man on the head. And thus he suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot, by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple. He became a true witness, both to Jews and Greeks, that Jesus is the Christ. And immediately Vespasian besieged them." These things are related at length by Hegesippus, who is in agreement with Clement. James was so admirable a man and so celebrated among all for his justice, that the more sensible even of the Jews were of the opinion that this was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem, which happened to them immediately after his martyrdom for no other reason than their daring act against him. Josephus, at least, has not hesitated to testify this in his writings, where he says, "These things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus, that is called the Christ. For the Jews slew him, although he was a most just man." And the same writer records his death also in the twentieth book of his *Antiquities* in the following words: "But the emperor, when he learned of the death of Festus, sent Albinus to be procurator of Judea. But the younger Ananus, who, as we have already said, had obtained the high priesthood, was of an exceedingly bold and reckless disposition. He belonged, moreover, to the sect of the Sadducees, who are the most cruel of all the Jews in the execution of judgment, as we have already shown. Ananus, therefore, being of this character, and supposing that he had a favorable opportunity on account of the fact that Festus was dead, and Albinus was still on the way, called together the Sanhedrin, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, James by name, together with some others, and accused them of violating the law, and condemned them to be stoned. But those in the city who seemed most moderate and skilled in the law were very angry at this, and sent secretly to the king, requesting him to order Ananus to cease such proceedings. For he had not done right even this first time. And certain of them also went to meet Albinus, who was journeying from Alexandria, and reminded him that it was not lawful for Ananus to summon the Sanhedrin without his knowledge. And Albinus, being persuaded by their representations, wrote in anger to Ananus, threatening him with punishment. And the king, Agrippa, in consequence, deprived him, of the high priesthood, which he had held three months, and appointed Jesus, the son of Damnaeus." These things are recorded in regard to James, who is said to be the author of the first of the so-called catholic epistles".

53. Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.*, III. xi: "AFTER the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, it is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all directions with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh (for the majority of them also were still alive) to take counsel as to who was worthy to succeed James. They all with one consent pronounced Symeon, the son of Clopas, of whom the Gospel also makes mention; to be worthy of the episcopal throne of that parish. He was a cousin, as they say, of the Savior. For Hegesippus records that Clopas was a brother of Joseph."

54. Eusebius *Hist. Ecc.* IV. xxii. 4-6: "And after James the Just had suffered martyrdom [AD 62], as the Lord had also on the same account, Symeon, the son of the Lord's uncle, Clopas, was appointed the next bishop. All proposed him as second bishop because he was a cousin of the Lord. "Therefore, they called the Church a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. But Thebuthis, because he was not made bishop, began to corrupt it from the seven sects among the people, amongst whose numbers he was included, (namely) from those who included Simon, from whom came Simonians, and Cleobius, from whom came Cleobians, and Dositheus, from whom came Dositheans, and Gorthaeus, from whom came Goratheni, and Masbothaeans {five sects are named here out of the seven that existed in the time of James and were the source of errors introduced by Thebuthis into the virgin Church}. From these sprang the Menandrianists, and Marcionists, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and Saturnilians. Each introduced privately and separately his own peculiar opinion. From them came false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, who divided the unity of the Church by corrupt doctrines uttered against God and against his Christ."

55. Tertullian, *Praescr. Haer.* 36: "How happy is that church, on which apostles poured forth all their doctrine along with their blood, in that location where Peter endures a passion like his Lord's, in that location where Paul wins his crown in a death like John's, in that location where the

Apostle John was first plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island-exile!

56. John 21. 22.

56a. See Romans 16. 13. This phrase "his [Rufus] mother and mine" is most likely the origin of the belief \gg that the biblical Timothy, called Paul's (spiritual) son (I Tim. 1. 18) was a member of the household, or otherwise a son, of Pudens. For, according to Romans 16. 13 Pudens (Rufus) and Paul were both "sons" of Priscilla (the former literally and the latter spiritually), whilst Timothy was a "son" (spiritual) of Paul. Hence Timothy might be deemed a "son", or strictly a "nephew", of Pudens.

56b. Rev. 1. 9. These or similar words are used several times in the Book of Revelation: 1. 6: the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ; 6. 9: the Word of God and the testimony which they (the souls under the altar) held; 12. 17: the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ; 14. 12: the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; 20. 4: the witness (same word as testimony) of Jesus and the Word of God. All of these but one are used in a context of persecution. On two occasions the "commandments of God" stand in place of "the Word of God", confirming that the reference in this part of the phrase is solely or principally to the Old Testament scriptures. As regards the other part of the phrase, the testimony of Jesus, John himself uses the word "testify" (the same word in Greek) of his written account of the Gospel of Jesus (John 21. 24). Now, the major theme of the Book of Revelation (chapters 4-8 and 22) is the Sealed Book - a symbol which represents the finality, the authority and the completeness of the Word of God (all those ideas being encompassed in the symbol of the Seal). The *completeness* and *finality* of the Word is also reflected in the phrases under consideration here, inasmuch as in them the Old Testament revelation is paired with and complemented by the New Testament testimony of Jesus. That completeness and finality is asserted very firmly at the end of the book with a curse on any who would venture to add or take away even a single word from it (Rev. 22. 19). Note further that it is the bloody Lamb (persecuted and crucified Son) who claims and unseals (reveals) that Word. All these themes echo the visions in Daniel relating to the Sealed Book (Dan 7 and 12), which the persecuted "wise" alone will understand (Dan. 12. 9-10). John himself truly was persecuted for the sake of the *completeness* of the revealed Word, rejecting that separation of the Old Testament scriptures from the testimony of Jesus for which the Gnostic heretics were agitating.

57. I Clement, 47.7: "It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of as that the most steadfast and ancient Church of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters. And this rumor has reached not only us, but those also who are of the opposite, hypocritical, party from us [Gk. *tous eteroklineis uparchontas aph' emōn*, lit. "those who are inclined in the opposite way from us": the adverb *eteroklinōs* is used in the LXX I Chron. 12. 34 (EVV. 33) to translate the Hebrew expression *lev va-lev*, lit. "heart and heart"], meaning "double-minded", "hypocritical", "feigning adherence or support"]; so that, through your infatuation, the name of the Lord is blasphemed, while danger is also brought upon yourselves."

58. Shepherd of Hermas VIS. III. ix. 9: "Take heed, therefore, children, that these dissensions of yours do not deprive you of your life. How will you instruct the elect of the Lord, if you yourselves have not instruction? Instruct each other therefore, and be at peace among yourselves, that I also, standing joyful before your Father, may give an account of you all to your Lord."

59. I Clement, 1. 1, 5-6, 7. 1: "CHAPTER 1 Owing, dear brethren, to the sudden and successive calamitous events which have happened to ourselves, we feel that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the points respecting which you consulted us; and especially to that shameful and detestable sedition, utterly abhorrent to the elect of God CHAPTER 5 But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest

and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors, and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience. CHAPTER 6 To these men who spent their lives in the practice of holiness, there is to be added a great multitude of the elect, who, having through envy endured many indignities and tortures, furnished us with a most excellent example. Through envy, those women, the Danaids and Dircae, being persecuted, after they had suffered terrible and unspeakable torments, finished the course of their faith with steadfastness, and though weak in body, received a noble reward. Envy has alienated wives from their husbands, and changed that saying of our father Adam, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Envy and strife have overthrown great cities and rooted up mighty nations. 19 CHAPTER 7 AN EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE These things, beloved, we write unto you, not merely to admonish you of your duty, but also to remind ourselves. For we are struggling on the same arena, and the same conflict is assigned to both of us."

60. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc., III. xxxii: "SYMEON, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM, SUFFERS MARTYRDOM. IT is reported that after the age of Nero and Domitian, under the emperor whose times we are now recording, a persecution was stirred up against us in certain cities in consequence of a popular uprising. In this persecution we have understood that Symeon, the son of Clopas, who, as we have shown, was the second bishop of the church of Jerusalem, suffered martyrdom. Hegesippus, whose words we have already quoted in various places, is a witness to this fact also. Speaking of certain heretics he adds that Symeon was accused by them at this time; and since it was clear that he was a Christian, he was tortured in various ways for many days, and astonished even the judge himself and his attendants in the highest degree, and finally he suffered a death similar to that of our Lord. But there is nothing like hearing the historian himself, who writes as follows: "Certain of these heretics brought accusation against Symeon, the son of Clopas, on the ground that he was a descendant of David and a Christian; and thus he suffered martyrdom, at the age of one hundred and twenty years, while Trajan was emperor and Atticus governor" And the same writer says that his accusers also, when search was made for the descendants of David, were arrested as belonging to that family. And it might be reasonably assumed that Symeon was one of those that saw and heard the Lord, judging from the length of his life, and from the fact that the Gospel makes mention of Mary, the wife of Clopas, who was the father of Symeon, as has been already shown. The same historian says that there were also others, descended from one of the so-called brothers of the Savior, whose name was Judas, who, after they had born testimony before Domitian, as has been already recorded, in behalf of faith in Christ, lived until the same reign. He writes as follows: "They came, therefore, and took the lead of every church as witness and as relatives of the Lord. And profound peace being established in every church, they remained until the reign of the Emperor Trajan, and until the above-mentioned Symeon, son of Clopas, an uncle of the Lord, was informed against by the heretics, and was himself in like manner accused for the same cause before the governor Atticus. And after being tortured for many days he suffered martyrdom, and all, including even the proconsul, marveled that, at the age of one hundred and twenty years, he could endure so much. And orders were given that he should be crucified." In addition to these things the same man, while recounting the events of that period, records that the Church up to that time had remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin, since, if there were any that attempted to corrupt the sound norm of the preaching of salvation, they lay until then concealed in obscure darkness. But when the sacred college of apostles had suffered death in various forms, and the generation of those that had been deemed worthy to hear the inspired wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then the league of godless error took its rise as a result of the folly of heretical teachers, who, because none of the apostles was still living, attempted henceforth, with a bold face, to proclaim, in opposition to the preaching of the truth, the 'knowledge which is falsely so-called.' CHAPTER 33. TRAJAN FORBIDS THE CHRISTIANS TO BE

SOUGHT AFTER. SO great a persecution was at that time opened against us in many places that Plinius Secundus, one of the most noted of governors, being disturbed by the great number of martyrs, communicated with the emperor concerning the multitude of those that were put to death for their faith. At the same time, he informed him in his communication that he had not heard of their doing anything profane or contrary to the laws, — except that they arose at dawn and sang hymns to Christ as a God; but that they renounced adultery and murder and like criminal offenses, and did all things in accordance with the laws. In reply to this Trajan made the following decree: that the race of Christians should not be sought after, but when found should be punished. On account of this the persecution which had threatened to be a most terrible one was to a certain degree checked, but there were still left plenty of pretexts for those who wished to do us harm. Sometimes the people, sometimes the rulers in various places, would lay plots against us, so that, although no great persecutions took place, local persecutions were nevertheless going on in particular provinces, and many of the faithful endured martyrdom in various forms. We have taken our account from the Latin Apology of Tertullian which we mentioned above. The translation runs as follows: “And indeed we have found that search for us has been forbidden. For when Plinius Secundus, the governor of a province, had condemned certain Christians and deprived them of their dignity, he was confounded by the multitude, and was uncertain what further course to pursue. He therefore communicated with Trajan the emperor, informing him that, aside from their unwillingness to sacrifice, he had found no impiety in them. And he reported this also, that the Christians arose early in the morning and sang hymns unto Christ as a God, and for the purpose of preserving their discipline forbade murder, adultery, avarice, robbery, and the like. In reply to this Trajan wrote that the race of Christians should not be sought after, but when found should be punished.” Such were the events which took place at that time CHAPTER 35. JUSTUS, THE THIRD BISHOP OF JERUSALEM. BUT when Symeon also had died in the manner described, a certain Jew by the name of Justus succeeded to the episcopal throne in Jerusalem. He was one of the many thousands of the circumcision who at that time believed in Christ. CHAPTER 36. IGNATIUS AND HIS EPISTLES. AT that time Polycarp, a disciple of the apostles, was a man of eminence in Asia, having been entrusted with the episcopate of the church of Smyrna by those who had seen and heard the Lord. And at the same time Papias, bishop of the parish of Hierapolis, became well known, as did also Ignatius, who was chosen bishop of Antioch, second in succession to Peter, and whose fame is still celebrated by a great many. Report says that he was sent from Syria to Rome, and became food for wild beasts on account of his testimony to Christ. And as he made the journey through Asia under the strictest military surveillance, he fortified the parishes in the various cities where he stopped by oral homilies and exhortations, and warned them above all to be especially on their guard against the heresies that were then beginning to prevail, and exhorted them to hold fast to the tradition of the apostles. Moreover, he thought it necessary to attest that tradition in writing, and to give it a fixed form for the sake of greater security. So when he came to Smyrna, where Polycarp was, he wrote an epistle to the church of Ephesus, in which he mentions Onesimus, its pastor; and another to the church of Magnesia, situated upon the Maeander, in which he makes mention again of a bishop Damas; and finally one to the church of Tralles, whose bishop, he states, was at that time Polybius. In addition to these he wrote also to the church of Rome, entreating them not to secure his release from martyrdom, and thus rob him of his earnest hope. In confirmation of what has been said it is proper to quote briefly from this epistle. He writes as follows: “From Syria even unto Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and by sea, by night and by day, being bound amidst ten leopards? that is, a company of soldiers who only become worse when they are well treated. In the midst of their wrongdoings, however, I am more fully learning discipleship, but I am not thereby justified. May I have joy of the beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray that I may find them ready; I will even coax them to devour me quickly that they may not treat me as they have some whom they have refused to touch through fear. And if they are unwilling, I will compel them. Forgive me. I know what is expedient for me. Now do I begin to be a disciple. May naught of things visible and things invisible envy me; that I may attain unto Jesus Christ. Let fire and cross and attacks of wild beasts, let wrenching of bones, cutting of limbs, crushing of the whole body, tortures of the devil, — let all these come upon me if only I may attain unto Jesus Christ.” These things he wrote from the above-mentioned city to the churches referred to. And when he had left Smyrna he wrote again from Troas to the Philadelphians and to the church of Smyrna; and particularly to Polycarp, who presided over the latter church. And since he knew him well as an apostolic man, he

commended to him, like a true and good shepherd, the flock at Antioch, and besought him to care diligently for it. And the same man, writing to the Smyrnaeans, used the following words concerning Christ, taken I know not whence: “But I know and believe that he was in the flesh after the resurrection. And when he came to Peter and his companions he said to them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit. And immediately they touched him and believed.” Irenaeus also knew of his martyrdom and mentions his epistles in the following words: “As one of our people said, when he was condemned to the beasts on account of his testimony unto God, I am God’s wheat, and by the teeth of wild beasts am I ground, that I may be found pure bread.” Polycarp also mentions these letters in the epistle to the Philippians which is ascribed to him. His words are as follows: “I exhort all of you, therefore, to be obedient and to practice all patience such as ye saw with your own eyes not only in the blessed Ignatius and Rufus and Zosimus, but also in others from among yourselves as well as in Paul himself and the rest of the apostles; being persuaded that all these ran not in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are gone to their rightful place beside the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not the present world, but him that died for our sakes and was raised by God for us.” And afterwards he adds: “You have written to me, both you and Ignatius, that if any one go to Syria he may carry with him the letters from you. And this I will do if I have a suitable opportunity, either I myself or one whom I send to be an ambassador for you also. The epistles of Ignatius which were sent to us by him and the others which we had with us we sent to you as you gave charge. They are appended to this epistle, and from them you will be able to derive great advantage. For they comprise faith and patience, and every kind of edification that pertaineth to our Lord.” So much concerning Ignatius. But he was succeeded by Heros in the episcopate of the church of Antioch.”

61. John 19. 25.

62. The Council of Ephesus (AD 431) which declared Mary *Theotokos* described itself as meeting “in the [city] of the Ephesians, where John the divine and the holy Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos*, [had been]” (Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, I. ii [Berlin/Leipzig, 1927], p. 70).

63. Luke 24. 18.

64. Pliny, Letters 10. 96 (about 112 A.D.): “To the Emperor Trajan: It is a rule, Sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of guiding my uncertainty or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials of the Christians, I am unacquainted with the method and limits to be observed either in examining or punishing them. Whether any difference is to be made on account of age, or no distinction allowed between the youngest and the adult; whether repentance admits to a pardon, or if a man has been once a Christian it avails him nothing to recant; whether the mere profession of Christianity, albeit without crimes, or only the crimes associated therewith are punishable—in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been denounced to me as Christians is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it I repeated the question twice again, adding the threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For whatever the nature of their creed might be, I could at least feel no doubt that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved chastisement. There were others also possessed with the same infatuation, but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither. These accusations spread (as is usually the case) from the mere fact of the matter being investigated and several forms of the mischief came to light. A placard was put up, without any signature, accusing a large number of persons by name. Those who denied they were, or ever had been, Christians, who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered adoration, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the gods, and who finally cursed Christ—none of which acts, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing—these I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by that informer at first confessed themselves Christian, and then denied it. True, they had been of that persuasion but they had quitted it, some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, and

cursed Christ. They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food--but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses: but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition. I therefore adjourned the proceedings, and betook myself at once to your counsel. For the matter seemed to me well worth referring to you,--especially considering the numbers endangered. Persons of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes, are, and will be, involved in the prosecution. For this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread through the villages and rural districts; it seems possible, however, to check and cure it. 'Tis certain at least that the temples, which had been almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred festivals, after a long intermission, are again revived; while there is a general demand for sacrificial animals, which for some time past have met with but few purchasers. From hence it is easy to imagine what multitudes may be reclaimed from this error, if a door be left open to repentance."

65. Trajan's Reply to Pliny Pliny, Letters 10. 97: "To Pliny: The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. It is not possible to lay down any general rule which can be applied as the fixed standard in all cases of this nature. No search should be made for these people; when they are denounced and found guilty they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that when the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not (that is, by adoring our gods) he shall be pardoned on the ground of repentance, even though he may have formerly incurred suspicion. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the spirit of the age."

66. Hegesippus in Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. III. xxxii. 7-8: "In addition to these things the same man [Hegesippus], while recounting the events of that period [the martyrdom of Symeon son of Clopas in the reign of Trajan c. AD 107], records that the Church up to that time had remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin, since, if there were any that attempted to corrupt the sound norm of the preaching of salvation, they lay until then concealed in obscure darkness. But when the sacred college of apostles had suffered death in various forms, and the generation of those that had been deemed worthy to hear the inspired wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then the league of godless error took its rise as a result of the folly of heretical teachers, who, because none of the apostles was still living, attempted henceforth, with a bold face, to proclaim, in opposition to the preaching of the truth, the 'knowledge which is falsely so-called.'"

[The Gnostic School Becomes a "Catholic Church" – Bishops Sixtus To Anicetus](#)

45. The dangers were soon realized. Within a single generation of faithful Pastor Clement, one of the elders ordained by the Bible-believing bishops of Rome crossed over to the Gnostic school founded by Simon Magus. His name was Sixtus. He is the first bishop recorded as having headed the Gnostic

school (67) (now counted as a church because it had a bishop to lead it). It is probable that the geographical proximity between the two groups, at the Vicus Patricius and the Vicus Lateranus in the Subura, facilitated fellowship between interested parties on both sides. Sixtus is said by later writers to have been the author of a book called *The Sentences*, which has no Christian element whatsoever, and is simply a rehash of half-understood, Pythagorean, pagan Greek philosophy. With that kind of interest it is no wonder that Sixtus gravitated towards the Gnostic pseudo-philosophical circle on the Vicus Lateranus. Also, according to the *Book of Popes*, a late and legendary source, but one which preserves some genuine historical nuggets, Sixtus was a son of one "Pastor". This name "Pastor" (the Shepherd) was commonly given to the prophet Hermas, and it is likely that it is Hermas who is intended here, as he seems to have lived on into the first few decades of the second century AD. Now, we know from Hermas' own book that his sons and other members of his family and church had neglected their Christian duties, and that the seriousness of the situation warranted the intervention of a heavenly messenger to warn Hermas to attend to his family, as well as to himself and to his fellow ministerial brethren. In the apostasy of Sixtus, son of "Pastor", we may see the consequences of a failure to repent on the part of at least one of his family, and Sixtus also happened to be an elder of the church. Confirming this suggestion is the evidence outlined hereafter that Hermas' brother, Pius, like Sixtus an elder of the church, was similarly drawn into the Gnostic net.

45a. Probably the end was believed by some of the Roman Christians to justify the means. Ignatius had held up the bishops as the antidote to heresy: would not this Gnostic school only benefit by a pastor like those of the faithful Christian congregations? In any case, the Gnostics seemed genuinely interested in incorporating elements of the tradition handed down from the Apostles in their own school's doctrines. Here was an example of mutual reconciliation: the Gnostics were no longer rejecting the leadership of the Bible-believers and their Jewish brethren - they were accepting it. But a little leaven leavens the lump. It was not the bishop who had won over the Gnostics, it was the Gnostics who had won over the bishop. The (magical) rituals of the Gnostics had to be maintained. The new bishops had to drop their Jewish Passover customs

and accept those of the Gnostics (68). The true believers did as Paul had said and KEPT AWAY from the heretics (and the farther the better). The Apostle John had famously fled from a bathhouse (69) when he knew a Gnostic heretic was inside, crying out to his brethren that they should get out with him in case the roof fell in for the blasphemy uttered within its walls. Sixtus, on the contrary, had now become the first of a line of bishops who FELLOWSHIPED WITH the heretics, and actually TOOK THEM UNDER PASTORAL SUPERVISION. They also attempted to obviate their disfellowshipping by usurping the rights of the Bible-believing pastors in other churches where the original Jewish Passover customs prevailed: they reserved a part of their eucharistic bread and sent fragments of it to sympathetic individuals in these other assemblies (70): they thus established a sort of supercommunion which ignored the existing (and sacred) pastoral boundaries. This was the beginning of Papal supremacy. It was also the beginning of the custom of leaving a portion of the Eucharist in the church building as an object of worship.

46. Sixtus and his successors were not the only ones in Rome to be corrupted. Even a great scholar like Tatian (71), the disciple of the renowned Bible-teacher Justin, was polluted with Gnostic error in the middle years of the second century AD. So was Pastor Florinus (72), who had been a hearer in his youth of Polycarp, the grand old disciple of John the Apostle (73). The more intellectual Christian leaders, particularly, seemed attracted to the pseudoscientific theology of the Gnostic gurus. They began to despise the simple, humble, spiritual Christianity of the Bible-believing majority. The latter were called the "Catholic Church", meaning those who, wherever they existed "throughout the world" ("Catholic" = "worldwide", "universal"), bore witness to the same Holy Ghost religion preached by the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. The Catholics were universal also in the sense that they encompassed within their communion both Jew and gentile. The Messianic Jews who honored the Law of Moses as members of the nation of Israel were a significant body in the true Catholic Church. But the pressure on Christians in Rome, particularly during the reign of Trajan, when the Jews were in disfavor with the authorities, was to spurn the Jewish Christians and make a clear separation between Church and Synagogue. The Gnostic school was an already-existing, nominally Christian, body which abhorred Judaism, had actually played

a major role in the imperial policy of persecution of the House of David, and was ready to welcome compromised believers from the Bible-believing Catholic communion. Those who wanted to be popular with the Roman authorities found a peaceful home in the school of Cerdon.

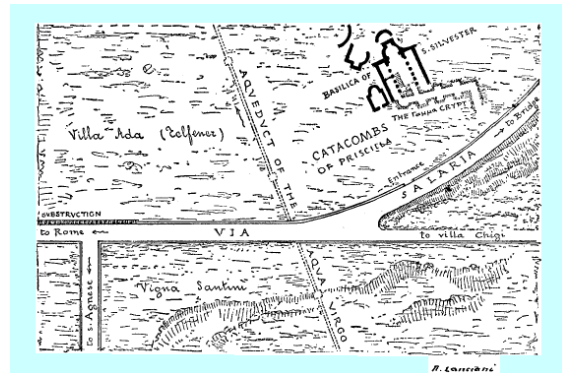
47. In the intervening years the Gnostic school was busy consolidating its political position with the Roman authorities by informing against the Jewish leadership of the Bible-believers. "Father" Simon was followed by "Father" Cerdon. Then, around AD 115-125, (73a) Sixtus, ordained by Alexander, the pastor of what used to be Clement's congregation, apostatized and became the episcopal head of the Gnostic school. Cerdon took a back seat, though evidently an influential back seat, and claimed he had "joined the Church" (74). Transformed into the leader of a heretical sect, Sixtus could still boast of his episcopal succession from the Apostles. He had been ordained by bishop Alexander, Alexander by Evaristus and Evaristus by Clement, and so on back to Linus and the Apostles. But that was before he had apostatized. It in no way authorized his apostasy into Gnosticism. He had now abandoned the true Faith and, with it, all claims he may have once had to be a true elder and bishop. Only those who viewed ordination as some kind of magical rite would imagine that Sixtus was still, after his apostasy, a validly ordained minister of the Gospel. Yet that is precisely how the Gnostic school on the Vicus Lateranus viewed him. In practice, the relationship between the new bishops of the First Church, Sixtus and his immediate successors, and the heretical teachers, who continued to inspire it doctrinally, was similar to the political relationship between a constitutional head of state, who has no actual power, and a prime minister, who runs the day-to-day business of government. Real power rested in the hands of the heretical teachers, Cerdon and his successor, Marcion.

48. According to an early Church tradition preserved by Epiphanius of Salamis (75) Marcion was an immigrant to Rome from Pontus in Turkey, who had once professed to be an ascetic - a man eschewing the luxuries of the world in the service of Jesus - but had failed to live up to his calling. He had been excommunicated from his own Bible-believing Church in his homeland of Pontus, the pastor of which was his own father, because he had had an immoral relationship with an unmarried girl

in the congregation. When he arrived in Rome, he first attempted to join the Bible-believing assembly in the city. They discovered the skeleton in his cupboard and refused him communion. He then crossed over to Cerdon's sect. He had no trouble joining that group! Now he had doctrinal justification for his separation from the Bible-believers. He challenged the elders of the Bible-believing assembly to answer the Gnostic problems Cerdon had, to his own satisfaction, solved. They declined to enter into the fruitless debate, and Marcion gloated in his new role of Gnostic theologian, guru and speculator. After Cerdon's death, he became head of Cerdon's school. His ambition proved his undoing, however. In the meantime Cerdon's sect had become a "church" under the supervision of bishops, the "First Church of Rome". Marcion's ever-restless curiosity and doctrinal speculating finally brought him into conflict with the latter-day, increasingly ambitious and strong-willed, bishops of the First Church. He was excommunicated. He then established a Gnostic church of his own. This prospered and spread abroad, surviving for hundreds of years in the East.

49. Following in the footsteps of Sixtus, another elder from the Bible-believing group, called Pius, crossed over to the Gnostics. Sixtus, seemingly, was the son, and Pius the brother, of the prophet Hermas. It was a family feud as bitter and as dangerous in its consequences as that between Cain and Abel. Pius had at one time ministered in the house of Pudens (Linus' friend) (76), where Clement's group assembled for meetings. This ancient house-church (77) (*ecclesia domestica*), to which we have already frequently referred, the mother of the godly Christians of Rome, and traditionally the mother of the British Church (78) as well, can still be seen on the Viminal Hill. It is known as "Santa Pudenziana". There were Roman baths in the building, called the Baths of Novatus or "the Timothinian Baths" which provided a hall sufficient for the meetings; they were so named from Novatus and Timothy, two Christian brothers associated with Pudens (some call them his sons), and this Timothy was anciently identified with Paul's beloved disciple. The house was later titled "Saint Pudenziana" (Santa Pudenziana), or "Saint Potentiana", after one of Pudens' daughters. She is variously named Potentiana or Pudenziana in the old records and her sister was called Praxedes. Members of this family were buried in the

Catacomb of Priscilla on the Via Salaria outside the walls of the city. This was the cemetery for the earliest Bible-believing Catholics of Rome, founded, according to tradition, by Pudens' noble Christian mother Priscilla - a different woman from Priscilla the wife of Aquila, but probably a member of the same Roman household. Inscriptions and frescoes from that primitive era can still be seen there today.



THE AREA OF THE CATACOMBS OF PRISCILLA

on the Via Salaria (from Lacus Curtius' online edition of Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*).

50. The same house-church was known when it met at an earlier period in the house of Pudens' himself on the Vicus Patricius, rather than in the hall of the neighboring Baths of Novatus, as the "Church of the Shepherd". The Shepherd was Pastor Hermas, though the name also referred to his angelic visitor. The Gnostic meeting-place on the Vicus Lateranus Pius named "Praxedes", today Santa Prassede, after Pudens' other daughter, thus falsely associating the Gnostic church he had just joined with the Bible-believing Catholic fellowship he had abandoned. He also constituted the church on the Lateranus as the official "House-church of Rome" (Latin: *titulus Romanus*). (See note 77 §3 for the full account.) He was claiming, in effect, to be the sole legitimate successor of the line of Bible-believing bishops at Pudens' house-church before Sixtus. The only real connection was that the heretical group on the Vicus Lateranus seems to have originally been founded by Junia and Andronicus who later, after its fall into heresy, separated from it and became the apostles of the fellowship to which Pudens belonged and which at some subsequent time assembled in Pudens' house.

51. Pius' apostasy and betrayal of the godly believers at Santa Pudenziana brought him what he lacked in their humble company, namely, worldly acclaim and social advancement: he was, at any rate, promoted to become the bishop of the apostate Gnostic church at an advanced age. One of the most infamous Gnostic heretics, Valentinus, like his fellow church-member, Marcion, "flourished" under the ministry of Pius (79). Meanwhile, the true Catholic church at the Baths of Novatus and Timothy (Santa Pudenziana) continued to meet during the lifetime of Pudens' daughters, under the pastorship of the old prophet, Hermas (commonly called simply "Pastor") in the first few decades of the second century AD (80). Shortly thereafter it was blessed with the presence of the Bible-teachers Hegesippus and Justin, and the house-church in the latter's time was under the authority of a brother called Martinus, the son, it appears, of a freedman of Timothy >>. The succession of bishops at Santa Pudenziana seems actually to have been under the guiding hand of Hegesippus (80a), who was a Messianic Jew, and a transmitter of the most authentic, Apostolic, teaching of the early Church. He travelled all the way to Rome from the East to help deal with these ecclesiastical problems in Rome. As for Justin, he states clearly that he recognized no Christian, true Catholic, assembly in the city, except for the one that met at the Timothian Baths (Santa Pudenziana), both in his first sojourn in Rome (not dated but within about a decade of AD 135) and in his second, at the end of which he was brought to trial in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180) (81). The other Bible-believing house-church at Santa Prisca had long ceased to operate: Aquila and Priscilla had moved to Ephesus, on the evidence of Paul's last letter to Timothy, way back in the 60s of the first century AD. The only other church known to have existed within the city walls of Rome in Justin's time was the Gnostic meeting at Santa Prassede and that, of course, did not count as Christian in Justin's estimation.

52. Justin himself was a Christian philosopher by profession. He had been converted before AD 135 in the East and had witnessed to Christ boldly and with great erudition in the city of Ephesus, before he journeyed to Rome, having fellowshiped in the circle of the disciples of the Apostle John. The Church he attended in Rome was very different from the philosophical school on the Vicus Lateranus, though one might have expected him, as

a professional philosopher, to tend in that direction. No, his house-church at the Timothian Baths was on fire for God. The Romans witnessed under its anointed ministry healing miracles and many cases of deliverance from demons (82). This was the vindication of true Catholic teaching: signs of the presence of the resurrected Savior followed the preaching of the Word.

53. However, the rival Gnostic school of Sixtus and Pius at Santa Prassede soon began to call itself a "Catholic" church, in fact, "THE Catholic Church". It boasted of its line of bishops, going back to the Apostles, Peter and Paul. In this sense only, and that an illegitimate one, could it claim apostolic origin, in the sense that Linus, the first in the line of bishops before Sixtus, had been ordained by apostles. If this so-called "Catholic" church was reproached with having heretical doctrine and ritual, which were innovations of the Gnostics, it emphasized that it was the OLDEST, ORIGINAL and FIRST Church of Rome. And indeed, IT WAS THE FIRST CHURCH OF ROME - it was the original Pentecostal church that had backslidden into Gentile paganism in the days of Claudius.

54. Now, the bishops of this First Church of Rome started to call themselves "Father", the title inherited from its Gnostic founders. This was a pagan, not a Christian, practice, since Jesus had specifically forbidden any Christian leader to be addressed as "Father". To describe a person as a "father", either in a genetic or a spiritual sense, was permissible (Romans 9. 5, I Corinthians 4. 15), but for one Christian brother to address another by that title, thus making a hierarchic separation as of an inferior to a superior between himself and the addressee, was forbidden. Jesus required communion to be on an equal footing between all members of the brotherhood. God alone could be addressed as "Father", Christ alone as "Master" or "Rabbi". (Matthew 23. 8-10.) The bishops of the First Church ignored this strict injunction. At the same time they became as particular as the Gnostic teachers in the congregation about ceremonies and rituals. The rituals were treated like magical rites; they had to be performed in a certain way, at a certain time, in a certain state of ritual purity. One of their most important celebrations was a spring festival which they called "Passover" preceded by a (Lenten) fast which Tertullian - a former member of the First Church of Rome - admitted to be

essentially the same as in the cult of the Great Mother Goddess (83) (called Cybele, Isis, Astarte etc. by the Romans). Tertullian claimed that this kind of paganizing ritual fast was condemned only coincidentally and not intentionally by the Apostle Paul, in his denunciation of those who commanded "to abstain from meats" (I Timothy 4. 3), because his ire was really directed against *Jewish* fasting of the Mosaic Law. On this interpretation, *Jewish* fasting was forbidden, *paganizing* (Montanist) fasting was permissible! The anti-Semitic motive here shines through. Centuries later the so-called Christian spring festival was given the name "Easter" by the English-speaking peoples, from one of the Mother Goddess' English names, "Eostre" (83a). The First Church of Rome thoroughly despised the scriptural, Jewish Passover celebration - an aversion explicable in the light of their anti-Judaic Samaritan origins - even though the Apostles themselves, being Jews by nationality, had celebrated the Passover in the Jewish manner, and so did their Jewish disciples. It was still the practice in the Bible-believing Catholic Church, and amongst its Gentile members, to celebrate a memorial of the Lord's death at the time that the Jews celebrated the Passover. Even this timing was condemned by the First Church of Rome. To be efficacious, in their view, the festival must be performed in the correct (magical) manner, at precisely the right time of year. In any case, the First Church of Rome wanted nothing to do with Judaism, and the same anti-Semitic spirit has persisted to this day.

55. If there was ever any illusion that the placement of Sixtus or Pius, ordinands of the Catholic Bible-believers, at the head of this group would bring it back to God, that illusion was soon shattered. It actually served to reinforce their obstinacy and false sense of superiority. New and more virulent Gnostic teachers were attracted to this unusual "Catholic" church. Valentinus found a home there for his mystical doctrines in the episcopate of Hyginus (84) and the Carpocratian heretic, Marcellina, for her idolatrous images under Anicetus (85). Image-worship was condoned by the First Church (86) on the pretext that it was only the despised "Jewish" Law that forbade idolatry, and that the Apostles suppressed its public practice because they were pandering to the scruples of "weaker" Jewish brethren amongst the gentiles. As the years went by and bishop succeeded bishop in the First Church, the heresies became institutionalized. The true

Catholics were dismayed and discouraged.

56. The aged bishop Polycarp of Smyrna, who had in his youth sat at the feet of John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, was filled with fatherly concern for the Christians in Rome. He traveled thousands of miles, in spite of the infirmities of his great age, from Smyrna on the coast of Turkey, to the capital of the Empire, to apprise the situation for himself. Like Ignatius, but with less rigidity, Polycarp's inclination was to exalt the bishop's role as a bulwark against Gnosticism. He went straight to work amongst the Bible-believers, and held meetings which were even attended by Bishop Anicetus (87). All Polycarp's efforts were directed to reforming the church at Santa Prassede. The Bishop, for his part, kept disagreements to a minimum. It looked as though Polycarp had succeeded. In front of the whole congregation, and shamed by the spiritual eminence of the disciple of John, Anicetus yielded the celebration of the Lord's supper to Polycarp. In fact, multitudes were persuaded by the personal testimony of Polycarp and were converted from the heretical teachers to true Christianity (88).

57. But the heretical leaders themselves, Marcion and Valentinus being the most important, were not for a long time yet (and then for a different reason) excluded from the First Church (89) and the heathen rituals and doctrines continued. The First Church prided itself in its "multi-faith" approach. Some had images of Jesus and the saints, as well as of the heathen philosophers and deities (90). They prostrated themselves before these idols and served them in the usual pagan manner. The idolatry went back to the original "father" of the First Church. There were idols amongst them called "Lord" and "Lady" (91) which were actually images of Simon Magus and his mistress Helena, their names changed to obscure their identity. To refer to them as Simon and Helena was forbidden. The "Lord" (Simon) was made in the form of the god Jupiter, and the "Lady" (Helena) in the form of the goddess Minerva. Now, Simon Magus himself had been an idiosyncratic devotee of the religion of the Magi. The most popular Magian cult in the Empire at that period was Mithraism, and the name of the god Mithras meant "The Mediator"; he was the god of contracts and oaths. This explains why the statue erected to Simon Magus on the island in the Tiber, the base of which was rediscovered in 1574, was

sculpted in the form of the god Semo Sancus, the "god of the oath", this being the Roman deity most nearly corresponding in function to Mithras. It was a common practice in that era to sculpt famous figures with attributes of a deity (e.g. the Emperor Claudius with attributes of Jupiter), as though the god had descended to earth and taken on human form as that person, so this statue would quite be in keeping with the spirit of the age. Of course, the followers of Simon also equated the god's name Semo with the name of their "father", Simon. The inscription on the base of the statue (92) read "Semoni Sanco Deo Fidio Sacrum", meaning "Dedicated to Semo Sancus the God of the Oath". The Gnostics read it as "To Simon (Semoni) the Holy (Sanco = Sancto, holy or sacred) God (Deo)" Semo Sancus was also identified with Jupiter by the Romans themselves, so the statue of Simon made in the form of the god Jupiter was probably just another specimen of this multi-faith god, Semo, Jupiter, or Mithras, deliberately sculpted to reflect the facial characteristics of Simon Magus, if it was not, indeed, this same statue on the island in the Tiber. But a reverence for Simon Magus - even under his proper name - survived for centuries in the Roman church. As late as the sixth century AD *Acts* of the Roman "saints" were concocted which honored Simon Magus with a place amongst the martyrs!

58. The rituals of the Mithraic Magi are significant in the light of how the First Church of Rome developed. There can be little doubt as to the source whence the following nonbiblical rites and ceremonies crept into the Papal religion. The Mithraic priests were called "father" and their chief priest, the "father of fathers", the very image of a pope, always resided at Rome. The priests wore a mitre-like, pointed, Phrygian cap and carried a shepherd's staff in their hand. Mithras was called CHRESTOS, the "Good One", a common variant of the name Christ. Initiates were marked on their forehead in water with the sign of a cross (symbolic of the sun's crossing over the celestial equator at the spring equinox). Women were excluded from the cult. Mithras was identified with the Sun, the Light of Heaven unconquered by the powers of darkness; accordingly, the Mithraists' holy day was Sunday, the day of the "Unconquered Sun", and December 25th (the winter solstice, following which the sun begins to rise higher in the sky) was the birthday of their god. A perpetual fire was kept burning in their sanctuaries. The Mithraists celebrated a sacred meal

in which they ate bread and wine, these elements being believed to infuse a magical virtue into those who partook of them. Furthermore, the Mithraic religion had been combined in the city of Pergamum in Turkey with the cult of Cybele, the "Mother of the Gods", worshipped alongside her divine consort Sabazius (identified with Zeus or Jupiter) – a cult which heretical Jews had introduced into Rome over a 100 years before the time of Christ (92a). The sign of Sabazius, a raised hand with the thumb and the middle and index fingers held upright and the other two fingers folded down, many representations of which are discovered by archaeologists, is today the characteristic sign of blessing of the Pope. Cybele was identified with the Mithraists' chief goddess, Anaitis and Sabazius with Mithras. In this mixed form Mithraism had become popular at Rome, even with the emperors - Nero and Commodus (two of the most vicious emperors of all) being keen adherents: this meant that both Nero and Commodus were cult brothers of the Gnostic followers of Simon Magus, and would be prepared to use state power to argue their cause. It was this same cult's "Great Mother Goddess" Cybele whose spring festival was identical to the "Passover" feast of the First Church of Rome. In fact, Cybele, Anaitis, Minerva, Astarte, Isis etc. amongst the Romans of that era were simply so many names of this "Great Mother Goddess". She was called the "Queen of Heaven" and the "Mother of God". Because of her feminine tenderness she was commonly served with an "unbloody" sacrifice. The priest lifted up in front of her idol the unbloody sacrifice of a piece of bread baked in a round shape to honor the Sun, and poured out the wine (rather than allowing the congregation to drink it) as a libation at the base of the statue.

59. All this had the tacit, if not the public, approval of the Bishop Anicetus. It is no wonder in the revival atmosphere at Rome during the visit of Polycarp that Anicetus shrunk from celebrating his pagan communion in the presence of that great patriarch. Anicetus would not yield on the principle and doctrine of his spring festival, however. He claimed it had always been celebrated like that in his church. The Bible-believers' concern about the content of the Gnostic cult was diverted into a fruitless debate about the calendrical timing of the "Passover" celebration and the length of the preceding (Lenten) fast. Details like that were of no interest to the Catholics. The anxiety of the heretics,

on their side, to receive recognition from Polycarp is illustrated by the famous occasion (93) on which the Gnostic archheretic Marcion approached Polycarp and inquired "Do you recognize us?" Polycarp replied "Yes, I do recognize you - the firstborn of Satan." However, by the adroitness, subtlety and blatant hypocrisy of Bishop Anicetus, the issues were fudged and, in the end, it was the First Church that gained points from Polycarp's visit. Once he was gone, they held up Anicetus' attendance at the Eucharistic celebration as apostolic validation of their cult.

Footnotes

67. §1. In his letter to Victor, Bishop of the First Church of Rome, Irenaeus lists the bishops of that church preceding Victor. A substantial fragment of Irenaeus' letter is preserved in Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.*, V. xxiv. 11-17. The list of bishops is found *ibid.* 14: "Among these [the ones who held on to customs, like the First Church of Rome Passover ritual, which were not strictly in accord with Apostolic practice, *ibid.* 13] were the presbyters before Soter, who presided over the church [the First Church of Rome] which thou [Victor] now rulest. We mean [working back in time] Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus [Sixtus]. They neither observed it [the Jewish Passover celebration] themselves, nor did they permit those after them to do so. And yet though not observing it, they were none the less at peace with those who came to them from the residential districts [of other churches] in which it was observed; although this observance was more opposed to those who did not observe it." [For the continuation of this quotation see [note 70](#) below.] This list only goes as far back as Sixtus then stops abruptly. Irenaeus gives no indication that there were any bishops of that particular church before Sixtus. Yet we know that there were bishops in Rome before Sixtus: Irenaeus himself informs us elsewhere (see [note 35](#)). These were, working back in time from Sixtus: Alexander, Evaristus, Clement, Anencletus, Linus). This suggests the possibility that the pre-Sixtine bishops did not preside over "the church over which thou [Victor] now rulest", as Irenaeus puts it, but over some other church. The evidence for the following observations, confirming this suggestion, will be provided in the footnotes at relevant places in the main text. They form a summary of the reasoning which leads us to believe there were, in the second century AD, two separate churches in Rome, one a Bible-believing fellowship, and the second a gathering of Gnostic heretics under bishops who falsely claimed to be orthodox in faith.

§2. The church at the Timothian Baths was the church where Justin Martyr fellowshiped throughout both periods he was resident in Rome. This is believed to be the church now known as Santa Pudenziana, which received its name from the Timothy to whom the Roman Baths in that location, according to tradition, were bequeathed, and which were otherwise known as the Baths of Novatus, from Timothy's brother, see further §§5 and 6. The existence of Roman Baths at Santa Pudenziana already in the first half of the second century AD has been confirmed by excavation. Justin states he did not recognize any other church in the city, and also the brethren in his fellowship held no communion with the Gnostic heretics, like Valentinus and Marcion. However, the church ruled by the bishops from Sixtus to Victor did hold communion with these heretics (see further §3) throughout the period Justin Martyr was ministering in the capital. This is the most stark, historical, evidence of the separation of two churches in Rome in the second century AD. In the account of the Martyrdom of Justin and his companions (ch. 2), Justin corrects a perceived misunderstanding of the interrogating prefect that the Christians assembled (or ought to have assembled) in one place in Rome, by stating that that Christians do not fellowship in one and the same place, but in different locations "where each one chooses and can".

§3. A similar situation is envisaged in Epiphanius' account of Marcion, extracted, as is much else in Epiphanius, from circumstantial, early church

records, this probably from a lost work of Hippolytus. When Marcion arrived in Rome (just after the death of Hyginus, and therefore in the time of Pius), being from a Bible-believing, orthodox, background in Pontus, he tried to join the Bible-believing church in Rome. That church refused him communion, because of his immoral conduct in Pontus. He then joined what is called "Cerdon's sect" in the source used by Epiphanius. Later Marcion became head of this sect. Now, Cerdon is known to have been, in actual fact, a professing member of the First Church of Rome, from an era at least as early as the episcopate of Telesphorus. In other words, Marcion, after being rejected by the orthodox church, joined the First Church of Rome, which at that time included in its ranks the heretic Cerdon. This is confirmed, in respect of what relates to Marcion, by Irenaeus, Tertullian and other writers, who state clearly that Marcion was, indeed, a member of a church, and that church was the First Church of Rome, from the time of bishop Pius all the way till the time of bishop Eleutherus (Tertullian's date), by whom he was finally expelled. This was the church of Sixtus and his successors, the one which welcomed fellowship with heretics, including, amongst many others, Marcion and Valentinus. On Justin's evidence, it had nothing to do with the other mentioned Bible-believing fellowship. There was one church in Rome which Marcion never succeeded in joining, viz. the Bible-believing one, and another church in Rome which he did succeed in joining, viz. the same First Church of Rome in which Cerdon professed orthodox faith, but from which he (Marcion) was later expelled. Here is evidence confirming the existence of two churches in Rome in the second century AD, with very different rules of admission and practice.

§4. Another witness to the separation of two churches in Rome in the latter quarter of the second century AD and the first quarter of the second, is Hippolytus of Rome. One church in Hippolytus is a Bible-believing assembly, and the other church is the First Church of Rome, with its line of monarchical bishops including (in Hippolytus' day) Victor, Zephyrinus and Callistus, and with heretics, not only fellowshiping freely within it, but also influencing the trend of its teaching. In his *Refutation of All Heresies* Hippolytus represents himself as a bishop of a church, with a ministry centered on Rome, but not a bishop in the church ruled by Victor and his successors, Zephyrinus and Callistus, viz. the First Church of Rome. Hippolytus calls his fellow church-members the "brethren" and says that he and his did not at any time have any collusion with the "school" of the heretics who followed the doctrine of Noetus, which increased greatly under the "succession" of such bishops as Zephyrinus and Callistus, but was already present in that church before the time of Zephyrinus (i.e. at least as early as Victor). The scandalous and criminal life of Bishop Callistus of the First Church is vividly portrayed by Hippolytus, who was his contemporary. No mention is made in the narrative of any schism initiated by Hippolytus or his fellow believers from the other church. On the contrary, the already existing, and permanent, separation is taken for granted. Only at times there would be discussions between Hippolytus and his people and members of the other church, in order to win the latter back to the true faith. The bishops of the First Church pretended to be orthodox in faith and gave verbal assent to Hippolytus' point of view (certainly they were unable to answer Hippolytus' fierce, Biblical, logic), but nevertheless continued to tolerate the heretical teachers. Now, Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus. Irenaeus had himself been present in Rome at the time of Bishop Eleutherus of the First Church, but did not, as Eleutherus did, fellowship with heretics. Irenaeus was also a staunch upholder of the doctrine of Justin Martyr and of Hermas. I.e. Irenaeus seems to have fellowshiped with the Christians of Justin's group at Santa Pudenziana, whilst Hippolytus, his disciple, seems to have continued his work there as bishop. Hippolytus treats the other congregation as a Catholic church in name only, and one which indiscriminately fellowshiped with heretics and was, indeed, under their controlling influence. This work of Hippolytus was, for understandable reasons, "lost" for many centuries and was only recovered in the nineteenth century from a single copy preserved in the Orthodox monastery of Mount Athos. Pope Damasus confirms the existence of a schism between Hippolytus and the First Church of Rome by reporting the tradition that Hippolytus remained till his end a presbyter in what he refers to as "the schism of Novatus," though Damasus was willing to interpret Hippolytus' description before his martyrdom of the true faith as "Catholic" to mean that he may have latterly returned repentant to the First Church! (Sylloge Corbeiensis, Epitaph of Hippolytus). Novatus fellowshiped for a time with Novatian, the leader of a rival church in Rome in the first half of the third century AD, that is, evidently, the church of which Hippolytus was bishop. (Novatus, not Novatian, subsequently lapsed into heresy, and the First Church deliberately confused the orthodox Bible-teacher Novatian with the lapsed heretic Novatus.) Actually, it was the First Church that was in schism from the Bible-believers. This notice

lets us know, incidentally, that the church at Santa Pudenziana was in the third century AD the church attended by the Novatianists or followers of Novatian (also called, incorrectly and slanderously, Cathari and Novatians, the followers of Novatus), who were in permanent "schism" from the First Church of Rome and its allies throughout the third and fourth centuries AD.

§5. Going back now to the beginning of the second century or the very end of the first, we find in *The Shepherd of Hermas* the prophet Hermas describing in his vision a congregation with which his own church in Rome (the church of Clement) did not hold communion, led by a false prophet or sorcerer seated on a *kathedra*, or episcopal throne. Members of Hermas' church, however, had been seduced into attending the meeting of this false prophet. Furthermore, Hermas specifically attacks in his book what we would call the Docetist, Gnostic, belief that pure spirit alone is of real consequence, and the flesh unimportant, which suggests - in view of the fact that the Gnostics were also sorcerers - that this false prophet and sorcerer is one of the Docetist Gnostics (perhaps Cerdon himself) who are known to have operated in Rome in the era of Hermas, i.e. about the time of Domitian. Considering that the word *kathedra* has such negative connotations in *The Shepherd of Hermas*, both in this vision and earlier ones, it is remarkable to find it stated in the Muratorian Canon, dating from the end of the second century AD, that Hermas' own brother, Pius (the Pius in Irenaeus' list above §1), occupied the *kathedra* of a church in Rome at the time *The Shepherd of Hermas* was put into writing. The hint here, as well as elsewhere in the book of Hermas, where it repeatedly highlights the need for repentance in the troubled household of Hermas himself, is that Hermas' own brother may have crossed over to the Gnostics and become a bishop amongst them in another "church" in Rome. This is confirmed by a seemingly reliable, ecclesiastical, tradition, different elements of which are preserved fossilized in the apocryphal *Acts of Pastor and Timothy* and in the *Liber Pontificalis* (see [note 77](#) below). The tradition informs us that in the time of one of the bishops in Irenaeus' list, viz. Pius, there were, indeed, two churches in Rome, and the tradition identifies them as Santa Prassede [Latin: *Praxedis*] and Santa Pudenziana [*Pudentiana*], though Pius seems to have used the form *Potentiana*, the name being derived from that of Pudens' daughter]. Pius is described as having ministered *at some earlier period* in Santa Pudenziana, where Hermas (his natural brother) was pastor. Since only two churches in Rome are mentioned in this tradition and Pius is bishop of Rome, it follows that Santa Prassede is the church where Pius usually ministered as bishop. I.e. Santa Prassede is the First Church of Rome (see further §6). It could not have been otherwise, if only two churches existed in Rome at that time, since we know that the church at Santa Pudenziana (Pudentiana) did not fellowship with heretics, whereas Pius, at his church, did. His church must be that other church mentioned in the apocryphal tradition, viz. Santa Prassede (Praxedis). The apocryphal work does not inform us whether Pius moved from Santa Pudenziana peacefully or in consequence of some conflict, but the evidence already given points to a schism between the two churches.

§6. The Senator Rufus Pudens, whose house is said to have been converted into the house-church Santa Pudenziana, is traditionally connected with Hermas (in Romans 16. 13f.) as well as with two of the bishops preceding Sixtus known from other lists in Irenaeus and elsewhere, namely Linus ("Pudens and Linus" II Timothy 4. 21) and Clement (*Shepherd of Hermas* VIS. II. iv. 3). This confirms the association of the pre-Sixtine bishops with Santa Pudenziana. The bishops before Sixtus appear, therefore, to have ministered at Santa Pudenziana, whilst Sixtus moved to the other church, Santa Prassede (which did not receive the name Santa Prassede [*Praxedis*] till the time of Pius), where he was followed as bishop by Telesphorus, and the rest up to Pius, Victor and so forth. Hermas was at some point also bishop at Santa Pudenziana, according to the *Acts of Pastor and Timothy*, and since he does not appear in Irenaeus' pre-Sixtine list, he seems to have taken the pastor's position after Alexander (the last of the pre-Sixtine bishops) at roughly the time Sixtus crossed over to the Gnostics, i.e. c. AD 115-125.

§7. It can be concluded from this that the First Church of Rome with its bishops from Sixtus through Pius, Eleutherus, Victor etc. was, in the earliest period, the sect of Cerdon, masquerading as a church. Cerdon continued in his role of Gnostic guru and seems simply to have accepted Sixtus and his successors with the title of "bishop", and no great doctrinal influence, in his remodeled "sect-cum-church". In fact, Irenaeus distinctly tells us that Cerdon "came into the church" and "professed orthodox faith" after an undetermined period in which he was a Gnostic teacher, and that he "continued" professing orthodox faith under bishop Hyginus, one of the successors of Sixtus. The word "continued" implies that he "joined the church" at least as early as the time of bishop Hyginus' predecessor,

Telesphorus, and, on the evidence produced here, more probably in the time of Telesphorus' predecessor, Sixtus. The precise sequence of events is no longer traceable in the fragments of second-century ecclesiastical literature which have survived. The date of Cerdon's arrival in Rome, even, is not certain; but his inspiration came from Simon himself and his immediate circle, according to the earliest and most reliable witness, Irenaeus, therefore a first century date is preferable. The third-century Anti-Marcionite poem alleges Cerdon arrived in Rome in the days of Telesphorus, but only to inflict "new wounds" after he had *already* been expelled by the faithful brethren for secret heretical teaching. Anti-Marcionite Poem, III. 282-293: "Sixth ALEXANDER commends the flock to SIXTUS, and he, after the period of his duty was complete, hands it on to TELESPHORUS. The latter was a shining example and a faithful martyr, following the former, a fellow-believer in the Law and a reliable teacher, when the fellow-believer in your [the Marcionites'] wickedness, (your) forerunner and founder, came to Rome, afflicting new wounds, that is, Cerdo, after having been thrown out, because he was spreading the intimations and words of poison in secret, for which he was driven from the ranks and then brought forth this sacrilegious brood by inspiration of the Serpent. The vibrant Church of Rome stood firm in piety, having been formed by Peter, whose successor now too he was, HYGINUS, taking the (bishop's) seat [cathedram] in ninth place." CARMINIS ADVERSUS MARCIONITAS LIBER III. "282 SEXTUS ALEXANDER SIXTO commendat ovile, 283 post expleta sui qui lustris tempora tradit 284 TELESPHORO; excellens hic erat martyrique fidelis 285 (post illum socius legis certusque magister), 286 cum vestri scleris socius, praecursor et auctor 287 advenit Romam Cerdo nova vulnera gestans, 288 deictus, quoniam voces et verba veneni 289 spargebat furtim; quapropter ab agmine pulsus 290 sacrilegum genus hoc genuit spirante dracone. 291 constabat pietate vigens ecclesia Romae 292 composita a Petro, cuius successor et ipse 293 iamque loco nono cathedram suscepit HYGINUS." It could be that Sixtus set up a church separate from Santa Pudenziana at the location later known as Santa Prassede and Cerdon and his sectarian colleagues joined it in the time of Telesphorus or in the time of Sixtus himself. In that case, the bishop provided a new ecclesiastical home for the wandering Gnostics of Rome who had been present in the capital since the earliest days of Emperor Claudius. Alternatively, Sixtus physically moved to the location later known as Santa Prassede, where Cerdon was already seated on his Gnostic *kathedra*, during the time he was teaching in secret. The latter alternative seems preferable inasmuch as Hermas depicts in his vision a sorcerer and false prophet (i.e. a Gnostic heretic), not a backslidden bishop, already seated on a *kathedra* in Rome, and members of Hermas' church (at Santa Pudenziana) are being seduced into attending his meeting - which is precisely the scenario envisioned if Sixtus moved into the Gnostic church.

§8. Though Cerdon professed to have "joined the church" by accepting an ordained bishop from Santa Pudenziana, the truth seems to have been that the bishop had joined the sect of Cerdon. Strong evidence of a more or less open embracing of Gnosticism in the First Church is the continued fellowshiping of its members, under the succession of these bishops, with heretics - a thing unknown amongst the orthodox. Again, the trend in the First Church, as in Gnosticism, was against Judaism and against Judaizing practices of the kind which were common amongst the orthodox. The bishops of the First Church celebrated thereafter a form of non-Jewish, or rather anti-Jewish, "Passover", which was condemned by the orthodox (as we learn from Tertullian in his tract *On Fasting*) as a borrowing or imitation of the cult of the Great Mother goddess. This kind of religious syncretism was the hallmark of Gnostic heresy. The First Church absolutely insisted on the practice of its ritual, like some magic rite, and, when it was able to, enforced it on others. It became, in consequence, a source of bitter contention in the early Church all the way into the medieval period. The rigid adherence of Sixtus and his successors on the *kathedra* of the First Church to this paganizing ritual indicates that, intellectually, the movement of Sixtus was *away* from the Bible-believing tenets of the church at Santa Pudenziana and *towards* the Gnostic heretics, who made the transition easy by professing orthodoxy. Some time thereafter, according to the account of Irenaeus, Cerdon's ecclesiastical charade was exposed by the Bible teachers and the separation of communion between the "brethren", as Irenaeus calls them, i.e. the orthodox Bible-believers, and Cerdon was severed. This implies that there was a doubt for a time whether Cerdon had genuinely "repented" and joined the church, by accepting the ministry of the bishops. Hence, it may be, the false accreditation granted to this church at Santa Prassede on occasion by orthodox churches. The bishops in the line of Sixtus claimed that their church was the "first" or "original" church in Rome (Gk. *archaiotate*, used

55 *The First Church of Rome*

of that church by Origen in the time of Zephyrinus, Eusebius Hist. Ecc. VI. xiv. 10, or Lat. *principalis*, as used of that same church by Cyprian). And so it was, because, whether the bishops had joined the Gnostics, or the Gnostics had joined the bishops, the First Church was the ecclesiastical home in Rome of the Gnostic heretics, whilst the Gnostic heretics originated from the school of Simon Magus, which was, in turn, composed of Gentile converts to Simon's Gnosticism from the earliest and original church in Rome, viz. the Gentile members of the Church of Priscilla and Aquila, and Andronicus and Junia, before the time of Claudius. It was that group of schismatics and heretics denounced shortly thereafter by Paul in Romans 16. 17f.

68. For a reference to the Paschal controversy in the time of Hermas and Sixtus see [Appendix 8](#).

69. Irenaeus Adv. Haer. III. iii. 4: "To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time, – a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles, – that, namely, which is handed down by the Church. There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bathhouse without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Dost thou recognize us?" "I do recognize thee, the first-born of Satan." Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

70. Irenaeus, from the letter to Victor quoted by Eusebius, Church History, V. xxiv. 15-17: "But none were ever cast out on account of this form [the Jewish Passover]; but the presbyters before thee [viz. before Victor, meaning the bishops from Sixtus up to Victor, as partially listed just prior to this, see note 67 above] who did not observe it, sent the Eucharist to people from the residential districts [of other churches] who themselves observed it, and furthermore, at the time when the blessed Polycarp visited Rome in the time of Anicetus, and having little things against each other on other points, they [viz. the presbyters of the First Church who did not keep the Jewish Passover, and those from other church districts who did] quickly made peace amongst themselves, not caring to quarrel over this matter. For neither was Anicetus able to persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John the disciple of our Lord [i.e. the Jewish Passover celebration], and the other apostles with whom he had associated; neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, as he [Anicetus] said that he ought to follow the customs of the presbyters that had preceded him. And in this state of affairs, they held communion amongst themselves. Also Anicetus conceded the Eucharist in the church to Polycarp, evidently out of a feeling of shame. And they settled the matter between them in peace, both those who observed [the Jewish Passover], and those who did not, maintaining the peace of the whole church." This passage indicates that Anicetus, the bishop of the First Church, was concerned at the impact Polycarp (who practiced the Jewish Passover of the Apostle John) made on the Christians in Rome. Anicetus' practice had been to send the First Church's eucharist to members of other groups who observed the Jewish Passover. Evidently, the important thing for the bishops of the First Church was to ensure that these outsiders at least *partook* of their (magical) elements. They, on the other hand, absolutely abstained from the Jewish Passover. This practice continued during Polycarp's visit, but the outsiders who received Anicetus' eucharist seem to have been influenced by Polycarp, *on other matters*, against the practice of the First Church ("having little things against each other ... not caring to quarrel over this matter"). In these differences we can see the beginning of a movement like that which developed shortly thereafter in the time when Anicetus' deacon, Eleutherus, became bishop, namely the Montanist movement. This was composed of Christians who accepted the First Church's Paschal practice and other elements of its cult, but were also influenced by the charismatic ministries of the disciples of John. This

proved to be a sore trial for the First Church bishops, and led eventually to a schism in the First Church itself, and the separation from it of Tertullian and the Cataprocian Montanists. The Paschal custom of the First Church was later condemned in the 14th Canon of the Laodicean Council, "On not sending the sacred elements for the purpose of imparting blessings, at the time of the Paschal feast, to other residential districts." (This custom is to be strictly differentiated from the orthodox practice of sending remainders of the eucharistic elements to absent members of the local church in the same residential area, e.g. to those absent through sickness or other urgent necessity [Justin, Apol. I. 67].)

71. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I. xxviii. 1: "Springing from Saturninus and Marcion, those who are called Encratites (self-controlled) preached against marriage, thus setting aside the original creation of God, and indirectly blaming Him who made the male and female for the propagation of the human race. Some of those reckoned among them have also introduced abstinence from animal food, thus proving themselves ungrateful to God, who formed all things. They deny, too, the salvation of him who was first created. It is but lately, however, that this opinion has been invented among them. A certain man named Tatian first introduced the blasphemy. He was a hearer of Justin's, and as long as he continued with him he expressed no such views; but after his martyrdom he separated from the Church, and, excited and puffed up by the thought of being a teacher, as if he were superior to others, he composed his own peculiar type of doctrine. He invented a system of certain invisible Aeons, like the followers of Valentinus; while, like Marcion and Saturninus, he declared that marriage was nothing else than corruption and fornication. But his denial of Adam's salvation was an opinion due entirely to himself."

72. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. 15: "Others, of whom Florinus was chief, flourished at Rome. He fell from the presbyterate of the Church, and Blastus was involved in a similar fall. They also drew away many of the Church to their opinion, each striving to introduce his own innovations in respect to the truth." and Irenaeus in Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. 20: "In the letter to Florinus, of which we have spoken, Irenaeus mentions again his intimacy with Polycarp, saying: "These doctrines, O Florinus [i.e. the Gnostic doctrines newly espoused by Florinus], to speak mildly, are not of sound judgment. These doctrines disagree with the Church, and drive into the greatest impiety those who accept them. These doctrines, not even the heretics outside of the Church, have ever dared to publish. These doctrines, the presbyters who were before us, and who were companions of the apostles, did not deliver to thee. "For when I was a boy, I saw thee in lower Asia with Polycarp, moving in splendor in the royal court, and endeavoring to gain his approbation. I remember the events of that time more clearly than those of recent years. For what boys learn, growing with their mind, becomes joined with it; so that I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance, and his discourses to the people, and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord. And as he remembered their words, and what he heard from them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his teaching, having received them from eyewitnesses of the 'Word of life,' Polycarp related all things in harmony with the Scriptures. These things being told me by the mercy of God, I listened to them attentively, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart. And continually, through God's grace, I recall them faithfully. And I am able to bear witness before God that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard any such thing, he would have cried out, and stopped his ears, and as was his custom, would have exclaimed, O good God, unto what times hast thou spared me that I should endure these things? And he would have fled from the place where, sitting or standing, he had heard such words. And this can be shown plainly from the letters which he sent, either to the neighboring churches for their confirmation, or to some of the brethren, admonishing and exhorting them." Thus far Irenaeus."

73. See [Appendix 9](#) on Polycarp.

73a. The historical setting of Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho is Ephesus just after the Bar Kokhba Revolt, between AD 135 and the early 140s. Whenever this work was actually composed, the fabric of the dialogue as reproduced by Justin includes a reference to the followers of

the Gnostic heretics, Marcion and Valentinus. (The word "Marcians" in Justin seems to denote what we would call Marcionites, in view of the fact that the Marcians are there paired with the Valentinians, Marcion and Valentinus being contemporaries.) This implies that by c. AD 135-145 Marcion and Valentinus were well-known in Christian circles in Ephesus. Valentinus and Marcion arrived in Rome during the episcopate of Hyginus. The traditional dates are Sixtus (AD 115-125), Tele(s)phorus (AD 125-136), Hyginus (AD 136-140), Pius (AD 140-155). Even if the Dialogue was composed much later than the setting in Ephesus c. AD 135-145 would imply, there seems to be no good reason why Justin should have invented the reference to Marcians and Valentinians, transposing them into an earlier era, when he was concerned to reproduce an authentic historical context (as the mention of the Bar Kokhba Revolt confirms) and the mistake would have been obvious - at least to readers in Rome, which was Justin's home for much of his later ministry. Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho the Jew xxxv, setting c. AD 135-145. "CHAPTER 35 HERETICS CONFIRM THE CATHOLICS IN THE FAITH And Trypho said, "I believe, however, that many of those who say that they confess Jesus, and are called Christians, eat meats offered to idols, and declare that they are by no means injured in consequence." And I replied, "The fact that there are such men confessing themselves to be Christians, and admitting the crucified Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, yet not teaching His doctrines, but those of the spirits of error, causes us who are disciples of the true and pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, to be more faithful and steadfast in the hope announced by Him. For what things He predicted would take place in His name, these we do see being actually accomplished in our sight. For he said, 'Many shall come in My name, clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' And, 'There shall be schisms and heresies.' And, 'Beware of false prophets, who shall come to you clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' And, 'Many false Christs and false apostles shall arise, and shall deceive many of the faithful.' There are, therefore, and there were many, my friends, who, coming forward in the name of Jesus, taught both to speak and act impious and blasphemous things; and these are called by us after the name of the men from whom each doctrine and opinion had its origin. (For some in one way, others in another, teach to blaspheme the Maker of all things, and Christ, who was foretold by Him as coming, and the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, with whom we have nothing in common, since we know them to be atheists, impious, unrighteous, and sinful, and confessors of Jesus in name only, instead of worshippers of Him. Yet they style themselves Christians, just as certain among the Gentiles inscribe the name of God upon the works of their own hands, and partake in nefarious and impious rites.) Some are called *Marcians*, and some *Valentinians*, and some Basilidians, and some Saturnilians, and others by other names; each called after the originator of the individual opinion, just as each one of those who consider themselves philosophers, as I said before, thinks he must bear the name of the philosophy which he follows, from the name of the father of the particular doctrine. So that, in consequence of these events, we know that Jesus foreknew what would happen after Him, as well as in consequence of many other events which He foretold would befall those who believed on and confessed Him, the Christ. For all that we suffer, even when killed by friends, He foretold would take place; so that it is manifest no word or act of His can be found fault with. Wherefore we pray for you and for all other men who hate us; in order that you, having repented along with us, may not blaspheme Him who, by His works, by the mighty deeds even now wrought through His name, by the words He taught, by the prophecies announced concerning Him, is the blameless, and in all things irreproachable, Christ Jesus; but, believing on Him, may be saved in His second glorious advent, and may not be condemned to fire by Him."

74. On Cerdon see [note 20](#).

75. §1. EPIPHANIUS Panarion (about AD 375), Haer. XLII (XXII). i-ii., ed. Migne PG XLI, 696-7, probably drawing on the lost *Syntagma* of Hippolytus, "Marcion, the founder of the Marcionites, took his cue from Cerdon and emerged into the world as a great serpent himself. And because he deceived a large number of people he founded a school which has endured to the present day in a variety of different forms. The sect is still to be found even now, in Rome and Italy, Egypt and Palestine, Arabia and Syria, Cyprus and Thebaid--in Persia too, moreover, and other places. For the evil one has lent great strength to the deceit in those parts. It is very commonly said that he was a native of Pontus--I mean Helenpontus and the city of Sinope. In early life he was an ascetic, if you please, for he was a

hermit, and the son of a bishop of our holy catholic church. But in time he corrupted a virgin, and, by deceiving the virgin, cheated both her and himself of the hope. For her seduction he was excommunicated from the church by his own father. His father was noted for his great devotion amongst the foremost, and especially amongst those concerned to uphold truth, in the episcopal ministry. So when Marcion went through the motions of petitioning repeatedly for mercy and of seeking repentance, he did not receive what he was looking for from his own father. The worthy old gentleman and bishop was stricken with grief, not only because that fellow had fallen, but also because he had brought shame on him. As Marcion could not wheedle what he required out of him, he felt unable to bear the people's ridicule and fled from his city, and betook himself to Rome, no less, at a period following the death of Hyginus, the bishop of Rome. (The latter was ninth in succession from the apostles Peter and Paul.) Meeting the elders who were still alive and had been taught by the pupils of the apostles, he asked for permission to assemble with the church; and no one allowed it to him. Finally, inflamed with jealousy at not getting a leading position in, along with entry into, the church, he thought of an expedient, and took refuge in the heresy of the fraud, Cerdon. Then he began, as we might put it, to use that position of principle, ensconced, so to say, behind the doors of disputed theses, to tender this particular thesis to those who were the elders at that time: "Tell me, what does this mean: "They do not put new wine into old wineskins, nor a patch of untreated material onto an old garment; otherwise, the filling (Gk. *plerōma*) comes away, and will not match the old. Then the rent will be made worse." And when the simple-hearted and wholly sanctified elders and teachers of the holy church of God heard this, they returned an answer in accord with the principles of discipleship, speaking to him in simplicity, as follows: "Child, this is the meaning of the old wineskins - they represent the attitudes of the Pharisees and scribes, hardened by long continuance in sins, and unresponsive of the message of the Gospel. And the old garment refers to such as Judas, who had long continued in his love of money and so did not accept the message of the new, holy and heavenly mystery, the message of the hope. And though he was joined in fellowship with the eleven apostles, and called by the Lord Himself, he held the creature to be of superior worth, for reasons of self-interest, without any good cause. So his intentions did not accord with the hope of higher things, and with the heavenly calling that looks to blessings in store, instead of treasures down here and worldly repute, and passing friendship, aspiration and pleasure." But he replied: "Not so! It means something quite different." That was Marcion's riposte. All because they did not want to accept him into communion. So he put this in plain words to them: "Why did you refuse to receive me into communion?" They replied, "Because we are unable to do so without the permission of your reverend father. For there is one faith, and one fellowship of the like-minded, and we are unable to act contrary to our fine fellow minister, and your own father." Then Marcion became jealous and was roused to great anger and pride, and since he was that sort of person he made the rent. He became head of his own sect and said, "I shall rend your church, and make a permanent rent in it." He did indeed make a rent of no small proportions, but by rending himself and his converts, not the church."

§2. The chronology of Marcion's sojourn in Rome is complicated, and riddled with inconsistencies, in the standard studies, but only because of a refusal to accept the statements in the original sources, especially the date of Marcion's expulsion from the First Church of Rome in Tertullian, viz. the era of Bishop Eleutherus or shortly thereafter (c. AD 175-189). This dating is rejected because the existence of two separated churches is not contemplated in the usual reconstruction. At the very time when Marcion was outlawed as a heretic by Justin Martyr at the Timothian Baths (his First Apology mentioning the worldwide spread of Marcion's heresy dates from around the third quarter of the second century AD), and by other orthodox Bible-teachers, he was actually an active, even an overactive, member of the First Church of Rome! In simple summary: Marcion arrived in Rome around AD 141 just after the death of Bishop Hyginus of the First Church, according to Epiphanius. He was rejected at that time by the Bible-believing congregation at the Timothian Baths (Santa Pudenziana), and then joined the First Church as an adherent of Cerdon. (Cerdon continued professing orthodox beliefs within the First Church in the time of Hyginus.) After Cerdon's death Marcion became head of Cerdon's school *within the First Church* (as Tertullian affirms) at least as early as the episcopate of Bishop Anicetus c. AD 144, as the Marcionites dated the birth of their movement some 115 years after Christ, presumably from the baptism of Christ in the 15th year of Tiberius c. AD 29. He continued in this position, "flourishing" (according to Irenaeus) in the episcopate of Anicetus (trad. c. AD 155-166) and planting his movement in other

countries (as Justin informs us), till the episcopate of Eleutherus (c. AD 175-189), latterly with varied fortunes. At last he was expelled from the First Church, and started his own sect, outside of both the First Church and the Bible-believing orthodox communion.

§3. Other relevant quotations: Tertullian Adv. Marc. I. xix. 2-3: "Of this teacher there is no doubt that he is a heretic of the Antonine period, impious under the pious. Now, from Tiberius to Antoninus Pius, there are about 115 years and 6 1/2 months. Just such an interval do they place between Christ and Marcion. Inasmuch, then, as Marcion, as we have shown, first introduced this God to notice in the time of Antoninus, the matter becomes at once clear, if you are a shrewd observer. The dates already decide the case, that he who came to light for the first time in the reign of Antoninus, did not appear in that of Tiberius; in other words, that the God of the Antonine period was not the God of the Tiberian; and consequently, that he whom Marcion has plainly preached for the first time, was not revealed by Christ (who announced His revelation as early as the reign of Tiberius)." "De quo tamen constat, Antoninianus haereticus est, sub Pio impius. A Tiberio autem usque ad Antoninum anni fere cxv et dimidium anni cum dimidio mensis. Tantundem temporis ponunt inter Christum et Marcionem. [3] Cum igitur sub Antonino primus Marcion hunc deum induxerit, sicut probavimus, statim, qui sapis, plana res est. Praeviducant tempora quod sub Antonino primum processit sub Tiberio non processisse, id est deum Antoniniani imperii Tiberiani non fuisse, atque ita non a Christo revelatum quem constat a Marcione primum praedicatum." Tertullian Praes. Haer. xxx. 1-3: "Where was Marcion then, that shipmaster of Pontus, the zealous student of Stoicism? Where was Valentinus then, the disciple of Platonism? *For it is evident that those men lived not so long ago, — in the reign of Antoninus for the most part, — and that they at first were believers in the doctrine of the Catholic Church, in the church of Rome under the episcopate of the blessed Eleutherus* [Tertullian broke away from the First Church about the time of Victor, Eleutherus' successor, and still refers to Eleutherus as "blessed" — evidently the rejection of the Quartodeciman Montanist Blastus did not affect yet Tertullian's own Cataproclan Montanists], until on account of their ever restless curiosity, with which they even infected the brethren, they were more than once expelled. Marcion, indeed, [went] with the two hundred thousand sesterces [Roman currency, but the amount is uncertain: *sestertius, masc.*, is a single *sesterce*, a small silver coin originally worth two and a half copper *asses*, whilst *sestertium, neut.*, is a thousand *sesterces*: unfortunately they both have the same abl. plural, which is the case and number in Tertullian here, so the figure can also (and, considering that Marcion had a rather substantial business background as a shipmaster, less probably) be interpreted as "two hundred sesterces"] which he had brought into the church, and, when banished at last to a permanent excommunication, they scattered abroad the poisons of their doctrines. Afterwards, it is true, Marcion professed repentance, and agreed to the conditions granted to him — that he should receive reconciliation if he restored to the church all the others whom he had been training for perdition: he was prevented, however, by death." "XXX. [1] Vbi tunc Marcion, ponticus nauclerus, Stoicae studiosus? ubi Valentinus Platonicae sectator? [2] Nam constat illos neque adeo olim fuisse, Antonini fere principatu, et in catholicae primo doctrinam credidisse apud ecclesiam Romanensem sub episcopatu Eleutherii benedicti, donec ob inquietam semper eorum curiositatem, qua fratres quoque uitabant, semel et iterum eieci, Marcion quidem cum ducentis sestertiis quae ecclesiae intulerat, nouissime in perpetuum discidium relegati, uenena doctrinarum suarum disseminauerunt. [3] Postmodum Marcion paenitentiam confessus cum conditioni datae sibi occurrit, ita pacem recepturus si ceteros quoque, quos perditioni erudisset, ecclesiae restitueret, morte praeventus est."

76. This Pudens is mentioned by Paul shortly before his martyrdom, along with Linus (Linus not then as a pastor): II Timothy, 4. 6-22: "6 For I [Paul] am now ready to be offered, and *the time of my departure is at hand*. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 9 ¶ Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him

according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. 16 ¶ At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. 21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and *Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia*, and all the brethren. 22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time."

77. §1. Liber Pontificalis (Book of the Popes), under the name Pius: "Hic ex rogatu beate Praxedis dedicavit aeccliesiam thermas Novati, in vico Patricii, in honore sororis sue sanctae Potentianae, ubi et multa dona obtulit; ubi et sepius sacrificium Domino offerens ministrabat. Inmo et frontem baptismi construit fecit, manus suas benedixit et consecravit; et multos venientes ad fidem baptizavit in nomine Trinitatis." "Following the request of the blessed Praxedes [daughter of Pudens], he [Pius] dedicated the baths of Novatus [son of Pudens in some accounts] on the Vicus Patricius as a church in honor of her sister, the holy Potentiana, where also he made many offerings, and where quite frequently he used to minister, offering sacrifice to the Lord. He also had a baptismal font to be constructed, and blessed and consecrated it with his own hands; and many coming to faith he baptized in the Name of the Trinity."

§2. The Liber Pontificalis is a late reworking of early historical items mixed with semi-historical tradition and legend. Duchesne in his edition of the Liber Pontificalis (i, p. 133, fn. 8) notes that this account has some relationship to the Acts of Saints Pudentiana and Praxedes or The Acts of Pastor and Timothy (after 8th century AD), which give a fuller account than the Liber Pontificalis (see for this account Acta Sanctorum, Maii iv, 297-301). These Acts consist of a letter from the presbyter Pastor [claimed traditionally to be Hermas, author of the Pastor (Shepherd) of Hermas and brother of Pius] to another presbyter called Timothy [supposed to be Paul's disciple] and the reply of the latter. A short narrative is appended. The following is a translation of the Acts. The name Pius has been edited out and relegated to the footnotes, as it clearly interrupts the narrative and is intended to demonstrate that Pius, rather than Hermas (Pastor) was the true bishop. There is no reason why the Acts in this edited form should not be accepted as an authentic memorial of the orthodox, Bible-believing, church in Rome. Its rejection has largely been due to its depiction of the apostolic church in the city as an entity different from the church of the bishops of the First Church, and Pastor Hermas as the true bishop of Rome, recognized as such by the disciples of Paul. The list of monarchical bishops of the First Church included no such figure. Hence also the need to interpolate the name of bishop Pius.

§3. Acts of the Sainted Virgins Pudentiana or Potentiana and Praxedes (text Migne PG II. col. 1011-1024)

(The Letter of Pastor to Timotheus)

1. The presbyter Pastor to Timotheus, greetings! Pudens our brother and the friend of apostles, was also a diligent receiver of strangers. After his wife Savinilla died, and his parents, his father Punicus, and his mother, Priscilla (who had joined him and his wife in marriage), he received instruction in all the precepts of the Lord, and came to despise the things of this world. When his wife passed on, she left him two daughters, Praxedes and Potentiana. Them Pudens brought up in all chasteness; and love of Christianity being the main concern for him, he taught them the whole divine law. He, like you, had received instruction from the blessed Paul, and desiring, after the death of his wife, to consecrate his house as a church {Latin "ecclesia"} of Christ, he brought this to a successful issue by means of us sinners: there he set up a house-church {Latin "titulus"} under our name in the city of Rome, more precisely, in the location called Vicus Patricius. As regards this same Pudens, I notify you hereby that he has passed on to be with the Lord of all, leaving the aforesaid daughters, conspicuous for chasteness and trained up in the whole divine law.

2. These same blessed virgins proceeded to sell all their goods, and

distributed them to the poor. Continuing wholly in the love of Christ, without regret, they took every opportunity to express their pride in the blooming beauty of their virginity, and persevered under the yoke together in watchings, in fastings, and in prayers. In that location where their father of blessed memory had dedicated the house-church in my name, a decision was made between myself and the slaves of Christ's Household, Praxedes and Potentiana, that for the upcoming sacred festal day of the Passover, we should apply ourselves to construct in the same house-church a baptismal pool, to employ it for the baptism of the whole household, which was pagan gentile. It was their own desire, no less than the love of the faith, which propelled them on to see it done.(1) All this, by the help of God, was completed. Then the slaves of Christ's Household convened their own household, both from the city and from their outlying properties, and entering into debate with them, discovered the Christians amongst them, and provided them with the means to acquire their freedom. These pagan gentiles they thus brought to faith in the holy law of Christ. Then, in the same house-church, following the ancient custom, they celebrated their freedom from slavery. When the day of the Passover came round, they were baptized, a mixed multitude of both sexes, ninety-six in all. Their plans had now been brought to fruition, and they began to hold meetings in the same house-church. Day and night the sound of hymns rang out continuously, and a great throng of pagan gentiles came to the faith, and were baptized with fulness of joy.

3. By and by these events came to the notice of Emperor Antoninus and he was prompted to take action. The Most Religious Antoninus Augustus issued a decree by his own imperial authority that whoever participated in the cult of Christ should understand it must suffice them henceforth to live within the bounds of their own habitations; that they should no longer mix with the rest of the populace, nor dine in public, nor frequent the public bathing establishments, but remain at all times within their own domiciles. Since this decree was observed by all Christians, our daughters dedicated to God, and approved to be true virgins on good testimony, we kept under our guardianship for a considerable period of time in the aforesaid house-church, which was their own domicile, spending our time in prayer, in watchings and fastings, along with the people of God who had come to faith through them, offering up praises to Christ day and night continually, and provided with means sufficient for our needs.(2)

4. At the end of sixteen years, Potentiana, the virgin of the Lord, passed on to be with the Lord. We and her sister most carefully wrapped her body in a shroud soaked in ointments, and kept it hidden in the aforesaid house-church. Twenty-eight days later we took the body by night and placed it next to her father Pudens in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria, the XIVth day before the Kalends of June.

5. After her death, the virgin of Christ Praxedes continued to live in the aforesaid house-church, under great personal affliction on account of the passing of her sister. Many noble Christians came to console her.(3) Also your own brother, Novatus, came to see her, who is our brother in the Lord. While he offered her his consolation, he also supplied the needs of many Christians from his own resources, and indeed ministered to all from his own resources out of respect to the same virgin Praxedes. He requested that he might be found worthy to receive from her the favor of prayers on his behalf. He also made frequent mention of yourself in that regard.(4) One year and twenty-three days later, it so happened that Novatus was confined to his house with a sickness, and was unable to visit the blessed virgin Praxedes.(5) When we heard he had been confined to his house with this sickness, we all expressed our condolences.

6. Then the blessed Praxedes said (6) we should go and see him, if perhaps by our visit (7) the Lord might grant him recovery. We all agreed with this suggestion, and set out by night to make our way to where he was. When Novatus, the man of God, saw we had all gathered to come and see him, he immediately offered thanks to God that he had been found worthy of a visit from (8) the virgin of the Lord, as of our concern for his welfare. We remained in his house eight days and nights. During that time he expressed his desire to leave all his material goods to ourselves and the blessed virgin. After making this decision, on the thirteenth day, he passed on to be with the Lord. It is concerning this matter we have directed this letter to you, with permission of (9) the virgin of Christ, Praxedes, so as to find out what you would have us do in regard to the material goods of your brother. Whatever you decide, that will be done in every particular. Sent by the hand of Eusebius, the sub-deacon of the Roman Church.

(The Reply of the Presbyter Timotheus)

7. The presbyter Timotheus to the sainted brother presbyter Pastor, and the most sainted sister Praxedes, greetings in the Lord! Willingly demonstrating our status as your slaves, wherever you, the fellow members of our Household, are in need, we beseech your sainted virtue to deign to commend our own lowly selves also to the memory of the sainted apostles (10) and to all the saints. I, the lowly one, am filled with great joy, on hearing what you deigned to write me. From this, your sainted virtue will perceive, my mind is made up concerning the matter of which you wrote: and what my brother agreed, agrees with us, the slaves of your Household: that is, whatever he left should be under your say and under the say of the sainted virgin. You have power to dispose of those things as you see fit.

We were filled with joy when we received this letter.(11)

8. At the same time, and having been granted this authority, Praxedes, the virgin of the Lord, requested (12) to consecrate the baths of Novatus, which were not then in use, as a church {Latin "ecclesia"}, because it was evident they comprised a large and spacious structure.(13) So she dedicated (14) the baths of Novatus as a church {Latin "ecclesia"}, named after the blessed virgin Potentiana on the Vicus Patricius.(15) Two years later a great persecution of the Christians broke out, and many received the martyr's crown. At this time Praxedes, the virgin of the Lord, hid many Christians in the above-mentioned house-church, and fed them both with natural food and the Word of God. Then it was reported to the Emperor Antoninus that Christian meetings were going on in the house-church of Praxedes. He dispatched a force immediately and arrested many of them. Amongst those arrested were the presbyter Simeon, and twenty-two others. He ordered them to be beheaded by the sword without a hearing. The blessed Praxedes gathered their corpses by night, and buried them in the cemetery of Priscilla on the VIIth day before the Kalends of June. Then, constrained by great affliction of the body, the virgin of the Lord sighed private prayers to the Lord that she would be counted worthy to be removed securely from this life. Her prayers and tears reached Heaven, because fifty-five days after the suffering unto death of the aforesaid saints, that is, on the XIIth day before the Kalends of August, she went to be with the Lord. Her body I, presbyter Pastor, buried next to her father, Pudens, on the Via Salaria, in the cemetery of Priscilla,(16) in the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be honor and dominion through the eternal ages of ages. Amen

Footnotes

The following additions were made to the text by an interpolator who wished to represent Pius, rather than Pastor, as the presiding presbyter of the Roman Church. The interpolator was aware Pius had actually been present in the house-church of Pastor at the time these events transpired (according to tradition Pius was the brother of Pastor) and therefore inserted his name, usually with the florid title "sainted bishop of the apostolic seat," or similar, at the appropriate place, where the members of Pastor's congregation were involved. It is noticeable that these additions interrupt the flow of the narrative, which makes perfect sense without them, and conflict directly in some cases with the role of Pastor. Almost identical wording relating to Pius' participation in the construction of the baptismal pool occurs in the Liber Pontificalis. Traditionally the antiquarian Pope Damasus was the author of the earliest edition of the Liber Pontificalis and possibly it was he who inserted these notes in the Acts of Potentiana and Praxedes. Pius later headed an heretical congregation, with whom Pastor's church did not fellowship, on the Vicus Lateranus, and this, according to footnote 15 below, he claimed to be the official "House-church of Rome."

(1) The present text adds: "When we consulted Pius, the sainted bishop {Latin "episcopus"} of the apostolic seat, concerning this plan, he was so delighted with it, he encouraged the construction of the baptistery, as we had planned, with enthusiasm; he also personally participated in the design and building of the pool."

(2) The present text adds: "Now, the most blessed Pius also often came to visit us, rejoicing, and offered sacrifices to the Lord on our behalf."

(3) The present text adds: "... among them, the sainted bishop Pius."

(4) The present text adds: "... to the most blessed bishop Pius, as he

approached the altar of the Lord."

(5) The present text adds: "So while bishop Pius was attending to the welfare of all the Christians, including the virgin Praxedes, he enquired, along with the rest, of Novatus."

(6) The present text adds: "... to our father, the sainted bishop Pius, let your sanctity give orders that ..."

(7) The present text adds: "... and your [viz. Pius] prayers ..."

(8) The present text adds: "... the sainted bishop Pius and ..."

(9) The present text adds: "... Pius the blessed bishop of the apostolic seat and ..."

(10) The present text adds: "... and to the sainted Pius who presides on the apostolic seat ..."

(11) The present text adds: "... and we handed it over to be read to the sainted bishop Pius. When it was read to him, he gave thanks to God."

(12) The present text adds: "... the blessed bishop Pius ..."

(13) The present text adds: "The sainted bishop Pius agreed to this plan."

(14) Latin "dedicavit," the interpolator interpreted this as "he [viz. Pius] dedicated." see the following note.

(15) The present text adds: "Now he {viz. Pius, see the preceding note} dedicated another {sc. church} also within the boundaries of the city of Rome, named after the sainted virgin Praxedes, in the street {Latin "vicus"} called Lateranus, where he constituted also the House-church of Rome {Latin "titulus Romanus"}. In the same location he consecrated a baptistery on the IVth day before the Ides of May." Baronius had in his library a copy of a MS, beginning "Sanctorum vestigia," and containing the Res Gestae Sancti Pastoris which was accustomed to be read on Pastor's dies natalis; the ninth lection contained the following passage relating to this house-church on the Vicus Lateranus: "quem {sc. Pastorem} pia devotio Paulo apostolo adeo charum et unicum conjunxit, quod in vico, qui dicitur Latericius, ecclesiam sui nominis consecravit." (Migne PG II col. 1013D.) This asserts that the house-church on the Vicus Lateranus was originally consecrated as the "Church of Pastor" by the Apostle Paul himself, and this must have been prior to AD 62. The evidence outlined in *The First Church of Rome* demonstrates that the Lateran house-church, which was, indeed, the earliest church established in the city, fell into heresy in the reign of Claudius, when it was deprived of its Jewish leaders, Aquila and Priscilla. Thus, it could only have been when Paul first met the refugee Aquila in Corinth, and learnt of the abandoned gentile church in Rome, that he appointed the supervision of the congregation there, temporarily perhaps, and presumably by letter, to Hermas (Pastor). Hermas would have been a recent convert at that time, a youthful and enthusiastic gentile believer. He is mentioned somewhat later at the end of Paul's epistle to the Romans (AD 58), but not then as supervisor of any congregation. By that time the heretics had taken over the house-church on the Vicus Lateranus, and the faithful Hermas (Pastor) had been forced to leave. Later in life he received his prophetic revelations written down in the book *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and later still, at a very advanced age, in the first few decades of the second century AD (before c. AD 122), he became pastor of this house-church on the Vicus Patricius. The heretical group continued in operation meanwhile on the Vicus Lateranus and was joined by the apostate brother of Pastor, Pius, some time not long after the events described in these Acts.

(16) The present text adds: "... where their prayers flourish unto this day ..."

The outline of events in the Acts is as follows: there was a certain Christian called Pudens in Rome whose mother was named Priscilla. They owned some property and had shown great zeal in entertaining Apostles and strangers. After the death of his own wife, Pudens consecrated his house as a church [= Santa Pudenziana]. This church in the house of Pudens was erected into a Roman parish under the name of *titulus Pastoris* (the presbyter Pastor being placed in charge of it). [This implies Santa Pudenziana was originally known as the church "of Pastor" Hermas, i.e.

"The Church of the Shepherd"; it also implies a traditional date for Hermas' pastorship after the episcopate of Evaristus as, according to *The Book of Popes*, which draws for this period on the same traditions underlying the Acts of Potentiana and Praxedes, Evaristus, AD 97-105, was the bishop who instituted the *tituli* in Rome] Pudens passed his remaining days in prayer, fasting and charitable deeds, along with his two daughters, Praxedis [Praxedes] and Potentiana [Pudentiana], chaste virgins. After Pudens' death, the two daughters obtained the consent of Pastor Hermas to the building of a baptistery adjoining the church. (Pius, Hermas' brother, was present in the congregation at this time and participated in the construction.) When the virgin Potentiana deceased, the letter of Pastor informs us, Pastor himself and Praxedis her sister placed her body by the side of that of her father in the Cemetery of Priscilla [evidently here the Priscilla who gave her name to the cemetery is the mother of Pudens] on the Via Salaria.

§4. Now begins what in some MSS. is called the "Acts of Praxedis". Many noble Christians came to console Praxedis on the loss of her sister. Amongst them was a certain Novatus, described as the brother of one Timothy, though not in these Acts as a son of Pudens (as in later Martyrologies). Novatus later fell ill and Pastor and Praxedis visited him in his affliction: the issue was that he left them the whole of his property in his will. A letter containing all this information was sent to his brother Timothy to find out what he would want them to do in the matter of his brother's estate. Timothy's reply was that he rejoiced at what his brother had done and he was happy to leave the disposition in the hands of Praxedis and Pastor. After these letters comes a narrative of what followed. Praxedis asked that the Baths of Novatus, which at that time were not in use, should be consecrated as a church. This was done, and the church was named after the departed sister Potentiana. The location, over what were originally the Baths of Novatus, is the same occupied by the present church of Santa Pudenziana. The congregation in Pudens' house on the Vicus Patricius seems to have congregated henceforth in this new property on the same street, because of its greater size. As well as interpreting the latter event as the work of Pius, the interpolator added at this point in the narrative: "Also he [Pius] dedicated the other church inside the boundaries of Rome with the name of the sainted virgin Praxedes on the Vicus Lateranus, where he constituted also the House-church of Rome." This important note informs us that Santa Praxedis on the Vicus Lateranus was considered the official Church of Rome, according to its own bishops.

§5. The events in the Acts before the constitution of the official Church of Rome on the Lateranus by Pius seem to be pictured as occurring in the first few decades of the second century AD, when the aged Hermas (Pastor) was bishop of the congregation at Pudens' house, presumably following bishop Alexander (*i.e.* next but one bishop after Evaristus, AD 97-105, who was believed to have instituted the *tituli*). Hermas' (younger?) brother Pius had not apostatized at this time and was therefore active in the congregation at Pudens' house. However, the wording of the entry in the Book of Popes presumes Pius was latterly *no longer* active as bishop at the church in Pudens' house. *I.e.* Pius subsequently apostatized and went over to the Gnostics at Santa Praxedis. Pius was still at Pudens' house-church at the time of Potentiana's funeral and had some time later consented to the consecration of the Baths of Novatus (still as a member of that congregation). However, he would only have constituted the church on the Lateranus as the official Church of Rome after his apostasy, naming it Praxedis as a means of designating it a spiritual "twin-sister" of the church on the Vicus Patricius, which was named after Potentiana.

§6. In Justin's time the house-church on the Vicus Patricius was known as the Timothian Baths - presumably after Timothy the last owner of the site before it became a church. Its previous name in the Acts and the Book of Popes was "the Baths of Novatus" though the earlier and neighboring property where the congregation met (according to the Acts) was called the "Titulus Pastoris" "Pastor's Church". The usual name from the fourth century on was "Ecclesia Pudentiana" ("The Church of Pudens"), producing the modern name "Santa Pudenziana", or "Titulus Pudentis" (attested AD 528, "Pudens' Church"). However, the historical existence of the two daughters of Pudens is corroborated by the fact that their tombs and that of Pudens are mentioned in the "Liberian Calendar" and in the "Pilgrim Itineraries" as existing in the fourth and fifth centuries in the Cemetery of Priscilla, where, according to the Acts, they were buried. Modern archaeology has consistently confirmed the general reliability of the old traditions respecting early Christians buried in the Catacombs of Priscilla. Paschal I in his translation of the remains of saints from the catacombs into the city in AD 817 brought the sarcophagi of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis to Santa Praxedis, and the names of both are recorded on a catalogue inscribed on a marble slab to the right of the altar

there, and their portraits appear in the mosaics of this date, which adorn the church.

§7. The Baths of Novatus on the Vicus Patricius at Santa Pudenziana were certainly not changed into a church building of the familiar kind until after Constantine legitimized the Christian religion. Before that, this edifice was simply a house-church (*ecclesia domestica*) of the early Christians of Rome which happened to have baths included in the structure. Excavations on the Viminal Hill in 1930 (Terenzio, *Bulletino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*, 1931) confirmed the broad outline of the tradition about the baths of Novatus. In the substructure of Santa Pudenziana the remains of the baths were found, making up part of the masonry of a most vast and complex thermal edifice at three levels. A house from the Republican (*i.e.* pre-Christian) period formed the base of the baths, which were in use in the second century AD. The baths were located under the floor of the later church. "Name: *Thermae Novatianae Sive Timotheanae* (Balneum Novati). Type: Bath Construction Date: 138-161 AD (after 129 AD, Krautheimer). Site (primary): Northwest of S. Maria Maggiore, at S. Pudenziana Note: L. Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome, 1551), pl. 9; F. Coarelli, *Roma* (Rome, 1994), 216, 241; L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis* (Paris, 1892), I:132; A. Fulvio, *L'Antichità di Roma*, ed. G. Ferrucci (Venice, 1588), 90; R. Krautheimer, et. al, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* (Rome, 1971), III:288-96, fig. 250; E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (New York, 1962), II: 465-66, fig. 1273-75; F. M. Nichols, ed. and trans., *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* (New York, 1986), 9; L. Richardson, *NTDAR* (Baltimore, 1992), 395. Note: The *Thermae Novatianae Sive Timotheanae*, which date from the principate of Antoninus Pius (138-161) were built upon the ruins of a house of the Hadrianic period. They stand on a series of barrel vaulted substructures set into the slope of the Viminal hill. The basilical hall of this bath complex was converted into the church of S. Pudenziana, perhaps in the 4th century (Richardson) and not in the second century under Pius I (during the principate of Antoninus Pius) as asserted in the *Liber Pontificalis* [though that work may be presumed to be describing the dedication of the house church (*ecclesia domestica*) for sacred use, not the conversion of the building into a church of the type we are familiar with, which occurred at the later date - ed.]. The floor level of the bath remains is 6.00 meters below the level of via Balbo where remains of the bath hall can be seen today (Nash). Note: "The principal axis of the basilica [of the bath] lay at right angles to the present church axis". The basilica was about 9 meters wide and 27.5 meters long, and there were two water tanks "one at each end flanking a shallow pool with apsidal protrusions...and ... the terrace was designed from the outset to support the tanks." The baths were remodelled and paved with mosaics depicting marine animals. The "structural core of the *thermae* hall - its supports and clerestory walls - were retained with little change when the building was converted into a church [viz. of the later type - ed.]" (Krautheimer, 288 and 297)." This information is online as at 09/2003 at <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/waters/main.html>. Object ID A0785 (use the Search facility to locate this Object ID).

78. Rev L. Smithett Lewis, late vicar of Glastonbury from *St Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury*, James Clarke & Co, London, 1955. Chapter Two. "There was probably no other aboveground church in Rome than the Titulus [= Santa Pudenziana - ed.] till the time of Constantine the Great, when the Empire followed him in becoming Christian about AD 326 [this statement is factually incorrect: the author takes no account of the history of Santa Prisca near the Circus Maximus, which for a time was the house-church of Aquila and Priscilla after their return to Rome, of Santa Prassede, and of St Mary or the neighbouring church in Trastevere, founded by Bishop Callistus]. It is interesting to note the claim that this Titulus* - or *Hospitium Apostolorum*, or *Palatium Britannicum* - was the abode of Rufus Pudens, the Roman noble who married Claudia Britannica, the most cultured woman in Rome, apparently daughter of the British king, Caractacus, and sister of Linus, Bishop of Rome.** [FOOTNOTE ON THE WORD TITULUS: * This "most ample house" with its baths named after Timothy and Novatus, two of the children (*sic*) of Rufus and Claudia, built on Viminalis Hill, became first a place where their daughter Praxedes hid martyrs, then a hospice for pilgrims from the East, and under Pope Evaristus (AD 100-109) a church, and was called Pastor's, probably after Pastor Hermas, who wrote to them. Baronius expressly calls St. Timothy a disciple of St. Peter and St. Paul (Baronius, Vol 2, Sec. 56, p47). Pastor Hermas says that all four children, Timotheus, Novatus, Praxedes and Pudentiana, were instructed by preaching of the Apostles (Baronius, Vol. 2, Sec. 8-148.). FOOTNOTE ON LINUS: ** Bishop, AD 69, martyred

AD 90 (Baronius, Vol. 1, p778). ... SS Peter and Paul ... Linus succeeded them.]

On the site of this house where St. Paul probably lived with the British Royal Family in exile, and from which he was probably martyred, is now a church dedicated to St. Pudentiana, one of the martyred daughters of Pudens and Claudia. Pudens died, martyred, AD 96, and Claudia, who survived him one year, is said to have given the Titulus to be a Home for the Faithful, afterwards, between AD 100-109, to become a Christian church

It is very interesting to note how the ancient British Royal Family was intimately connected with the earliest Apostolic Church, both in exile at Rome, and in Britain, where they fostered it. And there is a most interesting relic of the friendship of St. Paul and the Caractacus family in the existence of contemporary portraits of St. Paul and Linus engraved in two glass paterae (in the Vatican Museum) depicted in Sir Wyke Bayliss's *Rex Regum* (pp 60, 61). In the same Museum and the same book (pp. 73-75) there are contemporary portraits engraved on glass medallions with lines filled in with gold of (1) St. John, Damas, St. Peter and St. Paul; (2) St. Peter and St. Paul; (3) Justin and St. Timothy, which makes all these people live to us.

The Roman poet Martial shows that Claudia Rufina was British. [He calls her "Claudia peregrina et edita Britannis" (Foreign Claudia native of the Britons) (Martial, 13B, XI, 53).] "Since Claudia wife of Rufus comes from the blue-set Britons, how is it that she has so won the hearts of the Latin people?" He praises her beauty and that of her three children as greater than that of Greeks and Italians. It is interesting that he speaks of Rufus as her "holy husband". In an earlier epigram he had written, "The foreign Claudia marries my Rufus Pudens". Martial was born in Bilbilis in Spain, and went to Rome AD 65. He wrote the above poem about AD 68. About the same time [the date here is probably a little too late - ed.] St. Paul links together the name of Pudens, Linus and Claudia with Eubulus in his greetings to St. Timothy from Rome (2 *Tim*, iv, 21). In *Romans* xvi, 13, he sends greetings from Corinth to "Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother, and mine" A Pudens, servant of the Emperor Claudius, is named among the sepulchral chambers of the Imperial household. It is a matter, too, of interest that the name of Pudens is also in the well-known Latin inscription on a stone discovered at Chichester, which narrates that Pudens, son of Pudentinus, gave a site there for a Temple to Neptune and Minerva. The inscription also bears the name of the Emperor Tiberius Claudius, who died in AD 37. This would be before the conversion of Rufus Pudens, and the dates fit in well. Baronius tells us that Rufus the Senator received St. Peter [sic Baronius following here the common Roman Catholic myth - ed.] into his house on the Viminalis Hill in the year AD 44. [FOOTNOTE: Baronius' *Annales*, Sec. 61, f.365. Those who wish to study more closely the question of Rufus Pudens, Claudia, Linus, St. Pudentiana, and St. Timothy, should refer to Ussher, *Brit. Eccl. Antiq.*, p. 19; Archdeacon Williams's *Claudia and Pudens*; the Rev. R. W. Morgan's *St. Paul in Britain*, in which the matter is fully treated; and Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol II, pp. 581, 582, 594, 595; and Baronius's *Annales Ecclesiastic*, Vol. I, p. 228, re Vol 2, Sec. 56, p.64; Secs. IV and V, pp. 111-112; Secs. I and II, pp. 148 and 150.] He was apparently a Christian then, before receiving St. Peter. [See note above on Peter in Rome - ed.] If he be the Pudens of the Chichester inscription he was apparently converted between these two dates. Was Rufus Pudens, the Roman, converted in Britain? Was it he who first brought Christianity into the British Royal Family, when or before he married Gladys, soon by an easy transition to become Claudia? It is a fascinating question.

Cressy in his *Church History of Brittany*, 1618, tells us "Our ancient histories report that Timotheus the eldest son of Rufus came into Brittany [sic] where he converted many to the faith, and at least disposed King Lucius to his succeeding conversion." [This statement accepts the historicity of the myth of Lucius the native king of Britain. However, there is a possibility indeed that Emperor Lucius (Commodus), the original figure behind the myth, was acquainted with members of the noble family of Pudens in the second century, and perhaps even with Timotheus, though that acquaintance will have been most probably made in Rome. - ed.] And Cardinal Baronius distinctly says that Timotheus was a son of the most noble Roman Senator, Rufus Pudens, a disciple of SS. Peter and Paul" (Vol. 2, Sec. LVI, p47) Some think that as a result of these early efforts, when Caractacus and his family went to Rome as prisoners in AD 51, his sister Gladys, his daughters, Gladys (who, in compliment to the Emperor Claudius is said to have taken the name Claudia on her marriage to Rufus Pudens), and Euergen, [St Euergen of Caer Salog (Salisbury) and of Llan Illtud, South Wales, was the first British female saint] and Linus his

son were already Christians; but Caractacus and his aged father Bran, who had become an Arch-Druid, were unconverted, probably through troubles of State and war. [That Tacitus does not mention Bran being taken prisoner is not a great obstacle. He may have been taken prisoner, but unknown to Tacitus, or Bran may well have joined his son, after the latter was given his life and freedom to live in Rome.]

The Welsh Triads say that Bran was baptized in Rome in AD 58 by St. Paul. Bp. Edwards of St. Asaph's *Landmarks in the history of the Welsh Church*, p.2. The date given by the Triads is impossible. St. Paul did not go to Rome till AD 62 [again the date is a little too late – ed.]. The date 58 is probably the date of the baptism, and the Apostle's name an addition. The Triads hail from the book of Caradoc of Llancarvan, who died in 1156, but most of the events in them refer to the 6th century. And some must be older than that - one speaks of Glastonbury, Llan Illtud and Ambresbury as the three principal Choirs of Britain, but Ambresbury fell in the 6th century.] When they came back they were Christians, and thenceforth fostered and protected in Siluria or South Wales the Christian Church. Bran returned to Britain before Caractacus, AD 58, very probably as a missionary.

Bran Vendigaid, or the Blessed, was a very remarkable personality. The Welsh Triads not only speak of him as one of the introducers of Christianity, [Triads, 18 and 35, 3rd series. *Myrryrian Arch.*, vol 2] but together with Prydain and Dyfnwal as the three who consolidated elective monarchy in Britain. The Triads call the descendants of Bran one of the Three Holy Families of Britain. [Bran is stated to have returned mortally wounded from his punitive expedition to Ireland, and ordered his companions to carry his head to be buried in the White Hill, London (where the White Tower now stands), as a protection against future invasions, and there it remained till, some 500 years later, King Arthur had it removed. *Vide Mabinogion*. The Mabinogion (plural of Mabinogi) are the oldest remains of Welsh mythological sagas. Every young Bard had to learn them by heart, which confirms Caesar's statement that the Druids never committed their learning to writing, although it is said that they used Greek letters in writing.]

79. See [note 20](#) §1.

80. See [note 77](#) above §3ff.

80a. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. IV. xxii. 1-3: "HEGESIPPUS in the five books of Memoirs which have come down to us has left a most complete record of his own views. In them he states that on a journey to Rome he met a great many bishops, and that he received the same doctrine from all. It is fitting to hear what he says after making some remarks about the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. His words are as follows: "And the church of the Corinthians continued in the true faith until Primus was bishop in Corinth [implying some churches and/or Corinth itself did not]. I conversed with them on my way to Rome, and abode with the Corinthians many days, during which we were mutually refreshed in the true doctrine. And when I had come to Rome I formed [or, completed, or supplied] a succession [Gk. *diadochên epoiêsamên*] until Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. And Anicetus was succeeded by Soter, and he by Eleutherus. In every succession, and in every city that is held which is preached by the law and the prophets and the Lord."

81. Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs Justin etc. 2: Rusticus the prefect said, "Where do you assemble?" Justin said, "Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus the prefect said, "Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?" Justin said, "I live above one Martinus, at the Timothian Baths [or, the Baths of Martinus son of Timothinus >>]; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his. And if any one wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth." Rusticus said, "Are you not, then, a Christian?" Justin said, "Yes, I am a Christian." Justin's dates are correctly given in Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. XLVI. 1 (ed. Migne, PG XLI, 837): "This Justin was a Samaritan by nationality, who had come to faith in Christ, and, having practiced great austerity, and been a model of the virtuous life, at the end bearing witness as a martyr for Christ, proved himself worthy of the perfect crown, his

flourit in the city of the Romans falling within the thirty years that included the time when Rusticus was in office and the time of Emperor Hadrian [lit. being in the prime age within thirty years in the (city) of the Romans at the time of ruler Rusticus and Hadrian the king]."

82. Justin Martyr, Second Apology 6: "For He was made man also, as we before said, having been conceived according to the will of God the Father, for the sake of believing men, and for the destruction of the demons. And now you can learn from what is under your own observation. For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city [Rome], many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs."

83. Tertullian, On Fasting Against the Psychics (De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos). ii. 4-5 (emphases mine): "4. 'Xerophagies' [fasts in which certain types of food only were permitted, including especially the one before Passover] is a new name for what is treated as an official duty and is suggestive of pagan superstition: it is reminiscent of the asceticism found in the purificatory rites of Apis, Isis and the Great Mother [Cybele], which involve the exclusion of certain items of food: it was, however, if the truth be told, merely to ensure that the free faith in Christ should not depend for its practice of abstinence from any types of food on the Jewish Law, that the Apostle [Paul] lumped together all such practices in one and the same market-stall, in his expression of detestation for those who, as they forbade marriage, also commanded to abstain from foodstuffs, which were ordained by God. 5. Therefore we cannot accept that those who practice these rites in modern times are those referred to then as ones who depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits of this world, having a conscience branded with doctrines of deceitful talkers. What firebrands, I pray you, effected this result? Am I to believe those at which we multiply marriages and roast dinners every day?" Latin: "4. Xerophagias uero nouum adfectati officii nomen et proximum ethicae superstitioni, quales castimoniae Apim, Isidem, et Magnem Matrem certorum eduliorum exceptione purificant, cum fides libera in Christo ne Iudaicae quidem legi abstinentiam quorundam ciborum debeat, semel in totum macellum ab apostolo admissa, detestatore eorum qui sicut nubere prohibeant, ita iubeant cibis abstinere a deo conditis. 5. Et ideo non esse iam tunc praenotatos in nouissimis temporibus abscondentes a fide, intendentes spiritibus mundi seductoribus, doctrinis mendaciloquorum inustam habentes conscientiam. Quibus, oro te, ignibus? Credo, quibus nuptias saepe deducimus et cenas quotidie coquimus?" Ibid. xvi. 7-8: "7. In fact you do well, as you heap blasphemies on our xerophagies, to equate them with the Ascetic Fast [Latin: Castus, see [n. 115a](#)] of the cult of Isis and Cybele. I accept the comparison you make to defend your position. The rite thereby is confirmed to be of God, as the Devil, the emulator of the things of God, is imitating it. A lie is formed out of truth, superstition is compounded from elements of true religion. 8. Thereby you are proved to be that much more without true religion, and the pagan that much more provided with it: by this practice he sacrifices his appetite for the sake of the idol, but you are not willing to do the same for God." Latin: "7. Sed bene quod tu nostris xerophagiis blasphemias ingerens casto Isidis et Cybeles eas adaequas. Admitto testimoniam comparationem. Hinc diuinam constabit, quam diabolus diuinorum aemulator imitatur. Ex ueritate mendacium struitur, ex religione superstitio compingitur. 8. Hinc tu eo inreligiosior, quanto ethnicus paratior. Ille denique idolo gulam suam mactat, tu deo non uis." The whole argument of this tract of Tertullian is aimed at orthodox, Bible-believing, Christians who charged that the fasts imposed on those who celebrated the Passover ritual of Tertullian (the same ritual as was followed in the First Church of Rome) were comparable to the ritual, ascetic, fasts imposed in paganism on devotees of Isis and the Great Mother goddess, Cybele, at the time of the pagan spring festival. The basic (anti-Jewish) Passover ritual had always been practiced in the First Church but was latterly adopted by the Montanists, Tertullian himself being a fervent Montanist. This ritual developed out of the Docetist belief that the bread of the eucharist was the *material body* of the Supreme or Good God. The adherents of this doctrine abstained from taking communion with those who believed the eucharist represented the body of the historical Jesus who had suffered on the Cross and been raised from the dead. With the (magical) importance of their eucharist uppermost in their minds, the bishops of the First Church even sent portions of it out to any in other churches who were willing to receive it. Those who received this

eucharist in other churches and practiced other rituals at the same time, e.g. the Jewish Passover celebrated by the disciples of John, were not at first excommunicated by the bishops of the First Church. When the Montanists took it up, however, they added an obligatory element which was not present originally, because in Montanism rituals of this kind were now declared to be *commandments* of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. From the Montanists the First Church adopted the idea of making the Passover fast obligatory and added this to its already-existing ritual. It is obligatory to this day in Roman Catholicism (Lent). Now those who celebrated the Jewish Passover were summarily excommunicated by the First Church. Irenaeus rebuked the First Church bishop, Victor, for having thus *altered* the practice of his predecessors (see notes [67](#) §1 and [70](#) above). The Lenten fast of seven weeks before Easter was, according to the 6th century *Liber Pontificalis*, instituted in Rome by bishop Telesphorus (sub nom.): "hic constituit, ut septem ebdomadas ante pascha ieiunium celebraretur:" "he ordained, that for seven weeks before Pascha a fast should be celebrated."

83a. Bede De Temporum Ratione xv: "In olden times the English people -- for it did not seem fitting to me that I should speak of other nations' observance of the year and yet be silent about my own nation's-- calculated their months according to the course of the Moon. Hence, after the manner of the Greeks and the Romans, [the months] take their name from the Moon, for the moon is called *mona* and each month *monath*. The first month, which the Latins call January, is *Giuli*; February is called *Solmonath*; March *Hrethmonath*; April, *Eosturmonath* *Eosturmonath* has a name which is now translated "Paschal month", and which was once called after a goddess of theirs named *Eostre*, in whose honor feasts were celebrated in that month. Now they designate that Paschal season by her name, calling the joys of the new rite by the time-honored name of the old observance"

84. See [note 20](#) §1.

85. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I. xxv. 6: "Others of them employ outward marks, branding their disciples inside the lobe of the right ear. From among these also arose Marcellina, who came to Rome under [the episcopate of] Anicetus, and, holding these doctrines, she led multitudes astray. They style themselves Gnostics. They also possess images, some of them painted, and others formed from different kinds of material; while they maintain that a likeness of Christ was made by Pilate at that time when Jesus lived among them. They crown these images, and set them up along with the images of the philosophers of the world that is to say, with the images of Pythagoras, and Plato, and Aristotle, and the rest. They have also other modes of honoring these images, after the same manner of the Gentiles."

86. The following quotation relates to a subsequent phase of the Paschal controversy, in the sixth-century Celtic West, but it shows how the First Church promoted paganism (including their obligatory Paschal ritual) by playing it off against Judaism, as Tertullian did already in the second and third century: Bede, Ecclesiastical History, III. xxv: "Then Wilfrid [the representative of the First Church of Rome], being ordered by the king to speak, delivered himself thus -- 'The Easter which we observe, we saw celebrated by all at Rome, where the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, lived, taught, suffered, and were buried; we saw the same done in Italy and in France, when we traveled through those countries for pilgrimage and prayer. We found the same practiced in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, and all the world, wherever the church of Christ is spread abroad, through several nations and tongues, at one and the same time; except only these and their accomplices in obstinacy, I mean the Picts and the Britons, who foolishly, in these two remote islands of the world, and only in part even of them, oppose all the rest of the universe. When he had so said, Colman answered, 'It is strange that you will call our labors foolish, wherein we follow the example of so great an apostle, who was thought worthy to lay his head on our Lord's bosom, when all the world knows him to have lived most wisely.' Wilfrid replied, 'Far be it from us to charge John with folly, for he literally observed the precepts of the Jewish law, whilst the church still Judaized in many points, and the apostles were not able at once to cast off all the observances of the law which had been instituted by God. In which way it is necessary that all who come to the faith should forsake the idols which were invented by devils, that they might not give scandal to the

Jews that were among the Gentiles. For this reason it was, that Paul circumcised Timothy, that he offered sacrifice in the temple, that he shaved his head with Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth; for no other advantage than to avoid giving scandal to the Jews. Hence it was, that James said, to the same Paul, 'You see, brother, how many thousands of the Jews have believed; and they are all zealous for the law.' And yet, at this time, the Gospel spreading throughout the world, it is needless, nay, it is not lawful, for the faithful either to be circumcised, or to offer up to God sacrifices of flesh."

87. See [note 70](#) above.

88. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. III. iii. 4: To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time, -- a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles, -- that, namely, which is handed down by the Church."

89. Tertullian, Praesc. Haer. 30: "Where was Marcion then, that shipmaster of Pontus, the zealous student of Stoicism? Where was Valentinus then, the disciple of Platonism? For it is evident that those men lived not so long ago, -- in the reign of Antoninus for the most part, -- and that they at first were believers in the doctrine of the Catholic Church, in the church of Rome under the episcopate of the blessed Eleutherus [trad. AD 175-189], until on account of their ever restless curiosity, with which they even infected the brethren, they were more than once expelled. Marcion, indeed, [went] with the two hundred thousand sesterces which he had brought into the church, and, when banished at last to a permanent excommunication, they scattered abroad the poisons of their doctrines. Afterwards, it is true, Marcion professed repentance, and agreed to the conditions granted to him -- that he should receive reconciliation if he restored to the church all the others whom he had been training for perdition: he was prevented, however, by death."

90. See [note 85](#) above.

91. Hippolytus, Ref. VI. 15: "The disciples, then, of this [Simon] (Magus), celebrate magical rites, and resort to incantations. And (they profess to) transmit both love-spells and charms, and the demons said to be senders of dreams, for the purpose of distracting whomsoever they please. But they also employ those denominated Paredroi. "And they have an image of Simon (fashioned) into the figure of Jupiter, and (an image) of Helen in the form of Minerva; and they pay adoration to these." But they call the one Lord and the other Lady. And if any one amongst them, on seeing the images of either Simon or Helen, would call them by name, he is cast off, as being ignorant of the mysteries."

92. The full inscription reads: "Semoni Sanco Deo Fidio SACRVM Sex. Pompei. S. P. F. Col. Mussianvs Quinquennalis Decur Bidentalis Donum Dedit."

92a. §1. Valerius Maximus, 1. 3. 3: "Cn. Cornelius Hispalus, praetor peregrinus in the year of the consulate of M. Popilius Laenas and L. Calpurnius, ordered the Chaldaeans [astrologers] by an edict to leave Rome and Italy within ten days, since by a fallacious interpretation of the stars they perturbed fickle and silly minds, thereby making profit out of their lies. The same praetor compelled the Jews, who attempted to infect the Roman custom with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius, to return to their homes." "EXEMPLUM 3. [Par.] Cn. Cornelius Hispalus praetor peregrinus M. Popilio Laenate L. Calpurnio coss. edicto Chaldaeos citra decimum diem abire ex urbe atque Italia iussit, leuibis et ineptis ingeniis fallaci siderum interpretatione quaestuosam mendacii suis caliginem iniicientes. idem Iudaeos, qui Sabazi Iouis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit. EXEMPLUM 3. [Nep.] Chaldaeos igitur Cornelius Hispalus urbe expulit et intra decem dies Italia abire iussit, ne peregrinam scientiam uenditarent. Iudaeos quoque, qui Romanis tradere

sacra sua conati erant, idem Hispalus urbe exterminavit arasque priuatas e publicis locis abiecti." This event took place in 139 BC, about a year after Simon, the Hasmonean ruler, delegated Numenius, son of Antiochus, and Antipater, son of Jason, as envoys to the Roman Senate to plead on behalf of the Jews.

§2. The Jewish Sabazius cult is probably the single, most important, medium by which Hebrew traditions became intermingled with Graeco-Roman paganism. It seems to have been born in the area of Cappadocia, or Pontus, in Armenia, some time after the Assyrian or Babylonian captivity (8th-6th century BC), when members of a Jewish family called Shabbati (the name formed from the Hebrew word *shabbat* = "sabbath") were established in a new exilic home in Armenia. There the family name was corrupted into the form *Shambat*. The family was also known as the *Bagratuni*. (The story of the Bagratuni is preserved in the great History of the Armenians of Moses of Khorene, based on an earlier history, now lost, of one Mar Apas Catina.) These exiles "over the River Sambathion", i.e. north of Syria (the Syrian river name, like the exilic family name, derived from the Hebrew *shabbat*, see Jos. Wars VII. v. 1) are famed in Jewish legend. As the family prospered, their Judaism became mingled with the paganism of the Gentiles amongst whom they had settled. Some time after the conquest of Alexander the Great, they adopted the cult of Zeus and titled him "Sabazios" (Greek) or "Sabazius" (Latin), meaning the Zeus "of the Shabbati clan". The God of their ancestors, identified now with Zeus, was titled by them the "Highest God" (Greek *Hypsistos*), in contrast, presumably, to the lesser gods of the Gentile pantheon.

§3. The religious members of the family also sought connections between their native Hebrew religious traditions and those of their adopted homeland. Now, Armenia featured in one of the most striking histories in the Hebrew scriptures, namely the history of Noah and the Flood, for it was on the "Mountains of Ararat" (commonly translated "Armenia") that the Ark of Noah landed. This mountain was identified with Mount Masius, the highest peak in Armenia. (The Hebrew name spelt *a-r-r-t* in the consonantal Hebrew text, and read as Ararat in modern translations, is more likely, in reality, the name of the land and of the town Aratta, so called by the native Mesopotamians, the land being somewhere in the region of the biblical Ararat, and the town in southern Mesopotamia; the latter was otherwise known as Shuruppak, and Ziusudra-Noah is said to have reigned there.) Having identified this peak in their new homeland as the place of descent from the Ark, whence all the nations of the world dispersed, the Shambat clan promoted in their exilic home the cult of Noah and his family. Many pictures of Noah and the Ark have been found from this period in the neighboring regions, and these combine Biblical with pagan motifs. A Sibyl, or heathen prophetess, called Sambethe (i.e. "female of the Shambat clan"), also written Sabbe, was declared to have been the bride of a son of Noah, and to have prophesied many things relating to the future history of the sons of Noah. Fragments of the oracular utterances ascribed to Sambethe are found embedded in the Jewish-Christian forgeries known as the Sibylline Oracles, especially III. 117-361 (Greek text, 97-294). Sambethe had a shrine in Thyatira in Asia Minor and the reference in Rev. 2. 20 to the "Jezebel" of Thyatira who calls herself a prophetess is evidently an allusion to the cult of Sambethe. In the Sibylline fragments (III. 132 etc.), Noah has a son called Cronus (Kronos), which is simply the Greek form of the name Sabbath, both the Greek and Hebrew names being designations of the planet Saturn, the tutelary deity in pagan astrology of the seventh day of the week. This son Cronus or Saturn is elsewhere (first in Theophilus of Antioch and then commonly in Byzantine chronicles) identified as Noah's son Shem, the ancestor of the Hebrew race, and presumably the husband of Sambethe. Noah also being the first planter of a vineyard, and famous for having himself succumbed to wine, the cult of Zeus Sabazius was characterized by an emphasis on wine and intoxication. Its adherents indulged in drunken orgies and revelry. Sabazius was identified with the Greek vine-god Dionysus, who in turn was identified with the Egyptian Osiris and Serapis. Both in Greece and later in Italy, the cult of Sabazius, like that of Dionysus in the earlier period, was not infrequently suppressed by the authorities because of the excesses of its devotees, as well as for its barbarian (i.e. non-Graeco-Roman) origin and connections.

§4. The snake was the emblem of Sabazius. In Pergamum, the cult of Zeus Sabazius was merged with that of the Phrygian Mother Goddess, Cybele, and Sabazius was identified with her male consort, Atys or Attis. From this or a similar line of syncretistic Judaism came the identification of Jews - Latin *Iudaei* - with the *Idaei*, the *Idaeans*, the people of the Cretan or Asian Mount Ida and the adherents of the *Idaeian Mother*, Cybele. This particular identification is attested in Rome (by Tacitus Hist. v. 2: *Iudaeos Creta insula profugos novissima Libyae insedissememorant, qua tempestate*

Saturnus vi Iovis pulsus cesserit regnis. Argumentum e nomine petitur: inclutum in Creta Idam montem, accolae Idaeos aucto in barbarum cognomento Iudaeos vocitari) and doubtless was a way of linking the Romans, who called themselves *Idaeans*, because they traced their genealogy back through Aeneas from the area of Mount Ida, with the Jewish Sabazius cultists. This identification explains the reference in Revelation 2. 9 to "the blasphemy of *them which say they are Jews and are not*, but are the Synagogue of Satan [the *Serpent*, cp. also Rev. 3. 9 and 12. 9, 20. 2]." The number seven (Hebrew *sheva*) and the motif of the sacred oath (*shava*, swear, lit. bind by a sevenfold confirmation) are prominent in the cult of Sabazius, presumably because of the significance of the deity's name and its relation to the *seventh* day Sabbath. Hence the use of the "Sabazius hand", which seems to be a symbol of the oath of the Sabazius mysteries. Later, the Iranian god of the oath, Mithras, became identified with Sabazius, Iranian paganism (or Magism) being prevalent in Armenia, as exemplified by the name Mithradates borne by several of the kings of Pontus. The worshippers of Mithras spread from Cappadocia via Cilicia into Rome in the time of Pompey. The mysteries of Sabazius and Cybele were performed commonly in caverns or in chambers built to resemble caverns. Later, caverns and chambers, sometimes the identical caverns and chambers, were adopted by the Mithraists.

§5. In view of the long history of Sabazius syncretism, specifically the mixture of Hebrew and pagan traditions, in Asia Minor and the West many centuries before the Christian era, it is evident why Simon Magus (i.e. a practitioner of Magism, Mithraism being a sect of the Magian religion) and the Gnostics who succeeded him were able to merge the teachings of Jesus so quickly and successfully with Graeco-Roman paganism. The groundwork had already been done for them by the paganized Jews of the Sabazius cult. It may be a group of Sabazius cultists, or a similar cult derived from them, who are denoted under the name "Sebuaeans" (derived, in all probability, from the Heb. *shava*, swear, or rather *shevuah*, oath), listed as one of four Samaritan cults, along with the Dositheans, in Epiphanius (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. XI). Simon, originally an adherent of Dositheus, could have borrowed major elements of his system directly from them. Some of the earliest Gnostics were Naassenes and Ophites, both of whom worshipped the divinity in the form of a snake - the emblem of Sabazius - and made much of the cult of Cybele and Attis. Even the name "Gnostic" may be derived from the Sabazius tradition, since Gnostos "raving mad and false" (!) appears as the name of the father of the Sibyl Sambethe and husband of Circe in the Sibylline Oracles (III. 1013). Likewise, details like the identification of Simon with the god Semo Sancus in Rome can be explained from the adoption by Simon of Sabazius traditions, as the god Semo was not only the Roman god of the *oath* (an important motif in the Sabazius cult) but was also the divine ancestor of the Sabines, a Latin tribe whose name was traditionally equated, rightly or wrongly, with that of the *Saboi* or adherents of Sabazius.

§6. An examination of Simon's *Megale Apophasis*, the "Great Announcement", preserved in Hippolytus, Ref. VI. 4-15 (see [Appendix 3](#)), indicates that the major elements in his system came from two sources: 1) the prophesying of John the Baptist, and 2) the Sabazius cult. Elements from the doctrine of John the Baptist: 1) The designation "Standing One" from "there standeth one among you"; 2) The fire which devours from the "unquenchable fire" of John; 3) The mystic or cosmic Tree derived from the tree at whose roots the "ax is laid" in John's preaching; 4) the mystic fruit gathered to the garner from the same in John's message; 5) The use of Isaiah 40 (the withered grass), paralleling John's use of the same passage (the "voice in the wilderness"); 6) The destruction of the fruitless Tree by the ax (as in John's message); 7) The use of the idea that "He who comes after me was before me", as in the preaching of John; 8) The transference of the spirit of Divine Intelligence (from Helen of Troy to Simon's Helen), and of the Logos (from Moses to Jesus to Simon) from the transference of the spirit of Elijah. Elements from the Sabazius cult: 1) The identification of the Supreme Power with God's Seventh Day of Rest, i.e. "Sabbath" (Sabazius); 2) Heaven and Earth (Uranus and Gaea) produce the Logos-Sabbath, as Noah (identified with Uranus) and his wife (Gaea) produce Cronus-Shem in Sambethe's oracle, the Erythraean Sibyl; 3) The interpretation of the designation "Standing One" (the Messiah) in the sense of "Resting One" to identify him with the Sabbath Power (i.e. Sabazius); 4) The identification of the first day with Uranus (Heaven, creation of firmament on the first day), the second day with Gaea (Earth, appearance of dry land on the second day) and the third day (in addition to the seventh) with the Sabbath Power (Cronus, god of the fruitful earth, paralleling the emergence of fruit from the earth on the third day); 5) Allegorization of the Red Sea (Erythraean Sea), this sea giving its name to the Erythraean Sibyl, Sambethe; 6) Allegorization of the story of Circe's *moly* and its

identification with the *bitter* waters of Marah in the Exodus; 7) The appearance in Simon's system of Circe herself as a positive figure (Circe being the mother of Sambeth in Sabazius syncretism); 8) The use of philosophic theology, in respect to the interchangeability of the divine hypostases, as in the pagan philosophy of Heraclitus; 9) Pseudo-ascetic attitude to sexual generation, as in the Greek mysteries; 10) The divinization of the Divine Intelligence (Wisdom), as in Greek paganism; 11) The worship of Jupiter (Zeus Sabazius); 12) The use of pagan philosophers (Heraclitus and Empedocles) as in the Greek mysteries; 13) The use of idols, as in Greek paganism; 14) The use of magic, as in Greek paganism.

93. See [note 69](#) above.

[The First Church of Rome Rises To Power Under Soter and Eleutherius](#)

60. Now they had bishops like the Catholic Bible-believers at their head, now they had the "blessing" of Polycarp (their bishop Anicetus had attended communion with him); now also they had - what was of much greater consequence in their eyes - the sympathy of the secular authorities at Rome. The First Church embarked on a deliberate campaign to persuade and pressure the Catholics to accept them as the ultimate authority in faith and morals. They deemphasized their historical connection with Simon Magus ([94](#)) and asserted that their doctrines and practices had originated in "secret" oral traditions ([95](#)) handed down to a special elite by Jesus and the Apostles. Even in the missionary fields of Lyons, in Gaul, where Polycarp's disciples were active, there were some who addressed Eleutherus, the next but one Bishop after Anicetus, as "Father" ([96](#)).

61. Pastor Clement's fearful concern for the Christians in Corinth now proved justified. Though the vision tarried, it was at last fulfilled. Until the time of Bishop Anicetus in Rome and Bishop Primus in Corinth, the Corinthians had remained faithful to the Apostolic doctrine of Pastor Clement. This is vouched for ([97](#)) by the Bible-believing church historian Hegesippus who had fellowshiped with the Corinthian Christians on his way to Rome. In the days of Anicetus' successor, Soter, a change can be discerned. The Corinthian pastor in the time of Soter was the learned and influential Dionysius.

He had quite a reputation as an ecclesiastical politician: he won over the hesitating, restored the backslidden, tested heresies, like that of Marcion, by the Scriptures, and built bridges between communion and communion, both in the Greek mainland and abroad. No doubt, like secular politicians, however, he felt the need for ready finance to further his favorite projects. The First Church now used its monetary reserves (which were evidently large), and its "social welfare" projects, to win him over. From its wealthy guru, Marcion, alone the First Church had been endowed with a fortune of 200,000 sesterces, when Marcion became a member. There was plenty of money to go round, if hearts and minds could be won at the same time, and other churches brought into the "supercommunion" of the First Church. In exchange for a generous donation, Dionysius opened up his pulpit to First Church doctrine. Bishop Soter sent a doctrinal letter to Corinth ([98](#)) which was read publicly and regularly thereafter in the church at Easter. This Dionysius envisaged as a token of the close ecclesiastical bond newly forged between his own church and the First Church of Rome: both Peter and Paul, he claimed, had been responsible for the "planting" of the churches at Rome and Corinth, whilst both had "taught into" Corinth and ITALY (Italy, *not* Rome) – a quiet protest, this, promoting the claims of the Corinthian Church as a doctrinal authority against those of Rome. Nevertheless, the move irreversibly subjected the chief Church of Achaea to the ambitious and unprincipled bishops of the First Church. The reading of Soter's letter from the pulpit symbolized their submission. Ironically, it had long before this been the custom in Corinth to have public readings of the first-century *Epistle of Clement*, which warned the faithful Christians there of the very danger that had now materialized. Soter's letter was treated by Dionysius as a kind of follow-up epistle from the church in Rome to the original epistle from the Roman church at Santa Pudenziana written by Pastor Clement. In fact, some scholars believe that the letter of Soter, paired thereafter with the *Epistle of Clement*, has survived to the present day under the spurious title of the "Second Epistle of Clement". This work abounds in quotations from heretical Gospels, one of them, perhaps, the Gospel of the Egyptians, illustrating the author's acceptance of Gnostic "textual criticism" ([99](#)). Dionysius claimed that the abuse some of his own letters had received at the hands of detractors showed how the Scriptures themselves, as in the theory of Cerdon

and Marcion, could have been mutilated and interpolated by "apostles of the Devil".

61a. Along with the admission of the First Church's cult and doctrine at Corinth went an alarming relaxation of the standards of moral discipline expected of the ordinary members of the congregation. Dionysius even wrote letters to the bishops of other churches, like Pinytus of Cnossus in Crete, advising him against expecting too much from his flock in the way of the practical exercise of holiness. Pinytus replied, rebuking Dionysius, and, according to Eusebius, who had access to this correspondence, Pinytus' letter was commendably orthodox, the implication being that Dionysius' was not. This laxness was in sharp contrast to the asceticism Soter himself enjoined on those in Dionysius' congregation to whom his letter was addressed (presuming the letter survives in the form of II Clement), those, namely, who came to Soter, in Dionysius' words, as beloved children to their "father", or otherwise, those who participated in the Roman church's "supercommunion". Here we have the earliest example of a phenomenon that became increasingly common in the First Church: an excessive, outward or ritualistic, asceticism expected of the Roman bishop's most devoted adherents, especially the presbyters, combined with an excessive laxity of discipline allowed to the laity. The effect of this combination was to increase the daily attendance of the public at the church, as their moral life was not closely watched, whilst maximising the control of the bishop over the clergy, and, at the same time, separating them as an exclusive, dominant, clique from the laity. We shall find this same tendency carried to even more extravagant lengths in the time of bishop Callistus of the First Church one generation later.

62. Those who would not yield willingly to the First Church were coerced. Now - when political conditions were ripe - the "multi-faith" tolerance was dropped in favor of excommunication, denunciation and intrigue. A fierce persecution of the Bible-believing Christians commenced about this time. The First Church of Rome and its Gnostic teachers were left unscathed. Only evangelicals perished - the enemies of the Gnostics. And at the same time members of the Imperial family, who initiated the persecutions, began to come under the influence of the Bishops of the First Church.

63. It all began with an incident (100) which caused the Emperor to look favourably on the Christian religion. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius, out of gratitude for a miraculous deliverance in battle by the prayers of Christians, promised to put to death any who made accusations against them. When about to enter into battle with German barbarians, and parched with thirst because of a prevailing drought, the Emperor was put in touch with dedicated, non-combatant Christians, who prayed to the Lord to send rain for him and his men: immediately a refreshing rain descended on the Romans and a blasting hail on the enemies of Rome! The Legion involved was surnamed the "Thundering Legion". The event itself is undoubted as it features on the coin of the Empire and on the Antonine column in Rome.

64. The Emperor was astounded at the power of the Christians' prayer, and immediately issued a decree forbidding Christians to be harassed, unless they had committed some crime. He threatened to burn at the stake any who accused them falsely. However, the Emperor had associated with him on the throne his darkling child, Lucius (who used the name Commodus on becoming sole Emperor). It was when Lucius and Aurelius (also called Antoninus) were joint-rulers, according to Melito of Sardis (101), that persecution broke out. Lucius was as evil and cunning as his father was benevolent and broad-minded. Through his concubine, Marcia, Lucius became acquainted with the Bishop of the First Church of Rome (102). If the Bishop needed some favor from the Court, Marcia obtained it for him. For example, members of the First Church whom Marcus Aurelius had condemned for criminal activity to hard labor in the mines of Sardinia, Lucius freed through the offices of Marcia. The Bishop of the First Church called these convicts "martyrs" (reminding one of the "martyr" Simon Magus). The occupant of the episcopal throne in the earlier years of Lucius' reign, the successor of Soter, was Eleutherus, previously a deacon of Anicetus. The Book of Popes, in an entry under the name of Bishop Eleutherus (103), records that Emperor Lucius Britanni[c]us - the latter epithet assumed by him (104) as the imperial master of Britain - sent a letter to Eleutherus requesting to be "made a Christian by his command." Evidently he thought that this Bishop of the First Church had the power to turn him into a Christian by a mere word. All this boded well for the First Church and ill for the evangelicals who rejected their spurious claims.

65. Marvellous to relate, a persecution was suddenly initiated against the evangelicals. Aurelius' decree had promised vengeance on any who maligned Christians, but when the Imperial decree was executed, it fell on those who maligned the "Christians" of the First Church of Rome, i.e. on the EVANGELICALS WHO DENOUNCED THEIR OCCULT PRACTICES. True Christians, like Melito of Sardis in Turkey, were amazed at this outbreak of persecution under the auspices of such a philosophic and philanthropic Emperor as Aurelius. Melito sent official letters (105) to Rome asking if the persecution had been decreed by *someone else* (which could only mean by his son and coruler, Lucius). He also blamed *informers, sectional strife* and the *slandorous accusations of calumniators* for the current persecution and traced this fatal combination between *informers* and the imperial authorities directly back to the holocausts under Nero and Domitian; i.e. the real culprits were the Gnostic heretics of Rome, now under the episcopal supervision of Eleutherus. It is doubtful that these letters ever reached Aurelius. The renowned Bible-teacher, heresy-hunter, and Christian philosopher, Justin, was martyred (106) in the capital. The decree of Marcus Aurelius (107) written as a consequence of the miracle of the Thundering Legion is still found in the manuscripts appended to the text of Justin's defence before the Emperor. Justin's eloquent pleading and his appeal to the decree of Aurelius were not able to save him. When demanded by the Roman magistrate where his church assembled, Justin replied that it was a mistake to think there was any single church where Christians must needs assemble to be considered true Christians (an implicit criticism of the claims of the First Church), and that he and his fellow Christians held meetings at the house-church of Martinus in the Timothinian Baths (Santa Pudenziana) (108). But this church did not have official recognition as a Christian congregation; the coruler Lucius accepted the pronouncement of the First Church of Rome as to who was and who was not a Christian. The Roman magistrate also demanded to know whether it was Justin who had made his fellow-martyrs Christians (as Eleutherus was held to have made Lucius a Christian) but they replied that their conversion was accomplished by the *command of God* (and not, as in the case of Lucius, by the *command of the bishop of the First Church*). Regardless of such niceties, the magistrate condemned Justin and his fellow martyrs to death. The pagan authorities were only interested in

determining whether these Christians honoured the idols, since they were the pagans' "gods" as well as the symbols of imperial authority. Those who refused to do so were condemned as god-denying, subversive, "atheists". Of course, the "Christians" of the First Church of Rome who happily worshipped idols could not be accused of "atheism" according to this definition. The "atheists", on the contrary, were the evangelicals who rejected idol-worship.

66. The net of the persecutors was spread wide. As in Domitian's time, the persecution was hottest in Rome and in the centers where John's disciples had been active. In Turkey, the authorities hunted down the aged and venerable Polycarp (109), the hammer of heretics, and world-famous patriarch of the Bible-believing Catholics. He was burned at the stake as an "atheist", the Spirit departing from him in the form of a dove (110) as he expired. In Lyons and Vienne in Gaul, Polycarp's disciples and others influenced by them were mowed down in the arena (111), their agonies prolonged with horrible tortures.

67. Before their martyrdom, a number of Polycarp's disciples in Gaul tried to negotiate with the Bishop of the First Church (112). They sent to Rome a young pastor called Irenaeus, carrying letters to Eleutherus. Some of the martyrs in Lyons actually participated in the First Church's "supercommunion." These addressed Eleutherus as "Father" and their letters, thus addressing him, were included with the rest. They hoped their negotiations would bring peace to the churches, which had already suffered the loss of many brethren in the persecution. Clearly, they believed Eleutherus would be able to stop the bloodshed. Polycarp's disciples, Irenaeus being one of them, distanced themselves from the "New Prophecy" movement, founded by the cult-leader Montanus, which had been disturbing the First Church of Rome, and also pleaded for toleration. The confusion of Bible-believing, Holy Ghost filled Catholics with the Montanist "doomsday-cult" had evidently goaded the Imperial authorities to action against the Bible-believers. Surely their pleas would prevail with the Bishop of the First Church? He would clear up the confusion with his friends in the Government, and the bloodshed would cease. No response is recorded to have been forthcoming from the Bishop.

68. Who were the Montanists that played such an important part in this crisis? A flavor of the cult and its practices can be obtained from the contemporary accounts preserved in the *Church History* of Eusebius. Their leader, Montanus, a Phrygian by origin, had been before his profession of conversion to Christianity a priest in the ecstatic cult of the Phrygian Great Mother Goddess, Cybele. Montanists were commonly called Phrygians or Cataphrygians. The cult had spread from Phrygia in Asia (Turkey) and reached Rome around AD 170. It was strongly identified with the area of Turkey where it originated. So also were the Bible-believing disciples of John, like Polycarp and Irenaeus' bishop Pothinus. That was one reason why the two groups were confused.

69. The novelty of the Montanist cult was its belief that the Apostolic gifts of the Spirit, particularly prophecy by direct inspiration, had been renewed in the ministry of Montanus. Hence his movement was called the "New Prophecy". Indeed the "Paraclete" or "Comforter", the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus to lead Christians into all truth, had been embodied, some believed, in the person of Montanus. But the gifts of the Spirit that were "new" to Montanus and his disciples had long been exercised by the Bible-believing Catholics. We know that the Montanists' teacher Tertullian was influenced by Justin Martyr, whose Christian brethren in Rome experienced gifts of healing and deliverance, and by Irenaeus, who was likewise blessed with a notable, Spirit-anointed ministry in Rome and Gaul. Polycarp and Hermas are other examples of spiritually gifted men amongst the evangelical Catholics. Evidently a moribund cultic form of Christianity had been kindled into new life by the charismatic ministries of the Bible-believing Christians of Asia, to produce the "New Prophecy" movement of Montanus. The cult, in other words, was a bastard child of the Asian revival led by John and Polycarp. It held a midway position between the Gnostics of the First Church, on the one hand, and the Asian Bible-believers, on the other, and attracted adherents from both.

70. At first, the Montanist movement had been welcomed by the First Church of Rome. The pagan Phrygian background of Montanus was perhaps a factor in winning it respect in the apostate Gnostic church, as it certainly retained many evidences of its pagan background, including its spring-festival

"Passover" rituals. Another factor may have been the sway the new charismatic cult could potentially have with the Spirit-gifted Christians of Polycarp's circle. If so, the hopes of the First Church were disappointed. There was actually a great difference between the spiritual experiences of the evangelicals and the fanaticism of the Montanists. The Montanists claimed their revelations, delivered in ecstatic trances, were as binding on their followers as the Holy Scriptures. They invented new, detailed regulations about fasting, celibacy and other matters of church order, and demanded obedience to these regulations because they had been revealed by the Spirit to the new prophets. The evangelicals tested the Montanist spirit by the Word and rejected it as spurious.

Emperors of Rome - Antoninus to Commodus

Antoninus Pius AD 138-161

Marcus Aurelius 161-180.

Lucius Verus [coruler] 161-169

Lucius (Commodus)

[coruler 177-180,

sole Emperor 180-192]

71. The movement now became a burden, rather than a boon, to the First Church bishops. One area of conflict was the Passover practices of a Montanist splinter-group in Rome, led by Blastus. This

man had previously been a pastor of the Bible-believers and when he fell into Montanist error he carried over with him into the Montanist camp the Jewish Passover customs practiced by the Bible-believing disciples of the Apostle John. Since the Montanists regularly claimed divine inspiration for church rituals (like the Passover customs) Blastus would have presented a threat to the vaunted "Passover" spring-festival of the First Church and of the other Montanists. It would have been intolerable in the eyes of the anti-Semitic bishops of the First Church of Rome to have this particular group of Montanists imposing their Jewish customs on the "Holy Church" with the claim that it was the commandment of the Paraclete. These were the Montanists who were confused with the evangelical Christians of Polycarp's circle. Another point of conflict was the First Church's teaching on the godhead. The mainline Montanist enthusiasts of Rome, led by Proclus (hence called the Cataproclan Montanists) and counting amongst their number the articulate lawyer Tertullian, held out against a new teaching on the godhead adopted by the Bishop of the First Church which had roots in pagan philosophy. Tertullian censured with all his

(considerable) rhetorical powers the novel doctrine so effortlessly foisted on the Bishop by its promoters, as well as the vast pretensions and abysmal moral standards of the eldership of the First Church (113). Some Montanists, following the teacher Aeschines (hence called the Cataeschineta Montanists), taught the same novel heresy regarding the godhead. If this complicated civil-war had been allowed to continue it could have led to the break-up of the apostate organization. The outcome was the expulsion of the Montanists from the First Church of Rome and persecution both for them and for the charismatic evangelicals who had influenced them.

72. The danger posed by the Montanist cult, as far as the Roman Imperial authorities were concerned, was that its adherents prophesied the end of the world in their lifetime, and the arrival of the Kingdom of God, which would involve, according to the *Book of Revelation*, the overthrow of the Roman Empire. The leading Montanist charismatic, Maximilla, prophesied (114) anarchy and wars in the Empire (which did not materialize) and it was given forth that the Phrygian villages of Pepuza and Tymion were the new Jerusalem, in the expectation that all the faithful would gather there. Claims like these were to the Romans of the Antonine period in the second century AD as troubling as, if not more troubling than, they had been to Nero in the first. Anyone wishing to provoke a quick, negative response from the authorities towards the Bible-believing Catholics of the later second century AD, had only to point to cults like the Montanists. Polycarp's disciples might be confused with the Montanists by a superficial or prejudiced observer. As well as having a common geographical origin, both groups held a fervent belief in the soon appearing of the Kingdom of God, in the current endowment of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit and in a strict moral code. But the Montanists were fanatical extremists. The fasts that Montanus imposed on his followers - identical in the mainline group to the "Passover" rituals of the First Church of Rome - were, on the admission of the Montanists' own teacher, Tertullian, no different from the self-inflicted fasts and mortifications of the priests of the Great Mother. The priests of Cybele were well known for working themselves up into an ecstatic frenzy and to such an extent, that they actually castrated themselves out of devotion to their divine Lover and Mother. That was celibacy with a vengeance! It was evident to many men of God that

Montanus and the new prophets were still under the influence of that fanatical, heathen spirit. Also, the priests of Cybele had been proscribed by the Romans in the past because their cult tended to foster sedition. To ensure devotees of such foreign cults accepted the suzerainty of the Imperial Regime, the Romans demanded sacrifice to the state gods, and especially to the statue of the "divine" Emperor. That was where the Bible-believing Catholics (and the more fervent Montanists, for that matter) fell foul of the Roman authorities and incurred the charge of "atheism". For example, when Polycarp was burnt at the stake in Smyrna, a Phrygian (Montanist) called Quintus was also brought to trial, though in his case he eventually offered sacrifice to the idols and escaped capital punishment.

73. Notice how the Gnostic First Church of Rome operated to induce the secular authorities to persecute the evangelicals. There was 1) a motive 2) an excuse 3) a legal fiction. In the first persecution of Nero's time the motive was religious jealousy and sectional rivalry by the Gnostics against the Bible-believers, the excuse was the supposed danger to society posed by the Christians' millenarian visions (the burning of Rome) and the legal fiction was malevolent occult practices (black magic). Thereafter Rome's conflict with the Jews brought the Jewish Christians' loyalty under suspicion. In the second persecution under Domitian the motive was the same - religious jealousy and sectional rivalry on the part of the heretics against the Bible-believers, the excuse was the same - the supposed danger to society posed by millenarian visions - and the legal fiction was *atheism*, i.e. treason. In the third persecution under Trajan the same motive and excuse applied and the legal fiction was, likewise, contempt of the imperial authority demonstrated by refusal to worship the idols and the Emperor's statue. Under Lucius (Commodus) the same motive, the same excuse and the same legal fiction combined to produce the same result - the torture and death of the innocent disciples of Jesus.

Footnotes

94. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I. xxvii. 4: "All those who in any way corrupt the truth, and injuriously affect the preaching of the Church, are the disciples and successors of Simon Magus of Samaria. Although they do not confess

the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy."

95. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I. xxv. 5: "And thus, if ungodly, unlawful, and forbidden actions are committed among them, I can no longer find ground for believing them to be such. And in their writings we read as follows, the interpretation which they give [of their views], declaring that Jesus spoke in a mystery to His disciples and apostles privately, and that they requested and obtained permission to hand down the things thus taught them, to others who should be worthy and believing. We are saved, indeed, by means of faith and love; but all other things, while in their nature indifferent, are reckoned by the opinion of men — some good and some evil, there being nothing really evil by nature."

96. Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* V. iv. 1-2: "The same martyrs also recommended Irenaeus, who was already at that time a presbyter of the residential district of Lyons, to the above-mentioned bishop of Rome, saying many favorable things in regard to him, as the following extract shows: "We pray, *Father Eleutherus*, that you may rejoice in God in all things and always. We have requested our brother and comrade Irenaeus to carry this letter to you, and we ask you to hold him in esteem, as zealot for the covenant of Christ. For if we thought that office could confer righteousness upon any one, we should commend him among the first as a presbyter of the church, which is his position." Why should we transcribe the catalogue of the witnesses given in the letter already mentioned, of whom some were beheaded, others cast to the wild beasts, and others fell asleep in prison, or give the number of confessors still surviving at that time? For whoever desires can readily find the full account by consulting the letter itself, which, as I have said, is recorded in our *Collection of Martyrdoms*." The martyrs of Lyons evidently included some who participated in the First Church's "supercommunion," and looked up to the bishop of the First Church as their "Father." These were most likely Montanists in the mold of Blastus, who accepted the Montanist charismata but adhered also to the Passover practice of John (see [para. 71](#)). The context of this citation in Eusebius (see further [note 112](#)) is precisely the *differing* (Gk. *diaphorous*) letters sent from the persecuted brethren in Lyons respecting the Montanist movement that was then infecting the Church worldwide (Eusebius, *op. cit.* V. iii. 4). The danger of pseudo-asceticism of the kind practiced by the Montanists was present to the mind of these martyrs, as one of them, Attalus, exhorted another, Alcibiades, to partake of more than bread and water lest by this pseudo-ascetic (Gnosticizing, Montanizing) practice he should cause others to stumble into error (*loc. cit.* 2-3).

97. Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* IV. xxii. 1-3: "HEGESIPPUS in the five books of *Memoirs* which have come down to us has left a most complete record of his own views. In them he states that on a journey to Rome he met a great many bishops, and that he received the same doctrine from all. It is fitting to hear what he says after making some remarks about the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. His words are as follows: "And the church of the Corinthians continued in the true faith until Primus was bishop in Corinth. I conversed with them on my way to Rome, and abode with the Corinthians many days, during which we were mutually refreshed in the true doctrine. And when I had come to Rome I formed a succession until Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. And Anicetus was succeeded by Soter, and he by Eleutherus. In every succession, and in every city that is held which is preached by the law and the prophets and the Lord."

98. Eusebius, *Church History*, 4. 23: "There is extant also another epistle written by Dionysius to the Romans, and addressed to Soter, who was bishop at that time. We cannot do better than to subjoin some passages from this epistle, in which he commends the practice of the Romans which has been retained down to the persecution in our own days. His words are as follows: "For from the beginning it has been your practice to do good to all the brethren in various ways, and to send contributions to many churches in every city. Thus relieving the want of the needy, and making provision for the brethren in the mines by the gifts which you have sent from the beginning, you Romans keep up the hereditary customs of the

Romans, which your blessed bishop Soter has not only maintained, but also added to, furnishing an abundance of supplies to the saints, and encouraging the brethren from abroad with blessed words, as a loving father his children." In this same epistle he makes mention also of Clement's epistle to the Corinthians, showing that it had been the custom from the beginning to read it in the church. His words are as follows: "Today we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle. From it, whenever we read it, we shall always be able to draw advice, as also from the former epistle, which was written to us through Clement." The same writer also speaks as follows concerning his own epistles, alleging that they had been mutilated: "As the brethren desired me to write epistles, I wrote. And these epistles the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, cutting out some things and adding others. For them a woe is reserved. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if some have attempted to adulterate the Lord's writings also, since they have formed designs even against writings which are of less accounts.""

Eusebius, *Church History*, 2. 25: "And that they [Peter and Paul] both suffered martyrdom at the same time is stated by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his epistle to the Romans, in the following words: "You [Soter's church] have thus by such an admonition bound together the planting of the Romans and Corinthians that came from Peter and Paul. For both of them indeed, having planted into our Corinth, likewise taught us. And likewise, having taught together into Italy, they suffered martyrdom at the same time." I have quoted these things in order that the truth of the history might be still more confirmed."

Because an author wrote against heresies (like Dionysius), it did not follow that he himself was (or remained) faithful to the Apostolic doctrine. Of those mentioned below, Tatian and Bardesanes are known to have fallen into Gnostic heresy. Jerome, *Letter 70*: "Need I speak of Melito bishop of Sardis, of Apollinaris chief-priest of the Church of Hierapolis, of Dionysius bishop of the Corinthians, of Tatian, of Bardesanes, of Irenaeus successor to the martyr Pothinus; all of whom have in many volumes explained the uprisings of the several heresies and tracked them back, each to the philosophic source from which it flows." We could add Tertullian to the list of those who fought admirably against certain heresies (e.g. Marcionism and Valentinianism) but fell into heresy themselves or rather, in his case, went from one heresy (as a member of the First Church of Rome) into another (Montanism).

99. "The Second Epistle of Clement" or, more correctly, "The Second Epistle of the Romans to the Corinthians": "Ch 4: For this reason, if we should do such wicked things, the Lord hath said, "Even though ye were gathered together to Me in My very bosom, yet if ye were not to keep My commandments, I would cast you off, and say unto you, Depart from Me; I know you not whence ye are, ye workers of iniquity." Ch 5: Wherefore, brethren, leaving willingly our sojourn in this present world, let us do the will of Him that called us, and not fear to depart out of this world. For the Lord saith, "Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves." And Peter answered and said unto Him, "What, then, if the wolves shall tear in pieces the lambs?" Jesus said unto Peter, "The lambs have no cause after they are dead to fear the wolves; and in like manner, fear not ye them that kill you, and can do nothing more unto you; but fear Him who, after you are dead, has power over both soul and body to cast them into hell-fire." And consider, brethren, that the sojourning in the flesh in this world is but brief and transient, but the promise of Christ is great and wonderful, even the rest of the kingdom to come, and of life everlasting. By what course of conduct, then, shall we attain these things, but by leading a holy and righteous life, and by deeming these worldly things as not belonging to us, and not fixing our desires upon them? For if we desire to possess them, we fall away from the path of righteousness Ch 8: Wherefore, brethren, by doing the will of the Father, and keeping the flesh holy, and observing the commandments of the Lord, we shall obtain eternal life. For the Lord saith in the Gospel, "If ye have not kept that which was small, who will commit to you the great? For I say unto you, that he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." This, then, is what He means: "Keep the flesh holy and the seal undefiled, that ye may receive eternal life." Ch 12: from the *Gospel of the Egyptians*: Let us expect, therefore, hour by hour, the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of the appearing of God. For the Lord Himself, being asked by one when His kingdom would come, replied, "When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female, neither male nor female." Now, two are one when we speak the truth one to another, and there is unfeignedly one soul in two bodies. And "that which is without as that which is within" meaneth this: He calls the soul

"that which is within," and the body "that which is without." As, then, thy body is visible to sight, so also let thy soul be manifest by good works. And "the male with the female, neither male nor female," this... [The newly recovered portion follows:] ... meaneth, that a brother seeing a sister should think nothing about her as of a female, nor she think anything about him as of a male. If ye do these things, saith He, the kingdom of my Father shall come Ch 14: The male is Christ, the female is the Church. And the Books and the Apostles plainly declare that the Church is not of the present, but from the beginning. For she was spiritual, as our Jesus also was, but was manifested in the last days that He might save us. Now the Church, being spiritual, was manifested in the flesh of Christ, thus signifying to us that, if any of us keep her in the flesh and do not corrupt her, he shall receive her again so in the Holy Spirit: for this flesh is the copy of the spirit. No one then who corrupts the copy, shall partake of the original. This then is what He meaneth, "Keep the flesh, that ye may partake of the spirit." Ch 17: For the Lord said, "I come to gather together all the nations, tribes, and tongues.""

100. The site of the incident was Carnuntum near Vienna, the date c. AD 173-4. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. v. 1-7: "GOD SENT RAIN FROM HEAVEN FOR MARCUS AURELIUS CAESAR IN ANSWER TO THE PRAYERS OF OUR PEOPLE. It is reported that Marcus Aurelius Caesar, brother of Antoninus, being about to engage in battle with the Germans and Sarmatians, was in great trouble on account of his army suffering from thirst. But the soldiers of the so-called Melitene legion, through the faith which has given strength from that time to the present, when they were drawn up before the enemy, kneeled on the ground, as is our custom in prayer, and engaged in supplications to God. This was indeed a strange sight to the enemy, but it is reported that a stranger thing immediately followed. The lightning drove the enemy to flight and destruction, but a shower refreshed the army of those who had called on God, all of whom had been on the point of perishing with thirst. This story is related by non-Christian writers who have been pleased to treat the times referred to, and it has also been recorded by our own people. By those historians who were strangers to the faith, the marvel is mentioned, but it is not acknowledged as an answer to our prayers. But by our own people, as friends of the truth, the occurrence is related in a simple and artless manner. Among these is Apolinarius, who says that from that time the legion through whose prayers the wonder took place received from the emperor a title appropriate to the event, being called in the language of the Romans the Thundering Legion. Tertullian is a trustworthy witness of these things. In the Apology for the Faith, which he addressed to the Roman Senate, and which work we have already mentioned, he confirms the history with greater and stronger proofs. He writes that there are still extant letters of the most intelligent Emperor Marcus in which he testifies that his army, being on the point of perishing with thirst in Germany, was saved by the prayers of the Christians. And he says also that this emperor threatened death to those who brought accusation against us. He adds further: "What kind of laws are those which impious, unjust, and cruel persons use against us alone? which Vespasian, though he had conquered the Jews, did not regard; which Trajan partially annulled, forbidding Christians to be sought after; which neither Adrian, though inquisitive in all matters, nor he who was called Plus sanctioned." But let any one treat these things as he chooses; we must pass on to what followed." Cf. also Tertullian Apol. 5 (i. 295) (illam germanicam sitim christianorum forte militum precationibus impetrato imbri discussam), Scap. 4 (i. 703) (christianorum militum orationibus ad Deum factis). The pagan witnesses are the pillar of Marcus, Dion Cassius (lxxi. 8, 10), and Capitolinus (Hist. Aug. Life of M. Antoninus Philosophus, xxiv. 4). The earliest Christian witness is Apolinarius, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, who gave a simple account of the incident--probably very soon after its occurrence--perhaps in the Apology which he addressed to Marcus Aurelius. He said that it received from the Emperor the name of *keranobolos* (i.e. thundering) in memory of what happened.. The objection that the legion was already called Fulminata ("Thunderstruck"), at least since the time of Nero, is of no particular consequence, since the name could simply have been *re-interpreted* (as Fulminatrix, "Thundering", Greek *keranobolos*) by the Emperor as a result of the miraculous deliverance.

101. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. IV. xxvi. 7, see above, [note 31](#).

102. See First Church of Rome Part 5, [=>](#) and *ibid.*, [note 117](#).

103. The Book of Popes (*Liber Pontificalis*, 6th century AD, traditionally based on a work of the antiquarian Pope Damasus), under the name Eleutherius: "*Hic accepit epistula a Lucio Brittanio rege, ut Christianus efficeretur per ejus mandatum*" i.e. "He [Eleutherius] received a letter from Emperor Lucius Brittan[i]c[us], requesting that he be made a Christian by his command." The idea that this Lucius was some otherwise unknown native kinglet of Britain is absurd and arose by a mistake of Bede (he is the first English writer [673-735] to mention the story repeatedly (Hist. Eccl., I, V; V, 24, De temporum ratione, ad an. 161), and he took it, not from native sources, but from the "Liber Pontificalis"). Lucius (Commodus) was titled "Britannicus" because of the success of the Roman arms in those regions under his rule (AD 184: "However, the most important war was in Britain. For the tribes in the island crossed the Wall which divided them from the Roman soldiers and did a huge amount of damage, even taking out a legate with his troops. In consequence Commodus grew worried and despatched Ulpius Marcellus against the tribes ... he inflicted serious defeats on the British barbarians." Dion Cassius, LXXIII. viii. 1-2), though, of course, he was "king of Britain" also through his office as Emperor (in the Greek and later Roman terminology "king") of the Roman Empire, which included Britain within its dominions. Similar mistakes were made in regard to other historical figures from this period. "Pertinax and Trebellius" are named in medieval legend as the legates of Caesar who influenced Lucius to become a Christian. Ussher (*Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*, 1687, p. 26) pointed out long ago that this Pertinax is none other than the noble Roman and military commander of that name who, under Lucius Commodus, participated in a legation to Britain, and became Emperor after the murder of the latter. (Ussher missed, however, the identification of Lucius Britannus with this very same Lucius Commodus.) Medieval legend also records that in the time of the next but one Bishop of the First Church after Eleutherius, viz. Zephyrinus, and in the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus, a young man called Albinus (otherwise Albanus), an inhabitant of Britain but of noble Roman extract, was dispatched with a delegation to Rome to receive a military title (Ussher, *ibid.*, p. 86), and, amongst his companions, the flower of the British Isles, many became Christians at that time. Albinus is said to have served during the same reign of Severus as *magister militum* (generalissimo) of Britain with supreme command under Caesar (*sub Caesare primatus*) over all that province (*id.*, 83). In a persecution of the Christians instigated by Severus (others, with Bede, date this persecution to the era of Diocletian), Albinus is said to have offered protection to a fugitive Christian, who is named Amphibalus in later versions of the story. When the Roman soldiers knocked at the door of Albinus' house, Albinus himself came forth, wrapped in the rough mantle of the Christian ascetic. Albinus was martyred by decapitation as a consequence of his act of bravery and hospitality. His remains were taken to Rome, and, later in the Middle Ages, were transferred to Mainz (*id.*, p. 77f.), though dust stained with his blood was venerated also at the Roman Verulamium, known later as St Albans after him, in England (*id.*, 177). (Hence it came to be believed that the relics in Rome had been taken from Verulamium by Saint Germanus after he visited the English shrine, *id.*, 77f., 178.) This great Roman commandant of Britain can only be Clodius Albinus, who was indeed commander of the legions and governor in Britain during the reign of Severus, and whose severed head is known to have been taken to Rome - where it was put up for public display, in a barbarous act of un-Roman triumphalism - after his death at the hands of the soldiers of Severus. Historically Clodius Albinus perished during the great Battle of Lugdunum, Lyons in France, fighting for the supremacy of the Roman Empire against Severus himself (AD 197). Nothing is recorded in the Roman historical sources about his sheltering of a Christian ascetic, but then the record is notably vague about the precise circumstances of his demise (except to say that it was at a river, as also was that of the martyr Albinus in medieval legend). What we do know is that Lugdunum, the location of Clodius Albinus' death, was at that period a great center of Christian witness under the ministry of Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John, and that Irenaeus was martyred by "the heretics" [viz. the Gnostics] during a persecution promoted by Severus (ed. Smith, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, s.n. Irenaeus, from a Syriac fragment *apud* Harvey, Irenaeus, vol. II p. 454 n. 1, from Syriac MS D = British Museum 12,157 7th or 8th century AD). The very streets of Lugdunum are said to have run red with the martyrs' blood (Gregory of Tours, *Historia*, I. 29). Since it was the Gallic disciples of John, the adherents of Irenaeus, who were martyred by Severus in Lugdunum, and that at the prompting, or even by the hands, of the "heretics" - meaning Gnostics, evidently of the anti-Semitic, anti-Johannine type favored by the First Church - this particular persecution appears to have been a continuation of the policy of imperial patronization of the bishop of the First Church initiated by Lucius,

whose memory Severus took to defending in public when he became Emperor. It would be natural, in the circumstances, for Severus' political opponent, Clodius Albinus of Britain, to have opposed the policy of persecution adopted by Severus, and to have defended the Christian citizens of Lugdunum against the violence of Severus and his Gnostic allies. Hence, most probably, the medieval legend of Albinus' heroic defense of the Christian ascetic. Severus turned out to be the first of a whole series of dictatorial emperors during the third century AD who inherited the mantle he had left them of an Empire remodeled on the lines of an oriental monarchy. The Empire became under Severus, even more so than under Lucius, a despotism, without the shadow of Republican, Senatorial, legitimacy. This change of the political tide - a marked change for the worse - coincided with the rising of new religious winds, and, specifically, of winds sweeping over the imperial palace from the direction of the Vicus Lateranus.

104. Lewis-Short, Latin Dictionary @ The Perseus Project, s.v.: "Britannicus, i. m., a cognomen of the conquerors of Britain; of the son of the emperor Claudius and Messalina, previously called Germanicus, Suet. Claud. 27; 43; Tac. A. 11, 4; 11, 11; 11, 26; 11, 32; 12, 2; poisoned by Nero, Tac. A. 13, 16; Suet. Ner. 33.--Of the emperor Commodus, Lampr. Commod. 8." Also Dion Cassius, Roman History, LXXIII. xv. 5: "And to the senate he [Commodus] would send messages couched in these terms: "The Emperor Caesar Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Augustus Pius Felix Sarmaticus Germanicus Maximus Britannicus, Pacifier of the Whole Earth, Invincible, the Roman Hercules, Pontifex Maximus, Holder of the Tribunician Authority for the eighteenth time, Imperator for the eighth time, Consul for the seventh time, Father of his Country, to consuls, praetors, tribunes, and the fortunate Commodian senate, Greeting. ""

105. See above, [note 31](#).

106. For the dating to c. AD 177 see [note 112](#): "THE MARTYRDOM OF THE HOLY MARTYRS JUSTIN, CHARITON, CHARITES, PAEON, AND LIBERIANUS, WHO SUFFERED AT ROME. CHAPTER 1. EXAMINATION OF JUSTIN BY THE PREFECT In the time of the lawless partisans of idolatry, wicked decrees were passed against the holy Christians in town and country, to force them to offer libations to vain idols; and accordingly the holy men, having been apprehended, were brought before the prefect of Rome, Rusticus by name. And when they had been brought before his judgment-seat, Rusticus the prefect said to Justin, "Obey the gods at once, and submit to the kings." Justin said, "To obey the commandments of our Savior Jesus Christ is worthy neither of blame nor of condemnation." Rusticus the prefect said, "What kind of doctrines do you profess?" Justin said, "I have endeavored to learn all doctrines; but I have acquiesced at last in the true doctrines, those namely of the Christians, even though they do not please those who hold false opinions." Rusticus the prefect said, "Are those the doctrines that please you, you utterly wretched man?" Justin said, "Yes, since I adhere to them with right dogma." Rusticus the prefect said, "What is the dogma?" Justin said, "That according to which we worship the God of the Christians, whom we reckon to be one from the beginning, the maker and fashioner of the whole creation, visible and invisible; and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who had also been preached beforehand by the prophets as about to be present with the race of men, the herald of salvation and teacher of good disciples. And I, being a man, think that what I can say is insignificant in comparison with His boundless divinity, acknowledging a certain prophetic power, since it was prophesied concerning Him of whom now I say that He is the Son of God. For I know that of old the prophets foretold His appearance among men." CHAPTER 2 EXAMINATION OF JUSTIN CONTINUED Rusticus the prefect said, "Where do you assemble?" Justin said, "Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus the prefect said, "Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?" Justin said, "I live above one Martinus, at the Timothian Baths [or, the Baths of Martinus son of Timothinus]; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his. And if any one wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth." Rusticus said, "Are you not, then, a Christian?" Justin said, "Yes, I am a Christian." CHAPTER 3 EXAMINATION OF CHARITON AND OTHERS Then

said the prefect Rusticus to Chariton, "Tell me further, Chariton, are you also a Christian?" Chariton said, "I am a Christian by the command of God." Rusticus the prefect asked the woman Charito, "What say you, Charito?" Charito said, "I am a Christian by the grace of God." Rusticus said to Euelpistus, "And what are you?" Euelpistus, a servant of Caesar, answered, "I too am a Christian, having been freed by Christ; and by the grace of Christ I partake of the same hope." Rusticus the prefect said to Hierax, "And you, are you a Christian?" Hierax said, "Yes, I am a Christian, for I revere and worship the same God." Rusticus the prefect said, "Did Justin make you Christians?" Hierax said, "I was a Christian, and will be a Christian." And Paeon stood up and said, "I too am a Christian." Rusticus the prefect said, "Who taught you?" Paeon said, "From our parents we received this good confession." Euelpistus said, "I willingly heard the words of Justin. But from my parents also I learned to be a Christian." Rusticus the prefect said, "Where are your parents?" Euelpistus said, "In Cappadocia." Rusticus says to Hierax, "Where are your parents?" And he answered, and said, "Christ is our true father, and faith in Him is our mother; and my earthly parents died; and I, when I was driven from Iconium in Phrygia, came here." Rusticus the prefect said to Liberianus, "And what say you? Are you a Christian, and unwilling to worship [the gods]?" Liberianus said, "I too am a Christian, for I worship and reverence the only true God." CHAPTER 4 RUSTICUS THREATENS THE CHRISTIANS WITH DEATH The prefect says to Justin, "Hearken, you who are called learned, and think that you know true doctrines; if you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe you will ascend into heaven?" Justin said, "I hope that, if I endure these things, I shall have His gifts. For I know that, to all who have thus lived, there abides the divine favor until the completion of the whole world." Rusticus the prefect said, "Do you suppose, then, that you will ascend into heaven to receive some recompense?" Justin said, "I do not suppose it, but I know and am fully persuaded of it." Rusticus the prefect said, "Let us, then, now come to the matter in hand, and which presses. Having come together, offer sacrifice with one accord to the gods." Justin said, "No right-thinking person falls away from piety to impiety." Rusticus the prefect said, "Unless ye obey, ye shall be mercilessly punished." Justin said, "Through prayer we can be saved on account of our Lord Jesus Christ, even when we have been punished, because this shall become to us salvation and confidence at the more fearful and universal judgment-seat of our Lord and Savior." Thus also said the other martyrs: "Do what you will, for we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols." CHAPTER 5 SENTENCE PRONOUNCED AND EXECUTED Rusticus the prefect pronounced sentence, saying, "Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to yield to the command of the emperor be scourged, and led away to suffer the punishment of decapitation, according to the laws." The holy martyrs having glorified God, and having gone forth to the accustomed place, were beheaded, and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Savior. And some of the faithful having secretly removed their bodies, laid them in a suitable place, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ having wrought along with them, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." In Platner's Topography of Rome under THERMAE NOVATI, the phrase naming the Baths in the Acts of Justin above is understood thus: *Martinou tou Timothinou balaneion*, which would seem to mean the "Baths of Martinus son of Timothinus." If that is the correct reading, and in the light of the traditions connecting the baths of Santa Pudenziana with Timothy, son of Pudens, Timothinus could have been a freed Christian slave of Timothy, who adopted, as was customary, his master's name; and hence Martinus, the son of Timothinus, became the pastor of the congregation which met there, c. AD 145, i.e. at least as early as the first arrival of Justin in Rome, not long after the era of Pastor Hermas and Timothy. Similarly, the name of Novatian (Novatianus), who became a noted figure in the same house-church in the third century, following Hippolytus, and the leader of the "Novatianist sect" (so named by its enemies in the First Church), may reveal a connection between him and the household of Novatus, the "brother" of Timothy, who likewise bequeathed his name to the baths at Santa Pudenziana.

107. Justin, First Apology, 68: "EPISTLE OF MARCUS AURELIUS TO THE SENATE, IN WHICH HE TESTIFIES THAT THE CHRISTIANS WERE THE CAUSE OF HIS VICTORY The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Germanicus, Parthicus, Sarmaticus, to the People of Rome, and to the sacred Senate greeting: I explained to you my grand design, and what advantages I gained on the confines of Germany, with much labor and suffering, in consequence of the circumstance that I was surrounded by the enemy; I myself being shut up in Carnuntum by seventy-

four cohorts, nine miles off. And the enemy being at hand, the scouts pointed out to us, and our general Pompeianus showed us that there was close on us a mass of a mixed multitude of 977,000 men, which indeed we saw; and I was shut up by this vast host, having with me only a battalion composed of the first, tenth, double and marine legions. Having then examined my own position, and my host, with respect to the vast mass of barbarians and of the enemy, I quickly betook myself to prayer to the gods of my country. But being disregarded by them, I summoned those who among us go by the name of Christians. And having made inquiry, I discovered a great number and vast host of them, and raged against them, which was by no means becoming; for afterwards I learned their power. Wherefore they began the battle, not by preparing weapons, nor arms, nor bugles; for such preparation is hateful to them, on account of the God they bear about in their conscience. Therefore it is probable that those whom we suppose to be atheists, have God as their ruling power entrenched in their conscience. For having cast themselves on the ground, they prayed not only for me, but also for the whole army as it stood, that they might be delivered from the present thirst and famine. For during five days we had got no water, because there was none; for we were in the heart of Germany, and in the enemy's territory. And simultaneously with their casting themselves on the ground, and praying to God (a God of whom I am ignorant), water poured from heaven, upon us most refreshingly cool, but upon the enemies of Rome a withering hail. And immediately we recognized the presence of God following on the prayer — a God unconquerable and indestructible. Founding upon this, then, let us pardon such as are Christians, lest they pray for and obtain such a weapon against ourselves. And I counsel that no such person be accused on the ground of his being a Christian. But if any one be found laying to the charge of a Christian that he is a Christian, I desire that it be made manifest that he who is accused as a Christian, and acknowledges that he is one, is accused of nothing else than only this, that he is a Christian; but that he who arraigns him be burned alive. And I further desire, that he who is entrusted with the government of the province shall not compel the Christian, who confesses and certifies such a matter, to retract; neither shall he commit him. And I desire that these things be confirmed by a decree of the Senate. And I command this my edict to be published in the Forum of Trajan, in order that it may be read. The prefect Vitrasius Pollio will see that it be transmitted to all the provinces round about, and that no one who wishes to make use of or to possess it be hindered from obtaining a copy from the document I now publish." For obvious reasons sceptical souls have questioned the genuineness of this letter which some date before the time of Tertullian, some as late as early in the fourth century. Harnack regarded it as substantially genuine, but interpolated. The verdict ultimately must be: "innocent unless proven guilty."

108. See above [note 106](#), chapter 2.

109. See [Appendix 10](#) for details of the martyrdom of Polycarp.

110. See Appendix 10, [chapter 16](#).

111. See [Appendix 11](#).

112. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. iii. 4 - iv. 2 (see further [note 96](#)): "The followers of Montanus, Alcibiades and Theodotus in Phrygia were now first giving wide circulation to their assumption in regard to prophecy, — for the many other miracles that, through the gift of God, were still wrought in the different churches caused their prophesying to be readily credited by many, — and as dissension arose concerning them, the brethren in Gaul set forth their own prudent and most orthodox judgment in the matter, and published also differing [Gk. *diaphorous*] epistles from the witnesses that had been put to death among them. These they sent, while they were still in prison, to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, and also to Eleutherus, who was then bishop of Rome, negotiating for the peace of the churches. [CHAPTER 4] The same witnesses also recommended Irenaeus, who was already at that time a presbyter of the residential district of Lyons, to the above-mentioned bishop of Rome, saying many favorable things in regard to him, as the following extract shows: "We pray, Father Eleutherus, that you may rejoice in God in all things and always. We have requested our brother and comrade Irenaeus to carry this letter to you, and we ask you to hold him in esteem, as zealous

for the covenant of Christ. For if we thought that office could confer righteousness upon any one, we should commend him among the first as a presbyter of the church, which is his position." Why should we transcribe the catalogue of the witnesses given in the letter already mentioned, of whom some were beheaded, others cast to the wild beasts, and others fell asleep in prison, or give the number of confessors still surviving at that time? For whoever desires can readily find the full account by consulting the letter itself, which, as I have said, is recorded in our Collection of Martyrdoms." The dating here, the martyrdom of Polycarp coinciding with the martyrdoms at Lyons (the latter datable to AD 177), follows the synchronism in Jerome's edition of Eusebius' Chronicle, though there both events are dated too early, to the 6th year of Aurelius = AD 166 ("Persecutione orta in Asia Polycarpus et Pionius fecere martyrium, quorum scriptae quoque passiones feruntur. Plurimi in Gallia gloriose ob nomen Xpi interfecti, quorumusque in praesentem diem condita libris certamina perseuerant.") The synchronism in this case, as commonly in ancient chronicles, is more worthy of credit than the absolute dating, and the latter has been generally abandoned. However the common modern dating of the martyrdom of Polycarp to AD 155/156 is also untenable. It does not explain how Irenaeus, who very early in his presbyterial career was present in Rome on his mission to Eleutherus c. AD 177, is said also to have "taught many" in Rome *at the time of Polycarp's martyrdom* and, in fact, to have heard there a divine voice announcing that *event the moment it happened* (Irenaeus' Martyrdom of Polycarp, xxii. 3, 5, Codex Mosquensis 159, 13th century: "3. For this Irenaeus, at the time of the martyrdom of the bishop Polycarp, was in Rome, and taught many, and many most excellent writings are extant, in which he mentions Polycarp 5. And this also is recorded in the writings of Irenaeus, that at the day and hour when Polycarp suffered in Smyrna Irenaeus, being in the city of the Romans, heard a voice like a trumpet saying: "Polycarp has suffered martyrdom.""). There is no evidence that Irenaeus visited Rome twice, and it is inherently unlikely that he would have had any reason or means to do so, or that he could have "taught many," in his earliest youth, or before he was ordained, as, contrariwise, the dating to AD 155/156 would require. In the MSS of Polycarp's Martyrdom (xxi. 1) the event is dated precisely to the 8th hour (around 2 pm) of the 2nd of the month Xanthicus (the Macedonian calendar date used in Smyrna), and to the "7th before the kalends of March" (= 23rd February, the Julian equivalent), and that day is declared to have been "a great Sabbath" — an echo of the New Testament term used to describe the Sabbath when Jesus lay in the tomb (John 19. 31). In AD 177 Feb. 23 was, in fact, a Saturday. Likewise in Justin's case, it would have been no surprise, as it was, to Melito, that persecution broke out in the reign of the philosophic Marcus Aurelius c. AD 177, if the famous martyr Justin, not to mention the great Asian patriarch Polycarp from Melito's own homeland (on the chronology of Jerome-Eusebius), had been executed earlier by the same emperor. Therefore, unless and until any other more substantial evidence becomes available, the "kings" referred to in the account of the martyrdom of Justin and his brethren must be held to be Marcus Aurelius and his son, Lucius Commodus, the two emperors referred to by Melito in his letter to Rome which denounced the unexpected persecution, and Justin's martyrdom dated, with that of Polycarp and the martyrs of Lyons, to c. AD 177. The deposition amongst the apologetic works of Justin of the decree of Aurelius issued as a consequence of the Thundering Legion miracle, which occurred c. AD 173-4 shortly before the elevation of Lucius Commodus to joint rule, may in that case reflect a genuine, historical, connection between Justin's defence at his trial and that decree. Justin himself, or some ancient compiler, could have used it as evidence that the proceedings against him went against the recently adopted policy of Aurelius.

113. Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men, 53: "... Tertullian. He was presbyter of the church until middle life, afterwards driven by the envy and abuse of the clergy of the Roman church, he lapsed to the doctrine of Montanus, and mentions the new prophecy in many of his books."

114. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. xvi.18-20, citing Apolinarius of Hierapolis: "Again in the same work, after saying other things in refutation of the false prophecies of Maximilla, he indicates the time when he wrote these accounts, and mentions her predictions in which she prophesied wars and anarchy. Their falsehood he censures in the following manner: "And has not this been shown clearly to be false? For it is today more than thirteen years since the woman died, and there has been neither a partial nor general war in the world; but rather, through the mercy of God, continued peace even to the Christians." These things are taken from the second

book." Ibid., xviii. 2, citing Apollonius: "His actions and his teaching show who this new teacher is. This is he who taught the dissolution of marriage; who made laws for fasting; who named Pepuza and Tymion, small towns in Phrygia, Jerusalem, wishing to gather people to them from all directions who appointed collectors of money; who contrived the receiving of gifts under the name of offerings; who provided salaries for those who preached his doctrine, that its teaching might prevail through gluttony."

[The First Church of Rome Under Victor, Zephyrinus and Callistus](#)

[The Bride Fights Back](#)

74. The Bible-believing Christians of the house-church at the Timothinian Baths (Santa Pudenziana) had been deprived of their spiritual leaders in the persecution. Their teacher Justin and the other faithful brethren had won the martyr's crown. But God had immediately provided them with a leader anointed with spiritual power greater even than the faith-warrior, Justin. That new leader was Irenaeus, the young pastor sent by Polycarp's disciples in Gaul on that fruitless mission of peace to the Bishop of the First Church of Rome. As he stood in Rome one day, perhaps wondering what God's purpose for him now was, he heard a great voice like a trumpet blasting out the message from Heaven, "Polycarp has been martyred!" He learnt later that this happened at the very hour of the hero's execution. It was as if Polycarp's mantle had fallen with the voice from Heaven on the shoulders of Irenaeus. He took up the battle against the spiritual serpents that were sapping the life of the nominal Christian Church of Rome. He preached and taught with the holy zeal of a prophet in the great metropolis. God confirmed His Word with mighty signs and wonders of the Holy Ghost. The sick were healed, the dead raised to life and demons expelled in the ministry of Irenaeus.

75. Irenaeus saw through the hypocrisy of the bishops of the First Church of Rome. When they talked to the Bible-believers they pretended to be one of them; but in their day-to-day dealings with the members of their flock, they tolerated and catered to every foul doctrine of the Devil, as long

as it was popular with the public and the authorities of Rome. He determined to turn the spiritual heat up on the First Church bishops. He was in an excellent position to do this since he was a personal disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp was a personal disciple of the Apostle John, the closest of all the disciples to the heart of Jesus. He was thus only one step removed from the fountainhead of Apostolic doctrine. No Gnostic heretic could claim in the presence of Irenaeus to be a recipient of "secret" traditions from the mouth of Jesus. If anyone knew the secret counsels of the Lord it was His beloved disciple John. And John had entrusted the truths he had received from Jesus to his faithful ministers, of whom Polycarp was one of the most worthy.

76. Irenaeus admitted that the First Church of Rome was the oldest church in the capital and that it could trace its origin from apostles in the primitive era of the New Testament Church. In this he concurred with the Gnostics. But, pointing to the bishops of Santa Pudenziana before Sixtus who were Bible-believing Catholics, Irenaeus proved that their doctrines were identical to his own and had nothing in common with Gnosticism. These bishops were accepted as true bishops by both sides, by the Bible-believing Catholics on the one hand and by the Gnostic heretics on the other (because the list of these bishops preceding Sixtus was used by the Gnostics to validate the apostolic succession of Sixtus himself and therefore of Sixtus' successors on the episcopal chair of the First Church). Irenaeus had only to refer doubtful souls to the Letter of Clement - Clement being the most notable of these early bishops of Santa Pudenziana - to prove that the true apostolic doctrine was nothing like what the Gnostics taught to have been the apostles' "secret tradition". Clement was, like Polycarp, a personal disciple of the apostles and was well acquainted with all their doctrines.

77. Irenaeus' arguments and proofs were set out in his *opus magnum*, the monumental *Refutation and Subversion of Science Falsely So Called* (commonly called *Against Heresies*). This work dealt a fatal blow to the many-headed beast of Gnosticism. He proved that the Gnostics were nothing more than pagans with a Christian label. He unmasked their absurd theories as poor imitations of the heathen philosophies and their rituals and liturgies as borrowings from the indigenous and oriental idolatries. He also provided for posterity a

record of the simple, powerful, scriptural doctrine handed down by the Apostle John to his disciples. Many other works of Irenaeus, which would throw a flood of light on apostolic doctrine and practice, have strangely gone missing. The Byzantine scholar Photius, who still had access to some of them, explains their later disappearance when he refers to what they contained as *unorthodox* by the ecclesiastical canon of Photius' own degenerate times (114a).

78. Those who had abandoned Bible-faith, Irenaeus did his best to reclaim. He wrote to Blastus, the elder who had fallen into Montanist heresy: he was now proclaiming that it was absolutely a divine requirement for all believers to celebrate the Passover, like the Jewish disciples of John, on the 14th of the month Nisan. Irenaeus exhorted him to abandon his schismatic legalism and return to the fold of God. He also wrote to Florinus, who had once been a pastor of the Bible-believing Catholics and had fellowshiped in his youth, like Irenaeus himself, with Polycarp, but was now a priest in the apostate First Church of Rome and an avid proponent of the Gnosticism of Valentinus. His loving entreaties were disregarded. Florinus wrote books developing even further the Valentinian system and tried to turn other brethren from the straight and narrow Way of the Cross. The bishop of the First Church, Eleutherus' successor, Victor, hypocritically turned a blind eye to Florinus' propaganda. Irenaeus then wrote to Victor, publically putting him on notice (as if he needed to know it) that Florinus was actively promoting Valentinian heresy.

79. Though Irenaeus' overtures were unsuccessful, it was a good time to approach Victor: the Gnostic teachers Valentinus and Marcion were losing favor in the First Church and Victor was currently toying with the new, more fashionable, heresy of Noetianism, influenced by its eloquent advocate, Praxeas. In fact, the First Church of Rome was in a crisis. Victor was its first Latin-speaking pastor and wanted to distance himself from the Greek-speaking theological "experts" in order to construct a purely Roman, Latin or Western theology. Previously the Roman Church had been under the sway of Greeks. The Gospel and the various heresies had arrived in Rome from the Greek-speaking East. Most of the renowned teachers were Greek-speakers. Christianity, therefore, took root first amongst the

sizeable Greek-speaking population of the metropolis. Now, on one excuse or another, the earlier heretical favourites were banished from the First Church. Valentinianism, Marcionism and Montanism were abandoned. The Bishop of the First Church was in the process of evolving his very own Latin heresy. This incorporated elements of doctrine and practice culled from the multi-faith experience of the preceding century, but centered around the Noetian doctrine favoured by one group of Montanists (the Cataeschinetsans).

80. In the earlier phase of this development Victor proceeded as a Montanist would (115). He became overly anxious about ceremonies, fasts and rituals. He suddenly denounced the rival Montanist group who followed Blastus in asserting the NECESSITY of celebrating Passover precisely on the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan. These he called "Quartodecimans", meaning "fourteenthers" in Latin. Victor, on the contrary, as definitively asserted (as though by inspiration of the Paraclete) that Passover must be celebrated with the ritual of the First Church of Rome. This was the ritual which was so strikingly similar to that of Cybele, the "Mother of the Gods".

81. As Victor always had one eye on the Palace, he must have been aware of Commodus' interest in Mithraism and the cult of Cybele with which it was combined. In the religious sphere, the Empire was moving in the direction of a single solar cult. Rival religions were encouraged to lay down their arms and accept the "One God" (the Sun, Sol, Helios, Mithras, Apollo, Baal, Jupiter, Zeus etc., under whatever name he was called), this god, the King of Heaven, being embodied in the Emperor, who was King on Earth. Political stability - dear to the heart of emperors and despots - was the hoped-for result. The feminine element was represented in the Imperial "one-world" religion by the universal "Mother-goddess" (Cybele, Isis, Astarte, Juno etc.), and her divine child was the Platonic Logos, the creative World-Soul. It was a divine Triad or Trinity, superceding the old Triad worshipped on the Capitol Hill at Rome, namely Jupiter, the father-god, his wife Juno and Jupiter's spontaneously-generated child Minerva, the last representing a Logos-like creative wisdom, but feminine in gender. Many superficial connections could be forged between the Imperial Solar cult and Christianity and this fact will not have escaped Victor. Ahead lay an

enticing vision: the possibility of becoming unofficial "Pontifex" (priest) to the Emperor in his "one-world" religion.

82. Encouraged by such thoughts, Victor became more and more dogmatic about the rituals of the First Church. As the accusations and counter-accusations flew, it was clear the whole Church would suffer as it had recently done under Eleutherus. This time Irenaeus did more than act as go-between. He intervened directly. He wrote to Victor in Christian love, as tender as a mother with an erring child. Why should there be strife over rituals, days and fasts? What did these matter in comparison to the great truths of the Gospel? Faith, Hope and Love only were essential. Victor was now imposing rules on details of ritual which his predecessors on the episcopal throne of the First Church had left up to the individual conscience. The earlier bishops of his group had claimed to believe in "multi-faith" tolerance. They had welcomed all faiths, and that had been their justification for embracing within their fellowship (though contrary to the Scriptures) even infamous Gnostic heretics, as well as for accepting the ministry of Polycarp, for example, who kept the Passover differently from them in the original Jewish manner of John the Apostle. Victor had changed all this. He pronounced that the Easter fast must absolutely be maintained up to the Sunday on which the Resurrection of Jesus was celebrated. "Judaizers" who ate a memorial passover meal on the 14th of Nisan, whatever day of the week that was, and who broke the First Church's pre-Sunday fast, were stigmatized as "Quartodeciman" heretics. That was a falsehood. "Quartodecimans", properly speaking, were sectarians like Blastus who said the Passover MUST be celebrated on the 14th Nisan. Irenaeus opposed their legalism; nevertheless, he upheld the right of all believers to celebrate the Last Supper on the evening of the 14th Nisan, as the Apostles had done, so long as that was not made a LAW. Irenaeus believed the point was one that should be left to the individual's conscience. He personally celebrated a memorial of the Lord's resurrection on Sunday of the Passover week and he believed that was the way it should be done in order to follow more perfectly the example of the Apostles. But he was far from condemning those who thought differently from himself. Church ritual had been changed by Victor into some kind of magical rite. Victor was prepared to disfellowship believers if they did not fast up to Easter Sunday.

That was ridiculous and a disgrace to Christianity. The fast leading up to Easter Sunday had become in Victor's system a paganizing self-purification rite, like the mortifications and fasts imposed in the cult of the Great Mother Goddess especially at the time of the pagans' spring-festival. In fact, according to the *Book of Popes*, the First Church of Rome had instituted a 40 day lenten fast leading up to their Paschal festival as early as the time of Telesphorus (sub nom.) in the first half of the second century. The parallel between that supposedly Christian period and the 40 nights of weeping for the maiden Kore in the Eleusinian mysteries, ending, like the Lenten fast, on "Quadragesima," the "Fortieth," so named, is obvious to any impartial observer. ([115a](#)) In this era, particularly, the chief divine figures in the Eleusinian mysteries, Demeter and Iakkhos, were assimilated to the Asian Cybele and Attis, the Egyptian Isis and Osiris, the Syrian Aphrodite and Adonis, and the Babylonian Ishtar (Sumerian Inanna) and Tammuz (Dumuzi), all which deities were particularly favored by the Gnostics. The orthodox accused the Montanizing heretics in the later second and early third centuries AD of imitating the "Castus" or "ascetic fast" of the Attis cult and this in turn, according to Arnobius, was specifically an imitation of the Eleusinian rite. (Note [83](#) and [115a](#))

83. Victor took no heed to Irenaeus. He sent emissaries all over the Christian world, proclaiming the dangers of Judaizing "Quartodecimanism". Because there was truly a heretical Quartodecimanism preached by Blastus, many Bible-believing Catholics responded to the call. They convened councils to debate the question. However, the results did not at all match Victor's swelling expectations. Their decision was that "Just as the mystery of the Lord's resurrection from the dead would not ever be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day, so also we would observe the termination of Passover fasting on that day alone" ... and that was all. The true character of the festival period was thereby ensured - it was not a commemoration of the suffering of Christ, but a joyful celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death. These councils were careful to address a confusion, with dangerous consequences, which sprang out of the Passover practices of the First Church so aggressively advocated by Victor. That was the alteration of the character of the resurrection celebrations on the first day of the week (Sunday). In Catholic circles this day had

nothing to do with the suffering and death of Jesus. Those aspects of the last week in Jesus' earthly life were celebrated, as one would expect, at Passover on the 14th Nisan, or on the Friday preceding the day of the resurrection, or otherwise, depending on the local ecclesiastical custom. Symbolic of these aspects was the reinterpretation of the Hebrew festival name *Pesach* (Passover), or rather of its Greek transliteration, *Pascha*, as though it was derived from the Greek verb *pascho*, "to suffer". Strictly speaking, Passover (*Pascha*) was the commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ's own body, the antitype of the Paschal Lamb in the Law of Moses. In the ritual of the First Church, however, the name *Pascha* was applied perversely to the eucharistic celebration, the breaking of the fast, on the day of the resurrection. The Catholics maintained, correctly, that the latter should not be a celebration of the *suffering* or *sacrifice* of Christ, but a joyful memorial of His resurrection. The insistence of the First Church on the application of the word *Pascha*, with its connotations of suffering and sacrifice, to the eucharist on Easter Sunday, betokens a theological emphasis of a unique kind placed by them upon this eucharist as a sacrifice. Such a theology is known to have long been at home in the First Church, and that is the Gnostic theology already referred to, which held that the human body of Jesus (the "Good God") was apparitional and that his real, material, body was the eucharistic bread - the breaking asunder of which was, indeed, a sacrifice of the divinity's actual body, like that of the corn-god Osiris in Egyptian paganism. It is surely no coincidence that the fertility-god Attis, who was assimilated to Osiris, was believed to have hung dead on a pine-tree and then to have revived mysteriously upon it *on one and the same day*, and that day was the Hilaria festival or festival of joy, the 25th March (the notional spring equinox), which was celebrated with wild abandon in that era at Rome. This was the pagan festival the Catholics accused Montanists, and Montanizers, like Victor, of imitating. The same heretical groups, held, against all astronomical possibility and, presumably, for identical, Gnosticizing, theological reasons, that this was the historical date Jesus died and/or rose from the dead. The event was fitly re-enacted in the Passover ritual on Easter Sunday. In time these ideas received formal recognition in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass.

83a. Those who celebrated the Lord's Supper, like

the Apostle John, on the evening of the 14th Nisan at the time of the Jewish Passover were, of course, in no way condemned by these Catholic councils. That was the Passover memorial meal, the precursor to the memorial of the resurrection. Also, any fasting BEFORE the evening of the 14th was NOT a "Passover" fast as the Passover only began on that evening. If the followers of John fasted any time before the evening of the 14th and then broke their fast by eating the Lord's Supper, as Christ Himself had done, on that evening, they were not breaking any "Passover" fast before resurrection Sunday and thus they fell in with the considered decision of these councils. Some, as we learn from Anatolius of Laodicea, followed through in the Passover week the pattern set by Christ Himself in the days of his flesh, beginning the Passover celebration on the evening of the 14th Nisan, then extending the beginning of the celebration through the intervening days till the joyful Sunday of the resurrection (which could fall as late as the 20th Nisan on the Jewish lunar calendar), to commemorate the occasion when Christ Himself had eaten that original resurrection Sunday with his disciples (116). However those who fasted over the 14th of Nisan and only celebrated the Lord's Supper on Sunday of Passover week (like Victor) were likewise not condemned. The councils, in other words, confirmed the apostolicity of the advice and practice of Irenaeus.

84. Victor was furious. He had made his Montanizing stand, which demanded compliance with the Roman rite, now he had to back it up. His ritual was nothing less than the commandment of the Paraclete. Those who rejected it were rejecting the leadership of God. He summarily EXCOMMUNICATED every church throughout the world which celebrated the Lord's Supper on the evening of the 14th Nisan. The churches of the East were amazed at Victor's blustering intolerance and dogmatic arrogance. Of course, they took no notice whatsoever of his excommunication. However, this ecclesiastical decree did not lapse, it was simply held in reserve by subsequent bishops of the First Church to be hauled out later when the power of the emperor could be teamed up with the ecclesiastical authority of the Church of Rome in order to *enforce* it on the eastern churches. A hundred years were to pass yet before that opportunity presented itself. The single-minded patience of the First Church in achieving its own devious ends was (and is) quite remarkable. Constantine, initially, and Theodosius,

latterly, imposed on the whole Empire by statute in the fourth century what Victor in the second could only extract by machination. Theodosius, that "most religious" Emperor, revealed his colors and, in particular, his antipathy to the Greeks – a foretaste of things to come – in the massacre of 7000 at Thessalonica in AD 390, for which affront to God and man he was reined in at last, not, of course, by the First Church of Rome which he patronized, but by the evangelical bishop, Ambrose of Milan.

85. While these events were transpiring, Irenaeus was back in Gaul continuing his spiritual warfare against the Gnostic heresies. Even on the barbarian mission-field of Gaul the heretics had made some inroads. A particularly virulent pest from the First Church called Marcus had made disciples in the Rhone valley and it now fell to Irenaeus to deal with the spiritual wrecks he left behind him. Marcus' penchant was for deludable, wealthy, and beautiful, young women. With his mystic chants and promises of spiritual marriage, many had been convinced they were to enter, in union with Marcus, the ultimate Gnostic nirvana. When the fantasy dissolved, they ran back in tears to Pastor Irenaeus. Marcus' methods and results are a paradigm of the whole Gnostic movement.

86. Still, in spite of this and similar obstructions to the work, Irenaeus had great success evangelizing the idolatrous barbarians of Gaul. By Irenaeus' own account the churches of Gaul were aflame with the revival fire of the Holy Spirit. He had witnessed himself many miraculous demonstrations of the Holy Spirit in the churches where he exercised his ministry: "Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform miracles, so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe in Christ, and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, scattered throughout the

whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practicing deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them on account of such miraculous interpositions. For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister to others. Nor does she perform anything by means of angelic invocations, or by incantations, or by any other wicked curious art; but, directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of mankind, and not to lead them into error."

87. Irenaeus pointed out that the same supernatural working of the Spirit of God was not found amongst heretics: "Moreover, those also will be thus confuted who belong to [the Gnostic teachers] Simon and Carpocrates, and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles - who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray. For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons - none, indeed, except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity - the entire Church in that particular locality entreating the boon with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints - that they do not even believe this can be possibly be done, and hold that the resurrection from the dead is simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim."

[The Strange History of Callistus](#)

88. Meanwhile back in Rome, the stage was being set for the final phase of the First Church's career into episcopal apostasy. This phase began in apparent innocence when Victor received a "charitable" request from his protegee in the palace, Marcia, the concubine of Emperor Commodus (117). This request related to members of the First Church who had been convicted of various criminal offences by the good Emperor Aurelius and condemned to penal servitude on the island of Sardinia. The First Church called these convicts "martyrs". The story is told by one of Irenaeus' noted Roman disciples, Hippolytus, (117a) in a heavy tone of irony and sarcasm. "After a time, there being in that place [the mines of Sardinia] other 'martyrs', Marcia, a concubine of Commodus, who was a 'God-loving female', and desirous of performing some 'good work', invited into her presence the 'blessed' Victor, who was at that time a 'bishop of the Church', and inquired of him what 'martyrs' were in Sardinia. And he delivered to her the names of all, but did not give the name of Callistus, knowing the villainous acts he had ventured upon. [Callistus was the fugitive slave of a true Christian called Carpophorus (who was counted amongst the "brethren" of Hippolytus' fellowship, and was therefore not a member of Victor's church), and had been successfully prosecuted before the Roman magistrate for fraud and other corrupt practices. The full details of Callistus' crimes are related hereafter.] Marcia, obtaining her request from Commodus, hands the letter of emancipation to Hyacinthus, a certain eunuch, a presbyter [presumably an elder in the First Church]. And he, on receiving it, sailed away into Sardinia, and having delivered the letter to the person who at that time was governor of the territory, he succeeded in having the 'martyrs' released, with the exception of Callistus. But Callistus himself, dropping on his knees, and weeping, entreated that he likewise might obtain a release. Hyacinthus, therefore, overcome by the captive's importunity, requests the governor to grant a release, alleging that permission had been given to himself from Marcia, and that he would make arrangements that there should be no risk in this to

him. Now the governor was persuaded, and liberated Callistus also. And when the latter arrived at Rome, Victor was very much grieved at what had taken place; but since he was a 'compassionate' man, he took no action in the matter. Guarding, however, against the reproach uttered by many, – for the attempts made by this Callistus were not distant occurrences, – and because Carpophorus [the slave's Christian master] also still continued adverse, Victor sends Callistus to take up his abode in Antium, having settled on him a certain monthly allowance for food. And after Victor's death, Zephyrinus [the next bishop of the First Church after Victor], having had Callistus as a fellow-worker in the management of his clergy, paid him respect to his own damage; and transferring this person from Antium, appointed him over the cemetery."

89. The characters in this story of "humanitarian" compassion are quite a collection. At the head of the list is the arrogant, blustering and vicious bishop Victor of the First Church. In close collusion with him is the palace harlot Marcia, who later attempted to poison her own lover Commodus and when this failed brought in an athlete to strangle him in his bath, and her attendant, the eunuch Hyacinthus, who seems to have had no problem combining a position of spiritual leadership as a Christian "elder" with the intrigue and corruption of the imperial palace. Then there is Marcia's admittedly deserving victim, the mad Emperor Commodus. Following Victor on the episcopal throne is Zephyrinus, whom Hippolytus describes as "an ignorant and illiterate individual" and as one not only "unskilled in ecclesiastical definitions" but also "accessible to bribes, and covetous". At the centre of the whole story is the snivelling, cowardly, and utterly third-rate fraudster, Callistus. What should surprise one (but fails to in this particular company) is that the criminal Callistus was to become in remarkably short shrift the successor of Victor and Zephyrinus as bishop of the First Church!

90. Callistus' rise to eminence began with Victor's act of "compassion" in granting him free board in Antium. But to put this act in proper perspective, and thoroughly appreciate the quality of the character thus thrust into the ecclesiastical limelight, the details of Callistus' past must first be taken into consideration. Hippolytus tells the whole story from its commencement several years earlier

in the house of the hapless Christian businessman Carpophorus:

91. "It would seem to us desirable to explain the life of this heretic, inasmuch as he was born about the same time with ourselves, in order that, by the exposure of the habits of a person of this description, the heresy attempted to be established by him may be easily known, and may perchance be regarded as silly, by those endued with intelligence. This Callistus became a 'martyr' at the period when Fuscianus was prefect of Rome, and the mode of his 'martyrdom' was as follows.

92. "Callistus happened to be a domestic of one Carpophorus, a man of the faith belonging to the household of Caesar. [Several thousands of the inhabitants of Rome were employed, like Carpophorus, in the extended imperial household in one capacity or another, and some, from the earliest days of the Christian presence in Rome, were devoted Christians.] To this Callistus, as being of the faith, Carpophorus committed no inconsiderable amount of money, and directed him to bring in profitable returns from the banking business. And he, receiving the money, tried the experiment of a bank in what is called the Piscina Publica [The Public Fishpond at the Porta Capena, an area where there was a Jewish colony and where the house-church of Aquila and Priscilla was located in the first century AD]. And in process of time were entrusted to him not a few deposits by widows and brethren, under the ostensive cause of lodging their money with Carpophorus. Callistus, however, made away with all the moneys committed to him, and became involved in pecuniary difficulties.

93. "And after having practiced such conduct as this, there was not wanting one [apparently Hippolytus himself] to tell Carpophorus, and the latter stated that he would require an account from him. Callistus, perceiving these things, and suspecting danger from his master, escaped away by stealth, directing his flight towards the sea. And finding a vessel in Portus ready for a voyage, he went on board, intending to sail wherever she happened to be bound for. But not even in this way could he avoid detection, for there was not wanting one [presumably Hippolytus] who conveyed to Carpophorus intelligence of what had taken place. But Carpophorus, in accordance with the information he had received, at once repaired to the

harbor Portus, and made an effort to hurry into the vessel after Callistus. The boat, however, was anchored in the middle of the harbor; and as the ferryman was slow in his movements, Callistus, who was in the ship, had time to descry his master at a distance. And knowing that himself would be inevitably captured, he became reckless of life; and, considering his affairs to be in a desperate condition, he proceeded to cast himself into the sea. But the sailors leaped into boats and drew him out, unwilling to come, while those on shore were raising a loud cry.

94. "And thus Callistus was handed over to his master, and brought to Rome, and his master lodged him in the Pistrinum [the mill where slaves were punished with hard-labor at the millstone]. But as time wore on, as happens to take place in such cases, brethren repaired to Carpophorus, and entreated him that he would release the fugitive serf from punishment, on the plea of their alleging that Callistus acknowledged himself to have money lying to his credit with certain persons. But Carpophorus, as a devout man, said he was indifferent regarding his own property, but that he felt a concern for the deposits; for many shed tears as they remarked to him, that they had committed what they had entrusted to Callistus, under the ostensive cause of lodging the money with himself. And Carpophorus yielded to their persuasions, and gave directions for the liberation of Callistus.

95. "The latter, however, having nothing to pay, and not being able again to abscond, from the fact of his being watched, planned an artifice by which he hoped to meet death. Now, pretending that he was repairing as it were to his creditors, he hurried on their Sabbath-day to the synagogue of the Jews, who were congregated, and took his stand, and created a disturbance among them. They, however, being disturbed by him, offered him insult, and inflicted blows upon him, and dragged him before Fuscianus, who was prefect of the city. And on being asked the cause of such treatment, they replied in the following terms: 'Romans have conceded to us the privilege of publicly reading those laws of ours that have been handed down from our fathers. This person, however, by coming into our place of worship, prevented us so doing, by creating a disturbance among us, alleging that he is a Christian.' And Fuscianus happens at the time to be on the judgment-seat; and on intimating his

indignation against Callistus, on account of the statements made by the Jews, there was not wanting one [presumably Hippolytus] to go and acquaint Carpophorus concerning these transactions. And he, hastening to the judgment-seat of the prefect, exclaimed, 'I implore of you, my Lord Fuscianus, believe not thou this fellow; for he is not a Christian, but seeks occasion of death, having made away with a quantity of my money, as I shall prove.' The Jews, however, supposing that this was a stratagem, as if Carpophorus were seeking under this pretext to liberate Callistus, with the greater enmity clamored against him in presence of the prefect. Fuscianus, however, was swayed by these Jews, and having scourged Callistus, he gave him to be sent to a mine in Sardinia."

96. Sadly, as with Dracula's bat, it seemed impossible to keep Callistus down. The criminal pseudo-Christian was soon back on the mainland and back in Church business, under the understandably very hawkish eye of Victor, and subsequently under the less discerning patronage of Victor's successor, Zephyrinus. It is hard to believe that Victor's volte-face in his dealings with Callistus - first refusing to put in so much as a good word for him because of his record, then going to the other extreme of offering him free board and a Church appointment - had nothing to do with Callistus' original involvement with the rival Christian fellowship in Rome. When presented, against his will, with the liberated convict, Victor may well have decided to turn this embarrassing situation to his advantage. By granting him asylum the bishop of the First Church put Callistus under obligation to himself at a time when he craved protection from the creditors he had dealt with as a member of Carpophorus' church. Accordingly, in gratitude to Victor and aversion to his former fellowship and the brethren in Carpophorus' circle, Callistus threw himself wholeheartedly into Victor's rival programmes. And when Callistus himself was promoted to the bishopric of the First Church he followed through to execution what had only been formulations in the mind of Victor.

97. Now, as well as the Spring Festival Passover, Victor was particularly interested in the latest Gnostic theology, which had been introduced into the First Church by the teacher Praxeas, but was the original invention of Noetus of Smyrna in Turkey and had been advocated in Rome by more than one

theological "expert". Callistus took this project up with gusto. Under Victor's successor, Zephyrinus, we find Callistus going to extraordinary lengths to promote the theology of Noetus, as taught by its then current expositor, Cleomenes. Again Hippolytus takes up the story:

98. "There has appeared one, Noetus by name, and by birth a native of Smyrna. This person introduced a heresy from the tenets of Heraclitus [a heathen philosopher]. Now a certain man called Epigonus becomes his minister and pupil, and this person during his sojourn at Rome disseminated his godless opinion. But Cleomenes, who had become his disciple, an alien both in way of life and habits from the Church, was wont to corroborate the Noetian doctrine. At that time, Zephyrinus imagines that he administers the affairs of the Church - an uninformed and shamefully corrupt man. And he, being persuaded by proffered gain, was accustomed to connive at those who were present for the purpose of becoming disciples of Cleomenes. But Zephyrinus himself, being in process of time enticed away, hurried headlong into the same opinions; and he had Callistus as his adviser, and a fellow-champion of these wicked tenets. But the life of this Callistus, and the heresy invented by him, I shall after a little explain.

99. "The school of these heretics during the succession of such bishops, continued to acquire strength and augmentation, from the fact that Zephyrinus and Callistus helped them to prevail. Never at any time, however, have we been guilty of collusion with them; but we have frequently offered them opposition, and have refuted them, and have forced them reluctantly to acknowledge the truth. And they, abashed and constrained by the truth, have confessed their errors for a short period, but after a little, wallow once again in the same mire. Callistus attempted to confirm this heresy, - a man cunning in wickedness, and subtle where deceit was concerned, and who was impelled by restless ambition to mount the episcopal throne.

100. "Now this man molded to his purpose Zephyrinus, an ignorant and illiterate individual, and one unskilled in ecclesiastical definitions. And inasmuch as Zephyrinus was accessible to bribes, and covetous, Callistus, by luring him through presents, and by illicit demands, was enabled to seduce him into whatever course of action he

pleased. And so it was that Callistus succeeded in inducing Zephyrinus to create continually disturbances among the brethren, while he himself took care subsequently, by knavish words, to attach both factions in goodwill to himself. And, at one time, to those who entertained true opinions, he would in private allege that they held similar doctrines with himself, and thus make them his dupes; while at another time he would act similarly towards those who embraced the tenets of Sabellius [another heretical teacher with similar views as Noetus on the godhead]. But Callistus perverted Sabellius himself, and this, too, though he had the ability of rectifying this heretic's error. For at any time during our admonition Sabellius did not evince obduracy; but as long as he continued alone with Callistus, he was wrought upon to relapse into the system of Cleomenes by this very Callistus, who alleges that he entertains similar opinions to Cleomenes. Sabellius, however, did not then perceive the knavery of Callistus; but he afterwards came to be aware of it, as I shall narrate presently.

101. "Now Callistus brought forward Zephyrinus himself, and induced him publicly to avow the following sentiments: 'I know that there is one God, Jesus Christ; nor except Him do I know any other that is begotten and amenable to suffering.' And on another occasion, when he would make the following statement: 'The Father did not die, but the Son.' Zephyrinus would in this way continue to keep up ceaseless disturbance among the people. And we, becoming aware of his sentiments, did not give place to him, but reprov'd and withstood him for the truth's sake. And he hurried headlong into folly, from the fact that all consented to his hypocrisy - we, however, did not do so - and called us worshippers of two gods [a mocking misrepresentation of the Bible-believers' Scriptural doctrine that the Father and the Son were two distinct character-roles], disgorging, independent of compulsion, the venom lurking within him And Callistus, who was in the habit of always associating with Zephyrinus, and, as I have previously stated, of paying him hypocritical service, disclosed, by force contrast, Zephyrinus to be a person able neither to form a judgment of things said, nor discerning the design of Callistus, who was accustomed to converse with Zephyrinus on topics which yielded satisfaction to the latter.

102. "Thus, after the death of Zephyrinus,

supposing that he had obtained the position [as bishop of the First Church] after which he so eagerly pursued, he excommunicated Sabellius, as not entertaining orthodox opinions. He acted thus from apprehension of me, and imagining that he could in this manner obliterate the charge against him among the churches, as if he did not entertain strange opinions. He was then an impostor and knave, and in process of time hurried away many with him. And having even venom imbedded in his heart, and forming no correct opinion on any subject, and yet withal being ashamed to speak the truth, this Callistus, not only on account of his publicly saying in the way of reproach to us, 'Ye are Ditheists [worshippers of two gods, viz. the Father and the Son],' but also on account of his being frequently accused by Sabellius, as one that had transgressed his first faith, devised some such heresy as the following. Callistus alleges that the Logos Himself is Son, and that Himself is Father; and that though denominated by a different title, yet that in reality He is one indivisible spirit. And he maintains that the Father is not one character-role [Greek *prosopon*, lit. 'face', 'mask', 'role'] and the Son another, but that they are one and the same; and that all things are full of the Divine Spirit, both those above and those below. And he affirms that the Spirit, which became incarnate in the virgin, (117b) is not different from the Father, but one and the same. And he adds, that this is what has been declared by the Savior: 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?' For that which is seen, which is man, he considers to be the Son; whereas the Spirit, which was contained in the Son, to be the Father. 'For,' says Callistus, 'I will not profess belief in two Gods, Father and Son, but in one. For the Father, who subsisted in the Son Himself, after He had taken unto Himself our flesh, raised it to the nature of Deity, by bringing it into union with Himself, and made it one; so that Father and Son must be styled one God, and that this character-role being one, cannot be two.'

103. "And in this way Callistus contends that the Father suffered along with the Son; for he does not wish to assert that the Father suffered, and is one character-role, being careful to avoid blasphemy against the Father. How careful he is! senseless and knavish fellow, who improvises blasphemies in every direction, only that he may not seem to speak in violation of the truth, and is not abashed at being at one time betrayed into the tenet of Sabellius [that there is only one character-role], whereas at another

into the doctrine of Theodotus [that Jesus was merely human and became God secondarily by the indwelling of the Spirit of God].

104. "The impostor Callistus, having ventured on such opinions, established a school of theology in antagonism to the Church, adopting the foregoing system of instruction. And he first invented the device of conniving with men in regard of their indulgence in sensual pleasures, saying that all had their sins forgiven by himself. For he who is in the habit of attending the congregation of any one else, and is called a Christian, should he commit any transgression; the sin, they say, is not reckoned unto him, provided only he hurries off and attaches himself to the school of Callistus.

105. "And many persons were gratified with his regulation, as being stricken in conscience, and at the same time having been rejected by numerous sects; while also some of them, in accordance with our condemnatory sentence, had been by us forcibly ejected from the Church. Now such disciples as these passed over to these followers of Callistus, and served to crowd his school. This one propounded the dogma, that, if a bishop was guilty of any sin, if even a sin unto death, he ought not to be deposed – whereupon, bishops, priests, and deacons, who had been twice married, and thrice married, began to be allowed to be enrolled in the ministry; declaring further, in case any in the ministry might be aware that such [viz. a twice or thrice married person] should not remain in the ministry, as if he had done nothing wrong, that what has been spoken by the Apostle has been declared in reference to this situation: (117c) 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' But he asserted that likewise the parable of the tares was uttered in reference to this case: 'Let the tares grow along with the wheat;' or, in other words, let those who in the Church are guilty of sin remain in it. But also he affirmed that the ark of Noe was made for a symbol of the Church, in which were both dogs, and wolves, and ravens, and all things clean and unclean; and so he alleges that the case should stand in like manner with the Church. And as many parts of Scripture bearing on this view of the subject as he could collect, he so interpreted.

106. "And the hearers of Callistus being delighted with his tenets, continue with him, thus mocking both themselves as well as many others, and crowds

of these dupes stream together into his school. Wherefore also his pupils are multiplied, and they plume themselves upon the crowds attending the school for the sake of pleasures which Christ did not permit. But in contempt of Him, they place restraint on the commission of no sin, alleging that they pardon those who acquiesce in Callistus' opinions. Moreover he permitted women also, if they were husbandless and had become pregnant in full maturity, to do away with what they got by way of penalty – the one they brought on their own selves, a penalty they did not intend. (117d) Which is how it comes about that they are held to be lawfully married to whichever one they choose to be their bedfellow, whether a slave or free, and a woman, though not legally married, might consider such a companion as a husband. Whence women, reputed believers, began to resort to drugs for producing sterility, and to gird themselves round, so to expel what was being conceived on account of their not wishing to have a child either by a slave or by any worthless fellow, for the sake of their family and vaunted wealth. Behold, into how great impiety that lawless one has proceeded, by inculcating adultery and murder at the same time! And withal, after such audacious acts, they, lost to all shame, attempt to call themselves a Catholic Church! And some, under the supposition that they will attain prosperity, concur with them. During the episcopate of this one, second baptism was for the first time presumptuously attempted by them.

107. "These, then, are the practices and opinions which that most astonishing Callistus established, whose school continues, preserving its customs and tradition, not discerning with whom they ought to communicate, but indiscriminately offering communion to all. And from him they have derived the denomination of their men; so that, on account of Callistus being a foremost champion of such practices, they should be called Callistians."

107a. The sectarian Montanist, Tertullian, learnt in Africa of this shameful conduct of Callistus. He also heard that Callistus had awarded himself the title "Pontifex Maximus" which was the title of the Emperor as High Priest of the pagan religion of Rome! The title is still used by the popes of Rome today. (117e) "[6] I hear that there has even been an edict set forth, and a peremptory one too. The *Pontifex Maximus* - that is, the bishop of bishops - issues an edict: "I remit, to such as have discharged

the requirements of repentance, the sins both of adultery and of fornication." [7] O edict, on which cannot be inscribed, "Good deed!" And where shall this liberality be posted up? On the very spot, I suppose, on the very gates of the sensual appetites, beneath the very titles of the sensual appetites. There is the place for promulgating such repentance, where the delinquency itself shall haunt. There is the place to read the pardon, where entrance shall be made under the hope thereof. [8] But it is in the church that this edict is read, and in the church that it is pronounced; and the Church is a virgin! Far, far from Christ's betrothed be such a proclamation! She, the true, the modest, the saintly, shall be free from stain even of her ears. [9] She has none to whom to make such a promise; and if she have had, she does not make it; since even the earthly temple of God can sooner have been called by the Lord a "den of robbers," than of adulterers and fornicators. [10] This too, therefore, shall be a count in my indictment against the Psychics [= "soulish" as opposed to "spiritual" Christians]; against the fellowship of sentiment also which I myself formerly maintained with them [as a past member of the First Church of Rome]; in order that they may the more cast this in my teeth for a mark of fickleness. Repudiation of fellowship is never a pre-indication of sin. As if it were not easier to err with the majority, when it is in the company of the few that truth is loved. [11] But, however, a profitable fickleness shall no more be a disgrace to me, than I should wish a hurtful one to be an ornament. I blush not at an error which I have ceased to hold, because I am delighted at having ceased to hold it, because I recognise myself to be better and more modest."

107b. Along with the high-sounding title Pontifex Maximus, Callistus assumed, without any Scriptural warrant, the prerogatives of Peter. This practice, too, has become the hallmark of the Roman popes. Tertullian inveighed against the latter pretension, as he did against the former, and, in the process, managed himself to stumble over the true interpretation of Scripture in his eagerness to do down Callistus. (Tertullian thought the Scripture represented Peter himself as the foundation of the Church rather than the God-given revelation Jesus Himself was referring to. He also introduced the ominous word "Trinity", which in his case certainly had deviant overtones.) ([117f](#)) "[9] I now inquire into your opinion, to see from what source you usurp this right to "the Church." If, because the

Lord has said to Peter, "Upon this rock will I build My Church," "to thee have I given the keys of the heavenly kingdom;" or, "Whatsoever thou shall have bound or loosed in earth, shall be bound or loosed in the heavens," you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to you, that is, to every Church akin to Peter, [10] what sort of man are you, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring as that intention did this gift personally upon Peter? "*On thee*," He says, "will I build My Church; "and," I will give *to thee* the keys," not *to the Church*; and, "Whatsoever *thou shall have loosed or bound*," not what they shall have loosed or bound. [11] For so withal the result teaches. In Peter himself the Church was reared; that is, *through* Peter himself; Peter himself essayed the key; you see *what* key: "Men of Israel, let what I say sink into your ears: Jesus the Nazarene, a man destined by God for you," and so forth. [12] Peter himself, therefore, was the first to unbar, in Christ's baptism, the entrance to the heavenly kingdom, in which kingdom are "loosed" the sins that were beforetime "bound;" and those which have not been "loosed" are "bound," in accordance with true salvation; and Ananias he "bound" with the bond of death, and the weak in his feet he "absolved" from his defect of health. [13] Moreover, in that dispute about the observance or non-observance of the Law, Peter was the first of all to be endued with the Spirit, and, after making preface touching the calling of the nations, to say, "And now why are ye tempting the Lord, concerning the imposition upon the brethren of a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to support? But however, through the grace of Jesus we believe that we shall be saved in the same way as they." [14] This sentence both "loosed" those parts of the law which were abandoned, and "bound" those which were reserved. Hence the power of loosing and of binding committed to Peter had nothing to do with the capital sins of believers; [15] and if the Lord had given him a precept that he must grant pardon to a brother sinning against him even "seventy times sevenfold," of course He would have commanded him to "bind" – that is, to "retain" – *nothing* subsequently, unless perchance such sins as one may have committed against *the Lord*, not against a *brother*. For the forgiveness of sins committed in the case of a *man* is a prejudgment against the remission of sins against *God*. [16] What, now, has this to do with the Church, and *your* church, indeed, Psychic? For, in accordance with the person of

Peter, it is to *spiritual* men that this power will correspondently appertain, either to an apostle or else to a prophet. For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Spirit combines that Church which the Lord has made to consist in "three." [17] And thus, from that time forward, every number of persons who may have combined together into this faith is accounted "a Church," from the Author and Consecrator of the Church. And accordingly "the Church," it is true, will forgive sins: but it will be the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man; not the Church which consists of a number of bishops. For the right and arbitrament is the Lord's, not the servant's; God's Himself, not the priest's."

108. Here is the birth of the Roman Catholic system, described in vivid detail by a reliable contemporary bishop, and eyewitness of the process, Hippolytus, the disciple of Irenaeus, and confirmed by Tertullian, the sectarian who had come under the beneficial influence of Irenaeus and the other Apostolic upholders of the tradition of St John. After a gestation of a century and a half, the beast had emerged into the full light of day. It called itself then, and still calls itself, the "Catholic Church", aping the nomenclature of the Bible-believing majority, but it was never anything but the "Callistian heresy".

Footnotes

114a. Photius, Myriobiblon 120: "[Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses] Read the work of Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, entitled the Refutation and Subversion of Knowledge falsely so called or Against Heresies, in five books. The first, in which Valentinus and his impious heresy are discussed, begins as far back as Simon Magus and goes down to Tatian, who, at first a disciple of Justin Martyr, afterwards fell headlong into heresy. It also deals with those who are properly called Gnostics and the Cainites, setting forth their abominable doctrines. Such is the contents of the first book. In the second the impious dogmas of the heretics are refuted. The third quotes all kinds of testimony from the Scriptures against them. The fourth answers certain difficulties put forward by the heretics. The fifth shows that all that was said and done by the Lord in the form of parables, derived both from His saving doctrine and from the apostolic epistles, is suited for the refutation of the claptrap of the heretics. St. Irenaeus is said to have been the author of many other works of various kinds including letters, in some of which it should be observed that the exact truth of the doctrines of the Church appears to be falsified by spurious arguments. It is said that he was a pupil of the holy martyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and was presbyter to Pothinus, whom he succeeded in the bishopric of Lyons. At that time Victor was pope of Rome, whom Irenaeus frequently exhorted by letter not to excommunicate any members of the Church on account of a disagreement about Easter."

115. THE PASSOVER CONTROVERSY. Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. xxiii-xxv: "CHAPTER 23. THE QUESTION THEN AGITATED CONCERNING THE PASSOVER. A QUESTION of no small importance arose at that time. For the residential districts [of the churches] of all Asia, as from an older tradition, held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should be observed as the feast of the Savior's passover. It was therefore necessary to end their fast on that day, whatever day of the week it should happen to be. But it was not the custom of the churches in the rest of the world to end it at this time, as they observed the practice which, from apostolic tradition, has prevailed to the present time, of terminating the fast on no other day than on that of the resurrection of our Savior. Synods and assemblies of bishops were held on this account, and all, with one consent, through mutual correspondence drew up an ecclesiastical decree, that "Just as the mystery of the Lord's resurrection from the dead would not ever be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day, so also we would observe the termination of Passover fasting on that day alone." There is still extant a writing of those who were then assembled in Palestine, over whom Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea, and Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, presided. And there is also another writing extant of those who were assembled at Rome to consider the same question, which bears the name of Bishop Victor; also of the bishops in Pontus over whom Palmas, as the oldest, presided; and of the residential districts [of the churches] in Gaul of which Irenaeus was bishop, and of those in Osrhoene and the cities there; and a personal letter of Bacchylus, bishop of the church at Corinth, and of a great many others, who uttered the same opinion and judgment, and cast the same vote. And that which has been given above was their unanimous decision.

CHAPTER 24. THE DISAGREEMENT IN ASIA. BUT the bishops of Asia, led by Polycrates, decided to hold to the old custom handed down to them. He himself, in a letter which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome, set forth in the following words the tradition which had come down to him: "We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord's coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis; and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who fell asleep in Smyrna. Why need I mention the bishop and martyr Sagaris who fell asleep in Laodicea, or the blessed Papius, or Melito, the Eunuch who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis, awaiting the episcopate from heaven, when he shall rise from the dead? All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have closely followed. For seven of my relatives were bishops; and I am the eighth. And my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven. I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have met with the brethren throughout the world, and have gone through every Holy Scripture, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'" He then writes of all the bishops who were present with him and thought as he did. His words are as follows: "I could mention the bishops who were present, whom I summoned at your desire; whose names, should I write them, would constitute a great multitude. And they, beholding my littleness, gave their consent to the letter, knowing that I did not bear my gray hairs in vain, but had always governed my life by the Lord Jesus." Thereupon Victor, who presided over the church at Rome, immediately attempted to cut off from the common unity the residential districts [of the churches] of all Asia, with the churches that agreed with them, as heterodox; and he wrote letters and declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicate. But this did not please all the bishops. And they besought him to consider the things of peace, and of neighborly unity and love. Words of theirs are extant, sharply rebuking Victor. Among them was Irenaeus, who, sending letters in the name of the brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, recommended that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be observed only on the Lord's Day. He fittingly admonishes Victor that he should not cut off whole churches of God which observed the tradition of an ancient custom and after many other words he proceeds as follows: "For the controversy is not only concerning the day, but also concerning the very manner of the fast.

For some think that they should fast one day, others two, yet others more; and some, forty--these count their day as consisting of day and night hours [placing the stop after *tessaraktonta* with Rufinus, followed by Harvey, Irenaeus, II. 474, n. 6, et al.]. And this variation in its observance has not originated in our time; but long before in that of our ancestors, who, it seems, did not maintain in a strictly accurate fashion the original custom, simple and homely as it was, and thus produced [this variation] for their successors. Yet all of these lived none the less in peace, and we also live in peace with one another; and the disagreement in regard to the fast confirms the agreement in the faith." He adds to this the following account, which I may properly insert: "Among these [the ones who had received customs, like the First Church of Rome Passover ritual, which were not strictly in accord with Apostolic practice, *ibid.* 13] were the presbyters before Soter, who presided over the church [the First Church of Rome] which thou [Victor] now rulest. We mean [working back in time] Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus [Sixtus]. They neither observed it [the Jewish Passover celebration] themselves, nor did they permit those after them to do so. And yet though not observing it, they were none the less at peace with those who came to them from the residential districts [of other churches] in which it was observed; although this observance was more opposed to those who did not observe it. But none were ever cast out on account of this form [the Jewish Passover]; but the presbyters before thee who did not observe it, sent the Eucharist to people from the residential districts [of other churches] who themselves observed it, and furthermore, at the time when the blessed Polycarp visited Rome in the time of Anicetus, and having little things against each other on other points, they [viz. the presbyters of the First Church who did not keep the Jewish Passover, and those from other church districts who did] quickly made peace amongst themselves, not caring to quarrel over this matter. For neither was Anicetus able to persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John the disciple of our Lord [i.e. the Jewish Passover celebration], and the other apostles with whom he had associated; neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, as he [Anicetus] said that he ought to follow the customs of the presbyters that had preceded him. And in this state of affairs, they held communion amongst themselves. Also Anicetus conceded the Eucharist in the church to Polycarp, evidently out of a feeling of shame. And they settled the matter between them in peace, both those who observed [the Jewish Passover], and those who did not, maintaining the peace of the whole church." Thus Irenaeus, who truly was well named, became a peacemaker in this matter, exhorting and negotiating in this way in behalf of the peace of the churches. And he conferred by letter about this mooted question, not only with Victor, but also with most of the other rulers of the churches.

CHAPTER 25. HOW ALL CAME TO AN AGREEMENT RESPECTING THE PASSOVER. THOSE in Palestine whom we have recently mentioned, Narcissus and Theophilus, and with them Cassius, bishop of the church of Tyre, and Clarus of the church of Ptolemais, and those who met with them, having stated many things respecting the tradition concerning the passover which had come to them in succession from the apostles, at the close of their writing add these words: "Endeavor to send copies of our letter to every church, that we may not furnish occasion to those who easily deceive their souls. We show you indeed that also in Alexandria they keep it on the same day that we do. For letters are carried from us to them and from them to us, so that in the same manner and at the same time we keep the sacred day."

THE PASCHAL CANON OF ANATOLIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, Chapter 10: "But nothing was difficult to them with whom it was lawful to celebrate the Passover on any day when the fourteenth of the moon happened after the equinox. Following their example up to the present time all the bishops of Asia - as themselves also receiving the rule from an unimpeachable authority, to wit, the evangelist John, who leant on the Lord's breast, and drank in instructions spiritual without doubt - were in the way of celebrating the Paschal feast, without question, every year, whenever the fourteenth day of the moon had come, and the lamb was sacrificed by the Jews after the equinox was past; not acquiescing, so far as regards this matter, with the authority of some, namely, the successors of Peter and Paul, who have taught all the churches in which they sowed the spiritual seeds of the Gospel, that the solemn festival of the resurrection of the Lord can be celebrated only on the Lord's day. Whence, also, a certain contention broke out between the successors of these, namely, Victor, at that time bishop of the city of Rome, and Polycrates, who then appeared to hold the primacy among the bishops of Asia. And this contention was adjusted most rightfully by Irenaeus, at that time president of a part of Gaul, so that both parties kept by their own order, and did not decline from the original custom of antiquity. The one party, indeed, kept the Paschal

day on the fourteenth day of the first month, according to the Gospel, as they thought, adding nothing of an extraneous kind, but keeping through all things the rule of faith. And the other party, passing the day of the Lord's Passion as one replete with sadness and grief, hold that it should not be lawful to celebrate the Lord's mystery of the Passover at any other time but on the Lord's Day, on which the resurrection of the Lord from death took place, and on which rose also for us the cause of everlasting joy. For it is one thing to act in accordance with the precept given by the apostle, yea, by the Lord Himself, and be sad with the sad, and suffer with him that suffers by the cross, His own word being: 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' and it is another thing to rejoice with the victor as he triumphs over an ancient enemy, and exults with the highest triumph over a conquered adversary, as He Himself also says: 'Rejoice with Me; for I have found the sheep which I had lost.'"

115a. Julius Firmicus Maternus, *De Errore Profanarum Religionum*, xxvii. 2: "In Proserpinae sacris caesa arbor in effigiem virginis formamque componitur, et cum intra civitatem fuerit illata, quadraginta noctibus plangitur, quadagesima vero nocte comburitur." "In the rites of Proserpina, a tree is cut down and shaped into the effigy and likeness of a maiden, and, after it has been carried into the city, mourning is made for it for forty (quadraginta) nights; then on the fortieth (quadagesima) night it is given to the flames." Firmicus goes on to relate that other sacred wooden images earlier referred to by him were similarly burnt, but in their case at the end of a whole year (post annum). This is known to have been the practice in Egypt. The other wooden images were the lopped-off pine branch on which was tied the image of a youth (Attis) in the Phrygian rites of the Great Mother and the felled pine-tree which was carefully hollowed out and filled with seeds forming an image of Osiris in the Egyptian rites of Isis. *Ibid.* xvii. 1: "For his own nefarious purposes, the victim-slayer of ill-omen was regularly disposed to have his rites performed with a piece of a tree, because he well knew that it would be to a piece of a tree in the form of a cross that the life of a man would be affixed, bound in a bond of eternal immortality, and so he used an imitation of that piece of a tree to deceive perishing mankind. In the Phrygian rites which they name after the Mother of the Gods, each year a pine tree is cut down and in the middle of the tree an image of a young man is fastened with bonds. In the rites of Isis the trunk of a pine tree is cut down. The middle part of this trunk is carefully hollowed out and in that is interred an idol of Osiris formed out of seeds." "Sacra sua perditus carnifex, pro nefas, pro lignum semper renovari disposuit, ut quia sciebat fore ut ligno crucis affixa vita hominis perpetuae immortalitatis compagine stringeretur, perituros homines ex ligni imitatione deciperet. In sacris Frygiis quae matris deum dicunt, per annos singulos arbor pinea caeditur, et in media arbore simulacrum iuvenis subligatur. In Isiacis sacris de pinea arbore caeditur truncus. Huius trunci media pars subtiliter excavatur, illic de seminibus factum idolum Osiridis sepelitur." Hislop, *Two Babylons*, 102f. with my additions in square brackets: "That festival [Passover] agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified, a period which, in the days of Tertullian, at the end of the second century, was believed [but only in heretical circles] to have been the 23rd of March [25th March Julian]. That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent. "It ought to be known," said Cassianus, the monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century, and contrasting the primitive Church with the Church in his day, "that the observance of the forty days had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate." Whence, then, came this observance? The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, "in the spring of the year," is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent of forty days was held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans, for thus we read in Humboldt, where he gives account of Mexican observances: "Three days after the vernal equinox... began a solemn fast of forty days in honor of the sun." Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt, as may be seen on consulting Wilkinson's Egyptians. This Egyptian Lent of forty days, we are informed by Landseer, in his Sabeen Researches, was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god. At the same time, the rape of Proserpine seems to have been commemorated, and in a similar manner; for Julius Firmicus informs us that, for "forty nights" the "wailing for Proserpine" continued; and from Arnobius we learn that the fast which the Pagans observed, called "Custus" or the "sacred" fast, was, by the Christians in his time, believed to have been primarily in imitation of the long fast of Ceres [Demeter], when for many days she demerndly

refused to eat on account of her "excess of sorrow," that is, on account of the loss of her daughter Proserpine, when carried away by Pluto, the god of hell. [Amobius Adversus Nationes V. 16. 6. Quid temperatus ab alimonia panis, cui rei dedistis nomen castus? nonne illius temporis imitatio est quo se numen ab Ceres fruge violentia maeroris abstinuit?] As the stories of Bacchus, or Adonis and Proserpine, though originally distinct, were made to join on and fit in to one another, so that Bacchus was called Liber, and his wife Ariadne, Libera (which was one of the names of Proserpine), it is highly probable that the forty days' fast of Lent was made in later times to have reference to both. Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing, and which, in many countries, was considerably later than the Christian festival, being observed in Palestine and Assyria in June, therefore called the "month of Tammuz"; in Egypt, about the middle of May, and in Britain, some time in April." This was evidently the practice in the First Church of Rome before the Nicean Council. Already Irenaeus (apud Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. xxiv. 12, on Rufinus' understanding of the relevant passage) refers to a 40 day fast before Easter in the second half of the second century AD (n. 115 above), and tradition ascribed its institution in Rome to Telesphorus in the early years of the same century, *Book of Popes*, s.n. "hic constituit, ut septem ebdomadas ante pascha ieiunium celebraretur." Athanasius seems, on the evidence of his "Festal Letters," to have introduced the 40 day lenten fast amongst the churches of the East, after his trip to Rome and the West, in AD 339. By the time of Cassian in the fifth century it was openly and widely celebrated, and its pagan associations were no longer of consequence.

116. Luke 24. 36-43: " 36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them."

117. On Marcia, we have a first-class, contemporary witness, Dion Cassius (a contemporary of Commodus) LXXIII. iv. 6: "There was a certain Marcia, the mistress of Quadratus (one of the men slain at this time), and Eclectus, his cubicularius [valet]; the latter became the cubicularius of Commodus also, and the former, first the emperor's mistress and later the wife of Eclectus, and she saw them also perish by violence. The tradition is that she greatly favoured the Christians and rendered them many kindnesses, inasmuch as she could do anything with Commodus." Dion Cassius LXXIII. xiii. 5: "Marcia, the notorious wife of Quadratus" Dion Cassius LXXIII. xxii. 1-3: "And he actually did die, or rather was slain, before long. For Laetus and Eclectus, displeased at the things he was doing, and also inspired by fear, in view of the threats he made against them because they tried to prevent him from acting in this way, formed a plot against him. It seems that Commodus wished to slay both the consuls, Erucius Clarus and Sosius Flaco, and on New Year's Day to issue forth both as consul and secutor from the quarters of the gladiators; in fact, he had the first cell there, as if he were one of them. Let no one doubt this statement. Indeed, he actually cut off the head of the Colossus, and substituted for it a likeness of his own head; then, having given it a club and placed a bronze lion at its feet, so as to cause it to look like Hercules, he inscribed on it, in addition to the list of his titles which I have already indicated, these words: "Champion of secutores; only left-handed fighter to conquer twelve times (as I recall the number) one thousand men. (ibid. 4-6) For these reasons Laetus and Eclectus attacked him, after making Marcia their confidant. At any rate, on the last day of the year, at night, when people were busy with the holiday, they caused Marcia to administer poison to him in some beef. But the immoderate use of wine and baths, which was habitual with him, kept him from succumbing at once, and instead he vomited up some of it; and thus suspecting the truth, he indulged in some threats. Then they sent Narcissus, an athlete, against him, and caused this man to strangle him while he was taking a bath. Such was the end of Commodus, after he had ruled twelve years, nine months, and fourteen days. He had lived thirty-one years and four months; and with him the line of the genuine Aurelii ceased to rule." Dion Cassius LXXIV. xvi: "He [Julianus] accordingly put to death both

Laetus and Marcia, so that all who conspired against Commodus perished; for later Severus gave Narcissus to the wild beasts, causing it to be expressly proclaimed that he was the man who had strangled Commodus." There are also a few references in the *Historiae Augustae*, Commodus, VIII. 6: Fuit praeterea ea dementia, ut urbem Romanam coloniam Commodianam vocari voluerit; qui furor dicitur ei inter delenimenta Marciae iniectus. "His madness was so great that he actually purposed to change the name of the City of Rome to "The Colony of Commodus", this mania having been, it is said, infused into him by the blandishments of Marcia." XI. 9: Amazonius autem vocatus est ex amore concubinae suae Marciae, quam pictam in Amazone diligebat, propter quam et ipse Amazonico habitu in harenam Romanam procedere voluit. "Now he [Commodus] was called "The Amazonian" from love of his concubine, Marcia, whom he liked to be painted as an Amazon, on account of whom also he himself wished to enter into the Roman arena in the dress of an Amazon." XVII. 1-2: 1 His incitati, licet nimis sero, Quintus Aemilius Laetus praef. et Marcia concubina eius inierunt coniurationem ad occidendum eum. 2 Primumque ei venenum dederunt; quod cum minus operaretur, per atletam, cum quo exerceri solebat, eum strangularunt. "Stirred up by these things, and, one might justly add, not much beyond due time, Quintus Aemilius Laetus the Prefect and the concubine Marcia entered into a conspiracy to murder him. And they first plied him with poison, but when this failed to have the required effect, they strangled him by the hands of an athlete with whom he used to train."

117a. Photius, *Myriobiblon* 121: " [Hippolytus, Against Heresies] Read the tractate of Hippolytus, the pupil of Irenaeus, entitled Against the Thirty-two Heresies. It begins with the Dositheans, and goes down to the heresies of Noetus and the Noetians, which he says were refuted by Irenaeus in his lectures, of which the present work is a synopsis. The style is clear, somewhat severe and free from redundancies, although it exhibits no tendency to atticism. Some of the statements are inaccurate, for instance, that the epistle to the Hebrews is not the work of the apostle Paul. Hippolytus is said to have addressed the people after the manner of Origen, with whom he was very intimate and whose writings he so much admired that he urged him to write a commentary on the Bible, for which purpose he supplied, at his own expense, seven shorthand writers and the same number of calligraphists. Having rendered this service, he persistently demanded the work, whence Origen, in one of his letters, calls him a "hustler." He is said to have written a large number of other works." Further on the relationship between Hippolytus and Origen (a commanding figure in the ecclesiastical history of the third century AD, and a major influence on the theological course taken by the Eastern churches in their conflict with Rome), Jerome: *De Viris Illustribus* 61: "HIPPOLYTUS, bishop of some church (the name of the city I have not been able to learn [actually: of Rome - hence the problem of identification]) wrote A reckoning of the Paschal feast and chronological tables which he worked out up to the first year of the Emperor Alexander He wrote Some commentaries on the Scriptures, among which are the following: On the six days of creation, On Exodus, On the Song of Songs, On Genesis, On Zechariah, On the Psalms, On Isaiah, On Daniel, On the Apocalypse, On the Proverbs, On Ecclesiastes, On Saul, On the Pythonissa, On the Antichrist, On the resurrection, Against Marcion, On the Passover, Against all heresies, and an exhortation On the praise of our Lord and Savior in which he indicates that he is speaking in the church in the presence of Origen. Ambrosius, who we have said was converted by Origen from the heresy of Marcion, to the true faith. urged Origen to write, in emulation of Hippolytus, commentaries on the Scriptures, offering him seven, and even more secretaries, and their expenses, and an equal number of copyists, and what is still more, with incredible zeal daily exacting work from him, on which account Origen, in one of his epistles, calls him his "Taskmaster.""

117b. It is important to observe how, by employing his Heraclitian, pagan, philosophizing, Callistus had now identified the Spirit "WHICH BECAME INCARNATE IN THE VIRGIN" completely with the Father, making a SINGLE *prosopon*. By this theological sleight the human Jesus was identified as God absolutely, and, to switch the focus onto Jesus' mother - which seems to have been the bishop's object here - THE VIRGIN MARY HAD ALREADY BECOME WHAT THE FIRST CHURCH OF ROME STILL BLASPHEMOUSLY PROCLAIMS HER TO BE, THE VERITABLE "MOTHER OF GOD"! It is obvious that there was in operation in Callistus' system a syncretizing of the Christian Gospel message with the pagan cult of Apollo-Mithras-Attis ("God", i.e. the sun-god) and of Isis-Anaitis-Cybele, the so-called "Mother of God", which was

favored by the imperial authorities and especially by Victor's benefactor, Commodus. In orthodox Christianity Christ was both God and Man, and Mary was the mother of the fleshly man (the Son of Man), Jesus, and not, of course, of the divine nature (the Son of God, the Logos) within Him. In the new Callistian heresy, Mary was the mother of both natures, and hence could properly be called the "Mother of God", for in Callistus' theory Jesus was God absolutely and without any lesser human admixture in the single *prospoon*.

117c. This translation follows the reading of the text (for the Greek, click [here](#)), and simply splits the *gnômê* into two words *gnô(i) mē* The wanton emendation found in modern editions (*gamoîê* instead of the *gnô mē* of the codex) utterly destroys the sense of the original, and represents Hippolytus as a defender of priestly celibacy! The proper, literal, translation is: "But in case any in the ministry might be aware (*gnô(i)*) that such [viz. a twice or thrice married person] should not (*mē*) remain in the ministry, he [Callistus] alleges, as if he had done nothing wrong, that what has been spoken by the Apostle has been declared in reference to this situation: 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?'" The common translation, following the perverse emendation, runs as follows: "If also, however, any one who is in the ministry *should become married* [reading Gk. *gamoîê* (!) instead of the *gnômê* of the codex]] (he permitted) such a one to continue in the ministry as if he had not sinned, alleging that what has been spoken by the Apostle has been declared in reference to this person: 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?'" The proper reading, as well as following the text as it stands, appropriately involves two people (viz. the minister who knows the sinfulness of the situation, and the minister who is wrongly ordained) in the conduct condemned by the scripture, which likewise refers to two people (the one who judges and the one judged), whereas the commonly accepted emendation does not.

117d. Again, the usual modern emendations are unnecessarily harsh on the text, which only needs to be split correctly to read: *kai gar kai gunaixin epetrepesen, ei anandroi eien kai 'elikiai te tekaion, ta en axiai ('ê 'eautôn, axian 'ên mē boulointo) kathairein.* (This instead of the ridiculous reading ... 'elikiai te te kaionta enaxia ... which makes no sense at all.) In the conditional clause the verbs are optative, so we would expect an optative after the *kai* following the first optative *eien*. The questionable phrase follows, but in that we find accordingly an optative *tekaion*, the third person plural 2d aorist active optative of *tiktô* (2d aorist indicative 3 p. pl. *etekon*). We might expect a form like *tekeien*, but cf. e.g. *phênai* for *phêneie* and *phênaien* or *phêneian* for *phêneien*. The more correct form in this case might be *tekaïen*. For the Greek click [here](#).

117e. The Latin (De Pudicitia I. 6-11): "[6] Aduersus hanc nunc, ne dissimulare potuissem, audio etiam edictum esse propositum, et quidem preceptorium. Pontifex scilicet maximus, episcopus episcoporum, edicit: Ego et moechiae et fornicationis delicta paenitentia functis dimitto. [7] O edictum cui adscribi non poterit: Bonum factum! Et ubi proponetur liberalitas ista? Ibidem, opinor, in ipsius libidinum ianuis, sub ipsius libidinum titulis. Illic eiusmodi paenitentia promulganda est, ubi delinquentia ipsa uersabitur. Illic legenda est uenia, quo cum spe eius intrabitur. [8] Sed hoc in ecclesia legitur, et in ecclesia pronuntiatur, et uirgo est. Absit, absit a sponsa Christi tale praeconium! Illa, quae uera est, quae pudica, quae sancta, carebit etiam aurium macula. [9] Non habet, quibus hoc repromittat, et si habuerit, non repromittit, quod et terrenum Dei templum citius spelunca latronum appellari potuit a Domino quam moechorum et fornicatorum. [10] Erit igitur et hic aduersus psychicos titulus, aduersus meae quoque sententiae retro penes illos societatem, quo magis hoc mihi in notam leuitatis obiciant. Numquam societatis repudium delicti praediudicium. Quasi non facilius sit errare cum pluribus, quando ueritas cum paucis ametur. [11] At enim me non magis dedecorabit utilis leuitas quam ornari nocens. Non suffundor errore quo carui, quia caruisse delector, quia meliorem me et pudiciorem recognosco."

117f. The Latin De Pudicitia XXI. 9-17: "[9] De tua nunc sententia quaero, unde hoc ius ecclesiae usurpes. Si quia dixerit Petro Dominus: *Super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, tibi dedi clauem regni caelestis*, uel: *Quaecumque alligaueris uel solueris in terra, erunt alligata uel soluta in caelis*, idcirco praesumis et ad te deriuasse soluendi et alligandi potestatem, id est ad omnem ecclesiam Petri prouinciam. [10] qualis es, euerrens atque commutans manifestam Domini intentionem personaliter

hoc Petro conferentem? *Super te*, inquit, *aedificabo ecclesiam meam*, et: *Dabo tibi clauem*, non ecclesiae, et: *Quaecumque solueris uel alligaueris*, non quae soluerint uel alligauerint. [11] Sic enim et exitus docet. In ipso ecclesia extracta est id est per ipsum, ipse clauem imbuit, uides quam: *Viri Israelitae, auribus mandate quae dico: Iesum nazarenum uirum a Deo uobis destinatum*, et reliqua. [12] Ipse denique primus in Christi baptismo reserauit aditum caelestis regni, quo soluuntur alligata retro delicta et alligantur quae non fuerint soluta, secundum ueram salutem, et Ananiam uinxit uinculo mortis et debilem pedibus absoluit uitio ualetudinis. [13] Sed et in illa disceptatione custodiendae <necne> legis primus omnium Petrus spiritu instinctus et de nationum uocatione praefatus, et *nunc*, inquit, *cur temptastis Dominum de imponendo iugo fratribus, quod neque nos neque patres nostri sufferre ualuerunt? Sed enim per gratiam Iesu credimus nos salutem consecuturos, sicut et illi.* [14] Haec sententia et soluit quae ommissa sunt legis et alligauit quae reseruata sunt. Adeo nihil ad delicta fidelium capitalia potestas soluendi et alligandi Petro emancipata. [15] Cui si praeceperat Dominus etiam septuagies septies delinquenti in eum fratri indulgere, utique nihil postea alligare id est retinere mandasset, nisi forte ea quae in Dominum, non in fratrem, quis admiserit. Praeudicatur enim non dimittenda in Deum delicta, cum in homine admissa donantur. [16] Quid nunc et ad ecclesiam et quidem tuam, psychice? Secundum enim Petri personam spiritalibus potestas ista conueniet, aut apostolo aut prophetae. Nam et ipsa ecclesia proprie et principaliter ipse est spiritus, in quo est trinitas unius diuinitatis, Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus. Illam ecclesiam congregat quam Dominus in tribus posuit. [17] Atque ita exinde etiam numerus omnis qui in hanc fidem conspirauerint ecclesia ab auctore et consecratore censetur. Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum. Domini enim, non famuli est ius et arbitrium; Dei ipsius, non sacerdotis."

APPENDIX 1 - THE CATASTROPHE AT THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS, AD 33

According to Finegan's Handbook of Biblical Chronology, there are only two possible dates for the crucifixion, viz. AD 30 and AD 33. The latter is the date given by Ussher. Finegan, with the best modern research at his fingertips, is unable to decide conclusively between them. AD 33 seems to be the correct date because the New Testament implies, and the apocryphal Acts of Pilate affirm, that there was an eclipse of the moon, as well as an obscuration of the sun, in the latter, or afternoon, phase of the crucifixion, and in AD 33 (but not AD 30) there was an eclipse of the moon on the day of the Passover, viz. the day of the crucifixion, and that eclipse occurred in the late afternoon.

The details of the eclipse are as follows: on Friday April 3rd (Passover) AD 33 there was a partial, lunar eclipse, i.e. an obscuration of a part of the face of the moon by the shadow of the earth. It commenced, on the modern reckoning, at 15h 40m local time in Jerusalem, and terminated at 18h 31m local time in Jerusalem. In normal circumstances this eclipse would not have been visible in Jerusalem at the time when it actually began, but the last traces of the eclipse would have been visible for about an half hour once the moon rose over the horizon at the longitude of Jerusalem, around 6pm, and as the sun set in the west. Further east in Babylon it would have been, in normal circumstances, visible for a longer period, from just after its maximum phase and for a little over an hour in total, and the many Jews who lived there would have been able to observe it clearly as the moon rose over the city. The whole eclipse lasted almost three hours (2h 51m).

According to Mark, the crucifixion lasted about 6 hours (from the 3rd to the 9th hour), and, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, a darkness (Gk. *skotos*) occurred between the 6th and the 9th hours, during the latter half of the crucifixion. A difficulty arises, however, because, according to the other Gospel-writer, John, Pilate made his final pronouncement in the judgement of Jesus and Jesus was taken away to be crucified around the 6th hour. The Gospel writers seem to be using different time-schemes, since in John's Gospel Jesus had just been judged and dismissed to be crucified at about the 6th hour, whilst in the other three Gospels Jesus had already been on the cross for 3 hours by the 6th hour.

It has been suggested that John was using Roman time-reckoning and the other Gospel-writers Jewish reckoning. However, the Romans usually counted the daylight hours just like the Jews, starting from sunrise around 6am. The 3rd hour was around 9am, the 6th hour around 12 noon, and the 9th hour around 3pm (the precise time at any given date depending on the time of sunrise, which varied with the seasons). In any case, John is using Jewish terminology in that portion of the Gospel: "It was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour" he says (John 19. 14). "Preparation of the passover" is a uniquely Jewish expression, Friday being called "Preparation" because it was the day Jews prepared for the coming Sabbath, and Friday

happened also to be the Feast of the Passover that particular year. It would seem rather improbable that John switched from Jewish to Roman terminology in the very same sentence.

The explanation of the two time-schemes in the Bible is simple, but drastic. The Gospels clearly record that there was a darkness from the 6th to the 9th hours, but also Luke (23. 45) records that the SUN WAS COMPLETELY BLACKED OUT (*eskotisthē*), and Matthew reports (27. 51) that a great earthquake occurred at the same time. This blacking out of the sun could not have been a normal solar eclipse, because that is impossible when the moon is full and on the other side of the earth from the sun, as it always is at the Passover. These references, along with the difference of at least 3 hours between the two time-schemes in the Gospels, are indicators of a huge, and unusual, natural catastrophe.

The cosmic upheaval is alluded to in the Acts of the Apostles (2. 16, 20). Fifty days after the Passover, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter referred to the prophecy of Joel in the Old Testament (Joel 2. 31), as to an event of which his listeners had recently witnessed the fulfilment, that "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE that great and notable day of the Lord come." The original Hebrew word for "blood" here represents a color = blood-red, the color of the moon when it is eclipsed (compare the phrase "AS blood" in Revelation 6. 12, below, and Isaiah 13. 10, below, which specifically says the moon will not shine, in an equivalent context.) The significance of the word "before" in this quotation from Joel is that the very same catastrophe is prophesied to occur twice, once, as here in Joel BEFORE the Day of the Lord, and once also at the end of the world, ON the Day of the Lord: see Isaiah 13. 9-10: "9 Behold, THE DAY OF THE LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: THE SUN SHALL BE DARKENED IN HIS GOING FORTH, AND THE MOON SHALL NOT CAUSE HER LIGHT TO SHINE 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and THE EARTH SHALL REMOVE OUT OF HER PLACE, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and IN THE DAY OF HIS FIERCE ANGER. 14 And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that

no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land." Revelation 6. 12-17: "12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE, AND THE SUN BECAME BLACK AS SACKCLOTH OF HAIR, AND THE MOON BECAME AS BLOOD; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; and who shall be able to stand?" In Joel the same unique combination of an extinguishing of the light of the sun and a reddening of the moon in a lunar eclipse is prophesied to occur BEFORE that great Day of the Lord. If we look back through the pages of history, we find that such an event has already occurred, and that was on the day of the crucifixion, April 3rd AD 33, as recorded in the Gospels and in secular history (for the latter, see below). Peter was, therefore, pointing out to the Jews that this prophecy of Joel, predicting the catastrophe BEFORE the Day of the Lord, had already been fulfilled at the crucifixion.

One way the sun could be extinguished if it was not eclipsed by the moon would be if the EARTH TILTED. Compare the earthquake or seismic shock mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, the terror of which, according to the apocryphal Acts of Pilate, persisted throughout the 3 hours of darkness. According to the apocryphal Gospel of Peter (v. 6), a huge seismic shock occurred just as Jesus was taken down from the cross and immediately before the sun reappeared (v. 6). Such an event would be a natural concomitant of a shift of the earth on its axis. (Notice that on the Day of the Lord, according to Isaiah 13. 13, the earth is specifically prophesied to "remove out of her place" at the time the sun is extinguished and the moon is eclipsed.) The sun, prior to this high in the noonday sky, will have suddenly disappeared below the horizon. This was the belief of the early Church. Tertullian (Adv. Marc. IV. 42) quotes the Old Testament prophets to

this effect: "... Christ suspended on his gibbet! These proofs would still have been suitable for me, even if they had not been the subject of prophecy. Isaiah says: I will clothe the heavens with blackness. [Is. 50. 3] This will be the day, concerning which Amos also writes: And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that the sun shall GO DOWN [my emphasis] at noon and the earth shall be dark in the clear day. [Amos 8. 9]" Likewise in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter (v. 5), dating from around the first half of the second century AD, it is asserted that the Jewish authorities were concerned when the darkness fell at noon, because according to their Law *the sun should not set* on an executed criminal. If this phenomenon occurred on the afternoon of the crucifixion and continued around 3 hours, the lunar eclipse could have become visible in the eastern sky at Jerusalem, when in normal circumstances it would have been invisible beneath the eastern horizon. Peter implies that the reddening of the moon in eclipse had, indeed, been visible to the Jews in Jerusalem, and the apocryphal Acts of Pilate distinctly assert that the lunar eclipse was visible there during the period of darkness.

The extent of the physical effects of the catastrophe on the earth and sea is apparent in the following citation of the fourth century writer Arnobius. His sources are not identified but he accepts their testimony as self-evidently true and such as would be readily accepted by the pagan audience he is addressing in this tract. Arnobius, *Contra Gentes* I. 53: "But when, freed from the body, which He [Jesus] carried about as but a very small part of Himself [i.e. when He died on the cross], He allowed Himself to be seen, and let it be known how great He was, all the elements of the universe bewildered by the strange events were thrown into confusion. *An earthquake shook the world, the sea was heaved up from its depths, the heaven was shrouded in darkness, the sun's fiery blaze was checked, and his heat became moderate*; for what else could occur when He was discovered to be God who heretofore was reckoned one of us?" Needless to say, the heaving up of the sea from the depths, as well as a great seismic shock, are phenomena one would expect to accompany a tilting of the earth and the resultant disappearance of the sun behind the visible horizon, but not an eclipse or obscuration of the sun of the usual kind.

It is understandable that this catastrophic tilting of the earth at the crucifixion should have been a subject the first generation of Christians continued to refer to in their preaching. In the Acts of the Apostles (17. 6) the Jews of Thessalonica in Greece stirred up the pagan inhabitants of their city against the Christian missionary Paul by identifying the Christians as "these that have turned the world upside down." The word "turn upside down" here is Gk. *anastatoō*, a verb constructed from the adjective *anastatos*, which means "made to rise up and depart, driven from one's home, Hdt. 2. of cities and countries, ruined, laid waste" (Liddell-Scott-Jones, Lexicon, s.v.). It is used literally of persons removed from their homes in Acts 21. 38, of the known world in Acts 17. 6, and figuratively of doctrinal disturbance in Gal. 5. 12. In Thayer's Lexicon, four out of the five occurrences of this word in a variety of Greek translations of the Old Testament (it is not found in secular writers) refer to physical removal from a place. With the other two New Testament uses being literal and figurative respectively, the nuance of the word in an ambivalent passage like Acts 17. 6 must be decided from a combination of the balance of probability, in light of its usage in Old Testament Greek translation, and of deductions drawn from the context in which it occurs. First, as it is a geographical location that is the object of the disturbance in Acts 17. 6, a literal interpretation, as of cities and countries, "ruined, laid waste," is preferable. It would have certainly been a gross exaggeration, in fact a falsehood, to have claimed at that time that Christians had socially or psychologically unsettled the whole *oikoumenē* - the inhabited Roman world - when this was only the beginning of the first mission to the native Gentiles of Europe, specifically aimed at Gentiles, that is known from the New Testament. It would also have made nonsense of the Jews' objection that "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither [to Thessalonica] also:" on the figurative interpretation, the Jews would have been excluding Thessalonica from the realms of the civilized Roman world! It should accordingly be read in this sense: "These Christians who caused a physical upturning of the whole world are now also present right here in Thessalonica!" No doubt, like Peter on the Day of Pentecost, the Christians pointed to the huge catastrophe at the time of the crucifixion of the Messiah as a fulfilment of such scriptures as Joel 2 and Amos 8. The Jews would not have been able to deny the event itself, but they certainly would have

rejected the Christians' interpretation of it. And if they accepted a connection between the crucifixion and the catastrophe at all it will have been only to confirm themselves in their belief that Jesus was Beelzebub, the chief of the devils, and lord of natural catastrophe. They could blame the cosmic devastation on Jesus and his disciples, just as the Romans of the later Empire blamed the Christians for the natural catastrophes which fell at that time on the Empire, because the Christians threatened their social fabric. The Thessalonians had reason, by their own lights, to believe such an accusation because it was only a short time prior to this that an earthquake had rocked the neighboring city of Philippi and miraculously freed Paul and his fellow-apostle who were in prison there at the time (Acts 16. 25f.).

The earth's tilting in this way would also produce AN ALTERATION OF CLOCK-TIME. This assumes that the sun slipped down the space of approximately 6 hours in the sky at around 12 noon (the 6th hour of the day) to a position just below the horizon. Such a position is the minimum necessary to effect a blacking out of the sun and a visible appearance of the lunar disk above the eastern horizon.

This 6th hour is the time-mark used in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) to fix the beginning of the catastrophe. The same time-scheme is used in the Synoptic Gospels to fix the beginning of the crucifixion three hours earlier at the 3rd hour. John's Gospel, on the contrary, states that Jesus was dismissed by Pilate from the Praetorium, to be crucified, "about" the 6th hour. If the sun set abnormally at 12 noon on the day of the crucifixion, then the daylight had been suddenly shortened by a half. This foreshortening would EXACTLY HALF THE LENGTH OF EACH HOUR IN THE PRECEDING PERIOD OF DAYLIGHT, the daylight between sunrise and sunset being divided by custom into 12 equal, hourly, portions (John 11. 9). The length of these portions could vary depending on the length of daylight at any particular time of year - in winter the 12 hours were several minutes shorter than in summer. In this case, the daylight was catastrophically shortened, and sunset had fallen at 12 noon, so the same principle, applied now, WOULD TURN WHAT HAD BEEN COUNTED AS THE 3RD HOUR (IN THE PRE-

CATASTROPHE OR NORMAL TIME-SCHEME USED BY THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS) INTO THE 6TH HOUR OF THE (POST-CATASTROPHE) TIME-SCHEME USED IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

The catastrophe lasted about 3 hours in total, from the 6th to the 9th hour, according to the time-scheme used in the Synoptic Gospels. In the apocryphal Gospel of Peter (v. 6), a great earthquake occurred just after Jesus expired and was taken off the cross and immediately before the reemergence of the sun. Then reference is made in all of the Gospels to an "evening" interval of undetermined length at the end of the day, during which Jesus' body was hurriedly taken away from the cross and buried to avoid laboring on the Sabbath day (the Sabbath commenced, under normal circumstances, at sundown, around 6pm Friday). The events that are said to have occurred in this evening period, the petition of Joseph of Arimathaea to Pilate, the inquiry into and confirmation of the death of Christ, and the deposition of Jesus' body, would seem to require something like 2 hours. The use of the word "evening" here implies that sunlight had returned, if only to fade again shortly thereafter. I.e. the phase of seismic shocks at the end of the 3 hour-darkness coincided with a reemergence of the sun a little above the horizon and a short twilight period of 2 hours during which the sun finally set as normal. An interval of 2 hours would mean that, what would, in normal circumstances, have been 12 daylight hours, had been foreshortened that Friday by one hour, to 11 hours in all (6 normal hours of daylight after sunrise, followed by 3 hours of abnormal darkness, followed by 2 hours of twilight). This means that the lunar eclipse timed by modern reckoning to have begun at 15h 40m that Friday (a reckoning which takes no account of natural catastrophes) would have actually begun an hour earlier, according to the adjusted time-scheme, i.e. about 20 minutes before the 9th hour, as the Synoptic Gospels call it, in the last half-hour of darkness. It was also visible as it concluded for about half an hour as the sun set normally at around 6pm. A twilight period of much longer than 2 hours would have meant the lunar eclipse would not have been visible in the period of catastrophic darkness as the Acts of Pilate assert it was, because we know the eclipse lasted for 2h 51m in total and terminated at 6. 31pm. A twilight of about 2 hours duration, between the 9th and the 11th hour, would have

allowed the lunar eclipse to have been visible for 20 minutes before the 9th hour, and, indeed, it would have taken almost that long for the shadow to produce a significant obscuration of the lunar disk. On the other hand, a twilight any shorter than 2 hours would have left too little time for the transpiring of events connected with the deposition of Jesus' body from the cross, as recorded in the Gospels.

The heavenly sign was clear. In Judaism the moon, the reflex or image of the sun, symbolized the Messiah, the "Image" of God. The SHADOW of death passed over the Messiah during those last minutes He was upon the cross. But it was not a total eclipse. Within three days the Messiah, like the moon within three hours, recovered His full Glory! Furthermore, the heavenly sign was matched by an earthly one. In the New Testament, Jesus is called the Passover Lamb of God, Whose sacrifice on Calvary remitted, once for all time, the sins of the world. On that day in AD 33, when the sun was located in the Hebrew sign of the Lamb (Taleh), our Aries, those hours during which the shadow of death passed over the morally spotless, snow-white, Lamb of God, Jesus, and the literal shadow passed over the face of the snow-white, full, moon, were the very hours, 9th to 11th, during which the snow-white, Passover, lamb was slain in the Temple (Josephus, Wars, VI. 9. 3). This period was designated as the only proper time to sacrifice the Passover lamb, by Jehovah Himself, when the ceremony was instituted in Egypt at the Exodus. And there in the Books of Moses, for a reason which has defied the ingenuity of scholars to explain, this period, called the "evening-time" in Deuteronomy 16. 6, is also called, more specifically, the time "between the two evenings" (Exodus 12. 6 etc.). The prophetic Spirit signified by this unique expression the timing of the greater Passover Sacrifice of which the literal Passover was a type - that period precisely from the 9th to the 11th hour between the two evenings God Himself created on Good Friday: the first evening fell catastrophically at noon and benighted the world till the 9th hour, and the second fell at the 11th hour to close the day, and return the world to relative normality.

Another mystery is cleared up by this close reading and reexamination of the Gospel records of the crucifixion. Jesus prophesied He would be "three

days and three nights in the bowels of the earth" (Matthew 12. 40). On the usual understanding of the chronology of the crucifixion and burial, Jesus spent no more than 3 days and 2 nights in the bowels of the earth. There is no way another night can be fitted into the scheme without forcing the evidence one way or the other. But now we can see that an extra, 3-hour-long, night of complete darkness has been supernaturally interposed by God Himself into the Friday of the crucifixion. The Gospel of Matthew records Jesus' giving up the ghost immediately before the account of the earthquake and rending of the Temple veil. In the apocryphal Gospel of Peter (dating from around the first half of the second century AD), Jesus expires just before an earthquake at the end of the 3 hours of darkness and the return of light. According to the apocryphal Acts of Pilate, the fear of the earthquake persisted during the period of darkness between the 6th and 9th hours. Hence, we can conclude, Jesus gave up the ghost during the period of darkness. That is night number 1. (The Jews reckoned pars-pro-toto in chronology, so any part of a night or day counted as one night or day in estimations of the duration of time.) Then followed the equally abnormal shortened day of around 2 hours called "evening" in the Gospels. That's day number 1. (The beginning of day was always sunrise amongst the Jews, and night began at sunset, so here there was, indeed, a sunrise, though an abnormal one, a reemergence of the sun above the western horizon, followed two hours later by a sunset. Undoubtedly it was a "day", judged by the astronomical criteria used to determine these things. For the same reason, the Gospel of John counts the earlier, shortened day from sunrise to noon, when the sun set catastrophically, as a day with 12 hours, with its midpoint at the 6th hour = 9am on the modern reckoning. Note also how the Jewish authorities in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter [v. 5] are said to have been concerned that what the Law said about the *sun setting* on a criminal's execution applied to Jesus during the period of three hours' darkness.) Then followed Friday night, night number 2, followed by Saturday daytime, day number 2. Then followed Saturday night, night number 3, followed by Sunday morning, day number 3, when Jesus rose from the dead. Total: 3 days and 3 nights, just as Jesus had prophesied.

Details of the Lunar Eclipse, Passover April 3 (Julian = April 1 Gregorian) AD 33:

Beginning of lunar eclipse Jerusalem time (on the modern reckoning): 15h 40m (at Babylon 16h 31m), which corresponds (on the time-scheme used in the Synoptic Gospels, according to this reconstruction, with a loss of one hour in the late afternoon) to 20 minutes before the 9th hour.

Maximum phase of lunar eclipse Jerusalem time: 17h 05m (at Babylon 17h 56m); moonrise at Babylon 18h 18m.

Normal moonrise (on the absolute horizon) at Jerusalem 17h 57m.

Termination of lunar eclipse Jerusalem time: 18h 31m (at Babylon 19h 22m).

Under normal circumstances, the lower rim of the moon would be approximately 6° above absolute eastern horizon at Jerusalem at that time.

Normal sunset at Jerusalem 17h 58m.

Shadow 1.700000 semi-shadow 0.660000

THE HOURS OF THE CRUCIFIXION IN THE 4 GOSPELS:

Matthew 27.45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?... 50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.... 57 ¶ When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Mark 15. 22 ¶ And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. 24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. 29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him. 33 ¶ And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?.... 7 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.... 42 ¶ And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

Luke 23. 44 ¶ And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. 46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.... 50 ¶ And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a

counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: 51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

John 19. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. 16 ¶ Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.... 31 ¶ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

TESTIMONY OF THALLUS AND PHLEGON:

Thallus was a historian who wrote some time between AD 33 (as can be deduced from his mention of the catastrophe at the crucifixion, for the dating of which, see below) and AD 180 (when he is cited by Theophilus of Antioch). Phlegon's floruit was c. AD 140. From the Chronography of Julius Africanus (fl. first half of the third century AD), apud George Syncellus (p. 609, 21 Bonn.) = Müller section 8 [fr. Greek]: "ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH OUR SAVIOR'S PASSION AND HIS LIFE-GIVING RESURRECTION. As to His works severally, and His cures effected upon body and soul, and the mysteries of His doctrine, and the resurrection from the dead, these have been most authoritatively set forth by His disciples and apostles before us. On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness;

and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Savior falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Let that opinion pass however; let it carry the majority with it; and let this portent of the world be deemed an eclipse of the sun, like others a portent only to the eye. Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period. But it was a darkness induced by God, because the Lord happened then to suffer."

Immediately following this passage Syncellus quotes Eusebius' Chronicle verbatim in the original Greek as follows: "Jesus Christ ... underwent his passion in the 18th year of Tiberius [AD 32-33]. Also at that time in another Greek compendium we find an event recorded in these words: "the sun was eclipsed, Bithynia was struck by an earthquake, and in the city of Nicaea many buildings fell." All these things happened to occur during the Lord's passion. In fact, Phlegon, too, a distinguished reckoner of Olympiads, wrote more on these events in his 13th book, saying this: "Now, in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad [AD 32-33], a great eclipse of the sun occurred at the sixth hour [noon] that excelled every other before it, turning the day into such darkness of night that the stars could be seen in heaven, and the earth moved in Bithynia, toppling many buildings in the city of Nicaea."

Wherever Eusebius obtained this quotation (perhaps from the same kind of compendium he mentions earlier in the passage), this was not all that Phlegon had to say about the "eclipse", as is clear from the passage of Phlegon epitomized about a hundred

years earlier than Eusebius in Africanus, and from the passages from Phlegon summarized by Origen (below). In Eusebius' quotation only the sixth hour is mentioned, in Africanus' epitome the eclipse is said to have lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour. Also Africanus' citation mentions the fact that the moon was "full" at the time of the eclipse. This proves it was not a normal eclipse of the sun and that it did, indeed, as Eusebius' quotation puts it, excel "every other [eclipse] before it." The Greek word *ekleipo*, whence the word "eclipse", does not always refer to an occultation of the sun by the moon. It means, simply, "to fail" or "to desert a position" (e.g. in the sky). In one of its earliest occurrences in Greek literature with reference to the sun, in Herodotus VII. xxxvii. 2, it DOES NOT (and cannot, according to the evidence of eclipse cycles) indicate a normal eclipse of the sun, but precisely an abandonment by the sun of its position in the sky and a premature nightfall. As Macan says in his commentary: "The disappearance of the sun from his seat in heaven is apparently conceived in terms of motion. Herodotus is of course aware of the (apparent) motions of the sun, diurnal and annual (cp 2 24-25); it is not to be supposed that the motion here posited is in a visible direction analogous to either of those: it is apparently a direct retreat, or evanishment, from a cloudless and clear sky." This was a phenomenon comparable, semantically, to that which was a historical reality at the crucifixion. In the 4th century texts of the Gospel of Luke, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, and in a few other texts (Pap. 75, C, L, Coptic), Luke 23. 44-45 reads: "(44) And it was now about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, (45) THE SUN HAVING FAILED (or LEFT ITS POSITION)" (Greek: *tou êliou ekliptos*.) The word is *ekleipo* as in Herodotus. This seems not only to explain why the AD 33 event was referred to as an "eclipse" but also to reflect a belief that something similar to the phenomenon recorded by Herodotus occurred at the crucifixion, it being well known (cf. Africanus) that no normal eclipse was possible at the Passover full moon.

Phlegon in Eusebius confirms the concomitant shockwave which caused severe damage in Nicaea Bithynia. Of course, Phlegon's local reference here does not mean the damage was limited to that locality, but only that the records he had available to him, like those in the unidentified compendium, related to Nicaea. In Origen's summary, Phlegon

refers to "great earthquakes" plural, though Origen seems to be quoting from memory. We have the evidence in the Gospels and early Christian literature that earthquakes also affected Judaea. Our sources do not allow to track the damage outside of those two regions, though the apocryphal Acts of Pilate [below] refer to the "swallowing up" of the whole world by the infernal regions, which seems to be something more than a description of an earthquake.

Both Phlegon and the compendium quoted by Eusebius confirm the dating of the crucifixion to AD 33, as the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad and the 18th year of Tiberius exclude AD 30, but include AD 32 and AD 33, and, further, AD 32 is excluded because Passover was not a Friday that year. The earliest date is that provided by Phlegon, described as the "distinguished reckoner of Olympiads", viz. the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad, which is summer (conventionally 1 July) AD 32 to summer (conventionally 30 June) AD 33. During that Olympiad year there was only one Passover, viz. Nisan 14 = 3rd April AD 33, and this must be the date indicated by Phlegon. Eusebius' custom in his Chronicle was to equate Olympiad years with the Julian years (January 1 to December 31) in which they began (Finegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, 1998, §320, like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *ibid.* §191). So Phlegon's 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad, which was properly summer AD 32 to summer AD 33, Eusebius equated with the Julian year AD 32 (not AD 33), and hence with the 18th (not the more correct 19th) year of Tiberius. In later Christian chronicles this conventional chronology of Eusebius predominated over the more precise chronology of Phlegon.

The account of Phlegon is summarized as follows by Origen, a friend of Africanus:

"And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place, Phlegon too, I think, has written in the thirteenth or fourteenth book of his Chronicles." (Origen, *Against Celsus* 2. 33)

"Regarding these we have in the preceding pages made our defense, according to our ability, adducing the testimony of Phlegon, who relates that these events took place at the time when our Savior

suffered." (Origen, *Against Celsus* 2. 59)

[Phlegon mentioned Jesus also in connection with his foreknowledge in the same part of his work: "Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his Chronicles, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events (although falling into confusion about some things which refer to Peter, as if they referred to Jesus), but also testified that the result corresponded to his predictions. So that, he also, by these very admissions regarding foreknowledge, as if against his will, expressed his opinion that the doctrines taught by the fathers of our system were not devoid of divine power." (Origen, *Against Celsus* 2. 14)]

Philopon, a Christian Neo-Platonist, fl. 6th century AD (*De opif. mund.* II. 21) wrote, "Phlegon mentioned the eclipse which took place during the crucifixion of the Lord Christ, and no other [eclipse], it is clear that he did not know from his sources about any [similar] eclipse in previous times."

Cassiodorus, the Christian chronicler, fl. 6th century AD, confirms the unique nature of the eclipse: Cassiodorus, *Chronicon* (*Patrologia Latina*, v. 69) "... Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered (Crucifixion) ... and an eclipse [lit. failure, desertion] of the sun occurred, such as never was before or since." [Latin: "... Dominus noster Jesus Christus passus est ... et defectio solis facta est, qualis ante vel postmodum nunquam fuit."] (On the irregular dating of the Crucifixion in this last chronicle to 25th March, see further, [Appendix 7](#) on The Pre-Nicene Dating of the Birth and Death of Jesus.)

TESTIMONY OF THE ACTS OF PILATE :

From the Acts of Pilate, First Greek Form (as extant, not older than 4th century AD, but a work of this name, the Acts of Pontius Pilate, is referred to by Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 35, 48, in the middle of the 2nd century AD, in his defense before the Emperor, who would have been able to examine these Acts himself, so this may be a reworking of earlier, genuine material): "And at the time he was crucified there was darkness over all the world, the sun being darkened at mid-day, and the stars appearing, but in them there appeared no luster; and the moon, as if turned into blood, failed in her light. And the world was swallowed up by the lower

regions, so that the very sanctuary of the temple, as they call it, could not be seen by the Jews in their fall; and they saw below them a chasm of the earth, with the roar of the thunders that fell upon it. And in that terror dead men were seen that had risen, as the Jews themselves testified; and they said that it was Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, and Moses and Job, that had died, as they say, three thousand five hundred years before. And there were very many whom I also saw appearing in the body; and they were making a lamentation about the Jews, on account of the wickedness that had come to pass through them, and the destruction of the Jews and of their law. And the fear of the earthquake remained from the sixth hour of the preparation until the ninth hour."

TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL OF PETER

A large fragment of this apocryphal, Docetic, Gospel was discovered at Akmim (Panopolis) in Egypt in 1886. The following section deals with the catastrophic events at the Crucifixion: This work is mentioned with disapproval by Serapion of Antioch towards the end of the second century AD (apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. VI. xii. 2-6) and is datable to around the middle or earlier half of that century. It is therefore an early witness to traditions current in second century Church circles concerning the catastrophic events at the Crucifixion.

"5. [The Crucifixion is in progress at this point in the narrative] And it was noon, and darkness came over all Judaea: and they [the Jewish leaders] were troubled and distressed, lest the sun had set, whilst he [Jesus] was yet alive: [for] it is written for them, that the sun set not on him that hath been put to death. And one of them said, Give him to drink gall with vinegar. And they mixed and gave him to drink, and fulfilled all things, and accomplished their sins against their own head. And many went about with lamps, supposing that it was night, and fell down. And the Lord cried out, saying, My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me. And when he had said it he was taken up. And in that hour the vail of the temple of Jerusalem was rent in twain. 6. And then they drew out the nails from the hands of the Lord, and laid him upon the earth, and the whole earth quaked, and great fear arose. Then the sun shone, and it was found the ninth hour: and the Jews rejoiced, and gave his body to Joseph that he might bury it, since he had seen what good things he

had done. And he took the Lord, and washed him, and rolled him in a linen cloth, and brought him into his own tomb, which was called the Garden of Joseph."

TESTIMONY OF THE PUBLIC ARCHIVES IN PAGAN ROME AND OF PILATE'S LETTER TO TIBERIUS:

Tertullian (fl. first half of the third century AD), Apol. XXI: "But the Jews were so exasperated by His teaching, by which their rulers and chiefs were convicted of the truth, chiefly because so many turned aside to Him, that at last they brought Him before Pontius Pilate, at that time Roman governor of Syria; and, by the violence of their outcries against Him, extorted a sentence giving Him up to them to be crucified. He Himself had predicted this; which, however, would have signified little had not the prophets of old done it as well. And yet, nailed upon the cross, He exhibited many notable signs, by which His death was distinguished from all others. At His own free-will, He with a word dismissed from Him His spirit, anticipating the executioners work. In the same hour, too, the light of day was withdrawn, when the sun at the very time was in his meridian blaze. Those who were not aware that this had been predicted about Christ, no doubt thought it an eclipse. You yourselves have the account of the world-portent still in your archives. [XXI. 19: "Et tamen suffixus multa mortis illius propria ostendit insignia. Nam spiritum cum verbo sponte dimisit, praevento carnificis officio. Eodem momento dies medium orbem signante sole subducta est. Deliquium utique putaverunt qui id quoque super Christo praedicatum non scierunt. Et tamen eum mundi casum relatum in arcanis vestris habetis."]) Then, when His body was taken down from the cross and placed in a sepulcher, the Jews in their eager watchfulness surrounded it with a large military guard, lest, as He had predicted His resurrection from the dead on the third day, His disciples might remove by stealth His body, and deceive even the incredulous. But, lo, on the third day there was a sudden shock of earthquake, and the stone which sealed the sepulcher was rolled away, and the guard fled off in terror: without a single disciple near, the grave was found empty of all but the clothes of the buried One. But nevertheless, the leaders of the Jews, whom it nearly concerned both to spread abroad a lie, and keep back a people tributary and submissive to

them from the faith, gave it out that the body of Christ had been stolen by His followers. For the Lord, you see, did not go forth into the public gaze, lest the wicked should be delivered from their error; that faith also, destined to a great reward, might hold its ground in difficulty. But He spent forty days with some of His disciples down in Galilee, a region of Judaea, instructing them in the doctrines they were to teach to others. Thereafter, having given them commission to preach the gospel through the world, He was encompassed with a cloud and taken up to heaven, a fact more certain far than the assertions of your Proculi concerning Romulus. All these things Pilate did to Christ; and now in fact a Christian in his own convictions, he sent word of Him to the reigning Caesar, who was at the time Tiberius. Yes, and the Caesars too would have believed on Christ, if either the Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars." It has been noted in this connection "Great stress is to be placed on the fact that Tertullian was probably a juriconsult, familiar with the Roman archives, and influenced by them in his own acceptance of Divine Truth. It is not supposable that such a man would have hazarded his bold appeal to the records, in remonstrating with the Senate and in the very faces of the Emperor and his colleagues, had he not known that the evidence was irrefragable."

Philopon (De opif. mund. II. 21) wrote, "Phlegon mentioned the eclipse which took place during the crucifixion of the Lord Christ, and no other [eclipse], it is clear that he did not know from his sources about any [similar] eclipse in previous times ... and this is shown by the historical account itself of Tiberius Caesar."

ON THE PHYSICAL POSSIBILITY OF A RAPID POLE SHIFT AND RETURN

There seems to be evidence that precisely the kind of catastrophe it is suggested here took place in AD 33 can take place and has taken place. Einstein, no less, was inclined to accept the evidence that polar shift had occurred in the relatively recent geological past (in the Pleistocene). Attached [here](#) (PDF - to download, right-click and select "Save Target As...") is a paper on this subject. It suggests a quite small asteroid, say 1000 meters across (smaller than the Arizona meteor crater!), or even 500 meters across, could tilt the earth to a PERMANENT new

position on its axis if the torque produced by the angle of impact was sufficient and the gravitational pull of the sun and moon at the time was in the right direction. Also it describes an alternative scenario in which the sun and moon were in a different position and the effect of the asteroid impact would then be REVERSED (completely or otherwise) after a short period of time. I.e. the earth would tilt and then tilt back again, the damage in that case being limited to the immediate destruction caused by the impact. The same paper suggests this huge movement could take place over a few days or even a few HOURS (exactly as in AD 33, on the proposed reconstruction.) The paper describes catastrophic effects accompanying a tilt of about 20 degrees, but only for a situation in which the tilt remained permanent. The author says the most catastrophic effects would only gradually build up in that case, the main devastation, apart from extensive earthquake and volcanic damage, being by tidal flooding and wind. A temporary tilt - of the kind he says would occur if the sun and moon were not pulling in the same direction as the torque produced by impact, and of the kind it is suggested here took place in AD 33 - would not allow time for the buildup of effects of the same tremendously catastrophic magnitude. The sun and moon in AD 33 were actually pulling in opposite directions, as the moon was full at that time. Also this paper presumes that human life continued after even a permanent tilt of the earth in the Pleistocene, and conditions under the alternative scenario of a temporary tilt and return to at or near the original axis are less devastating.

APPENDIX 2 - SIMON MAGUS IN THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

Apostolic Constitutions, VI. i. 7-10: WHENCE THE HERESIES SPRANG, AND WHO WAS THE RINGLEADER OF THEIR IMPIETY 7. Now the original of the new heresies began thus: the devil entered into one Simon, of a village called

Gitthae, a Samaritan, by profession a magician, and made him the minister of his wicked design. For when Philip our fellow-apostle, by the gift of the Lord and the energy of His Spirit, performed the miracles of healing in Samaria, insomuch that the Samaritans were affected, and embraced the faith of the God of the universe, and of the Lord Jesus, and were baptized into His name; nay, and that Simon himself, when he saw the signs and wonders which were done without any magic ceremonies, fell into admiration, and believed, and was baptized, and continued in fasting and prayer, – we heard of the grace of God which was among the Samaritans by Philip, and came down to them; and enlarging much upon the word of doctrine, we laid our hands upon all that were baptized, and we conferred upon them the participation of the Spirit. But when Simon saw that the Spirit was given to believers by the imposition of our hands, he took money, and offered it to us, saying, "Give me also the power, that on whomsoever I also shall lay my hand, he may receive the Holy Ghost;" being desirous that as the devil deprived Adam by his tasting of the tree of that immortality which was promised him, so also that Simon might entice us by the receiving of money, and might thereby cut us off from the gift of God, that so by exchange we might sell to him for money the inestimable gift of the Spirit. But as we were all troubled at this offer, I Peter, with a fixed attention on that malicious serpent which was in him, said to Simon: "Let thy money go with thee to perdition, because thou hast thought to purchase the gift of God with money. Thou hast no part in this matter, nor lot in this faith; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray to the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." But then Simon was terrified, and said: "I entreat you, pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of those things which ye have spoken come upon me."

WHO WERE THE SUCCESSORS OF SIMON'S IMPIETY, AND WHAT HERESIES THEY SET UP 8. But when we went forth among the Gentiles to preach the word of life, then the devil wrought in the people to send after us false apostles to the corrupting of the word; and they sent forth one Cleobius, and joined him with Simon, and these became disciples to one Dositheus, whom they despising, put him down from the principality. Afterwards also others were the authors of absurd

doctrines: Cerinthus, and Marcus, and Menander, and Basilides, and Saturnilus. Of these some own the doctrine of many gods, some only of three, but contrary to each other, without beginning, and ever with one another, and some of an infinite number of them, and those unknown ones also. And some reject marriage; and their doctrine is, that it is not the appointment of God; and others abhor some kinds of food: some are impudent in uncleanness, such as those who are falsely called Nicolaitans. And Simon meeting me Peter, first at Caesarea Stratonis (where the faithful Cornelius, a Gentile, believed on the Lord Jesus by me), endeavored to pervert the word of God; there being with me the holy children, Zacchaeus, who was once a publican, and Barnabas; and Nicetas and Aquila, brethren of Clement the bishop and citizen of Rome, who was the disciple of Paul, our fellow-apostle and fellow-helper in the Gospel. I thrice discoursed before them with him concerning the true Prophet, and concerning the monarchy of God; and when I had overcome him by the power of the Lord, and had put him to silence, I drove him away into Italy.

HOW SIMON, DESIRING TO FLY BY SOME MAGICAL ARTS, FELL DOWN HEADLONG FROM ON HIGH AT THE PRAYERS OF PETER, AND BRAKE HIS FEET, AND HANDS, AND ANKLE-BONES 9. Now when he was in Rome, he mightily disturbed the Church, and subverted many, and brought them over to himself, and astonished the Gentiles with his skill in magic, insomuch that once, in the middle of the day, he went into their theater, and commanded the people that they should bring me also by force into the theater, and promised he would fly in the air; and when all the people were in suspense at this, I prayed by myself. And indeed he was carried up into the air by demons, and did fly on high in the air, saying that he was returning into heaven, and that he would supply them with good things from thence. And the people making acclamations to him, as to a God, I stretched out my hands to heaven, with my mind, and besought God through the Lord Jesus to throw down this pestilent fellow, and to destroy the power of those demons that made use of the same for the seduction and perdition of men, to dash him against the ground, and bruise him, but not to kill him. And then, fixing my eyes on Simon, I said to him: "If I be a man of God, and a real apostle of Jesus Christ, and a teacher of piety, and not of deceit, as thou art, Simon, I command the wicked powers of the apostate from piety, by whom Simon the magician

is carried, to let go their hold, that he may fall down headlong from his height, that he may be exposed to the laughter of those that have been seduced by him." When I had said these words, Simon was deprived of his powers, and fell down headlong with a great noise, and was violently dashed against the ground, and had his hip and ankle-bones broken; and the people cried out, saying, "There is one only God, whom Peter rightly preaches in truth." And many left him; but some who were worthy of perdition continued in his wicked doctrine. And after this manner the most atheistical heresy of the Simonians was first established in Rome; and the devil wrought by the rest of the false apostles also.

HOW THE HERESIES DIFFER FROM EACH OTHER, AND FROM THE TRUTH 10. Now all these had one and the same design of atheism, to blaspheme Almighty God, to spread their doctrine that He is an unknown being, and not the Father of Christ, nor the Creator of the world; but one who cannot be spoken of, ineffable, not to be named, and begotten by Himself; that we are not to make use of the law and the prophets; that there is no providence and no resurrection to be believed; that there is no judgment nor retribution; that the soul is not immortal; that we must only indulge our pleasures, and turn to any sort of worship without distinction. Some of them say that there are many gods, some that there are three gods without beginning, some that there are two unbegotten gods, some that there are innumerable Aeons. Further, some of them teach that men are not to marry, and must abstain from flesh and wine, affirming that marriage, and the begetting of children, and the eating of certain foods, are abominable; that so, as sober persons, they may make their wicked opinions to be received as worthy of belief. And some of them absolutely prohibit the eating of flesh, as being the flesh not of brute animals, but of creatures that have a rational soul, as though those that ventured to slay them would be charged with the crime of murder. But others of them affirm that we must only abstain from swine's flesh, but may eat such as are clean by the law; and that we ought to be circumcised, according to the law, and to believe in Jesus as in an holy man and a prophet. But others teach that men ought to be impudent in uncleanness, and to abuse the flesh, and to go through all unholy practices, as if this were the only way for the soul to avoid the rulers of this world. Now all these are the instruments of the devil, and the children of wrath.

APPENDIX 3 - SIMON MAGUS IN HIPPOLYTUS' REFUTATION

Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, VI. 1-2, 4-15:

CHAPTER 1 THE OPHITES THE PROGENITORS OF SUBSEQUENT HERESIES Whatever opinions, then, were entertained by those who derived the first principles (of their doctrine) from the serpent, and in process of time deliberately brought forward into public notice their tenets, we have explained in the book preceding this, (and) which is the fifth of the Refutation of Heresies. But now also I shall not be silent as regards the opinions of (heresiarchs) who follow these (Ophites in succession); nay, not one (speculation) will I leave unrefuted, if it is possible to remember all (their tenets), and the secret orgies of these (heretics) which one may fairly style orgies, – for they who propagate such audacious opinions are not far distant from the anger (of God), – that I may avail myself of the assistance of etymology.

CHAPTER 2 SIMON MAGUS It seems, then, expedient likewise to explain now the opinions of Simon, a native of Gitta, a village of Samaria; and we shall also prove that his successors, taking a starting-point from him, have endeavored (to establish) similar opinions under a change of name. This Simon being an adept in sorceries, both making a mockery of many, partly according to the art of Thrasymedes, in the manner in which we have explained above, and partly also by the assistance of demons perpetrating his villainy, attempted to deify himself. (But) the man was a (mere) cheat, and full of folly, and the Apostles reprov'd him in the Acts.

.... <CHAPTER 3 - on the Libyan Apsethus who made a god of himself - omitted>

CHAPTER 4 SIMON'S FORCED INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE; PLAGIARIZES FROM HERACLITUS AND ARISTOTLE; SIMON'S SYSTEM OF SENSIBLE AND INTELLIGIBLE EXISTENCES In this way we must think concerning Simon the magician, so that we may compare him unto the Libyan, far sooner than unto Him who, though made man, was in reality God. If, however, the assertion of this likeness is in itself accurate, and the sorcerer was the subject of a passion similar to Apsethus, let us endeavor to teach anew the parrots of Simon, that Simon was not Christ, who stood, stands, and will stand, (that is, was, is, and is to come,) but was a man, offspring of the seed of a woman, born of blood and the will of the flesh, as also the rest (of humanity). And that these things are so, we shall easily prove as the discussion proceeds. Now Simon, both foolishly and knavishly paraphrasing the law of Moses, makes his statements (in the manner following): For when Moses asserts that "God is a burning and consuming fire," taking what is said by Moses not in its correct sense, he affirms that fire is the originating principle of the universe. (But Simon) does not consider what the statement is which is made, namely, that it is not that God is a fire, but a burning and consuming fire, (thereby) not only putting a violent sense upon the actual law of Moses, but even plagiarizing from Heraclitus the Obscure. And Simon denominates the originating principle of the universe an indefinite power, expressing himself thus: "This is the treatise of a revelation of (the) voice and name (recognizable) by means of intellectual apprehension of the Great Indefinite Power. Wherefore it will be sealed, (and) kept secret, (and) hid, (and) will repose in the habitation, at the foundation of which lies the root of all things." And he asserts that this man who is born of blood is (the aforesaid) habitation, and that in him resides an indefinite power, which he affirms to be the root of the universe. Now the indefinite power which is fire, constitutes, according to Simon, not any uncompounded (essence, in

conformity with the opinion of those who) assert that the four elements are simple, and who have (therefore) likewise imagined that fire, (which is one of the four,) is simple. But (this is far from being the case): for there is, (he maintains,) a certain twofold nature of fire; and of this twofold (nature) he denominates one part a something secret, and another a something manifest, and that the secret are hidden in the manifest portions of the fire, and that the manifest portions of the fire derive their being from its secret (portions). This, however, is what Aristotle denominates by (the expressions) "potentiality" and "energy," or (what) Plato (styles) "intelligible" and "sensible." And the manifest portion of the fire comprises all things in itself, whatsoever any one might discern, or even whatever objects of the visible creation he may happen to overlook. But the entire secret (portion of the fire) which one may discern is cognized by intellect, and evades the power of the senses; or one fails to observe it, from want of a capacity for that particular sort of perception. In general, however, inasmuch as all existing things fall under the categories, namely, of what are objects of Sense, and what are objects of Intellect, and as for the denomination of these (Simon) employs the terms secret and manifest; it may, (I say, in general,) be affirmed that the fire, (I mean) the super-celestial (fire), is a treasure, as it were a large tree, just such a one as in a dream was seen by Nabuchodonosor, out of which all flesh is nourished. And the manifest portion of the fire he regards as the stem, the branches, the leaves, (and) the external rind which overlaps them. All these (appendages), he says, of the Great Tree being kindled, are made to disappear by reason of the blaze of the all-devouring fire. The fruit, however, of the tree, when it is fully grown, and has received its own form, is deposited in a granary, not (flung) into the fire. For, he says, the fruit has been produced for the purpose of being laid in the storehouse, whereas the chaff that it may be delivered over to the fire. (Now the chaff) is stem, (and is) generated not for its own sake, but for that of the fruit.

CHAPTER 5 SIMON APPEALS TO

SCRIPTURE IN SUPPORT OF HIS SYSTEM And this, he says, is what has been written in Scripture: "For the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the man of Judah is His beloved plant." If, however, the man of Judah (is) the beloved plant, it has been proved, he says, that there is not any other tree but that man. But concerning the secretion and dissolution of this (tree), Scripture, he says, has spoken sufficiently. And as regards instruction for those who have been fashioned after the image (of him), that statement is enough which is made (in Scripture), that "all flesh is grass, and all the glory of flesh, as it were, a flower of grass. The grass withereth, and its flower falleth; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever." The word of the Lord, he says, is that word which is produced in the mouth, and (is) a Logos, but nowhere else exists there a place of generation.

CHAPTER 6 SIMON'S SYSTEM EXPOUNDED IN THE WORK, GREAT ANNOUNCEMENT; FOLLOWS EMPEDOCLES Now, to express myself briefly, inasmuch as the fire is of this description, according to Simon, and since all things are visible and invisible, (and) in like manner resonant and not resonant, numerable and not subjects of numeration; he denominates in the Great Announcement a perfect intelligible (entity), after such a mode, that each of those things which, existing indefinitely, may be infinitely comprehended, both speaks, and understands, and acts in such a manner as Empedocles speaks of: – "For earth, indeed, by earth we see, and water by water, And air divine by air, and fire fierce by fire, And love by love, and also strife by gloomy strife."

CHAPTER 7 SIMON'S SYSTEM OF A THREEFOLD EMANATION BY PAIRS For, he says, he is in the habit of considering that all these portions of the fire, both visible and invisible, are possessed of perception and a share of intelligence. The world, therefore, that which is generated, was produced from the unbegotten fire. It began, however, to exist, he says, according to the following manner. He who was begotten

from the principle of that fire took six roots, and those primary ones, of the originating principle of generation. And, he says that the roots were made from the fire in pairs, which roots he terms "Mind" and "Intelligence," "Voice" and "Name," "Ratiocination" and "Reflection." And that in these six roots resides simultaneously the entire indefinite power potentially, (however) not actually. And this indefinite power, he says, is he who stood, stands, and will stand. Wherefore, whensoever he may be made into an image, inasmuch as he exists in the six powers, he will exist (there) substantially, potentially, quantitatively, (and) completely. (And he will be a power) one and the same with the unbegotten and indefinite power, and not laboring under any greater deficiency than that unbegotten and unalterable (and) indefinite power. If, however, he may continue only potentially in the six powers, and has not been formed into an image, he vanishes, he says, and is destroyed in such a way as the grammatical or geometrical capacity in man's soul. For when the capacity takes unto itself an art, a light of existent things is produced; but when (the capacity) does not take unto itself (an art), unskillfulness and ignorance are the results; and just as when (the power) was non-existent, it perishes along with the expiring man.

CHAPTER 8 FURTHER PROGRESSION OF THIS THREEFOLD EMANATION; CO-EXISTENCE WITH THE DOUBLE TRIAD OF A SEVENTH EXISTENCE And of those six powers, and of the seventh which co-exists with them, the first pair, Mind and Intelligence, he calls Heaven and Earth. And that one of these, being of male sex, beholds from above and takes care of his partner, but that the earth receives below the rational fruits, akin to the earth, which are born down from the heaven. On this account, he says, the Logos, frequently looking towards the things that are being generated from Mind and Intelligence, that is, from Heaven and Earth, exclaims, "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, because the Lord has spoken. I have brought forth children, and exalted them; and these have rejected me." Now, he who utters these

words, he says, is the seventh power - he who stood, stands, and will stand; for he himself is cause of those beautiful objects of creation which Moses commended, and said that they were very good. But Voice and Name (the second of the three pairs) are Sun and Moon; and Ratiocination and Reflection (the third of the three pairs) are Air and Water. And in all these is intermingled and blended, as I have declared, the great, the indefinite, the (self-) existing power.

CHAPTER 9 SIMON'S
INTERPRETATION OF THE MOSAIC
HEXAEMERON; HIS ALLEGORICAL
REPRESENTATION OF PARADISE

When, therefore, Moses has spoken of "the six days in which God made heaven and earth, and rested on the seventh from all His works," Simon, in a manner already specified, giving (these and other passages of Scripture) a different application (from the one intended by the holy writers), deifies himself. When, therefore, (the followers of Simon) affirm that there are three days begotten before sun and moon, they speak enigmatically of Mind and Intelligence, that is, Heaven and Earth, and of the seventh power, (I mean) the indefinite one. For these three powers are produced antecedent to all the rest. But when they say, "He begot me prior to all the Ages," such statements, he says, are alleged to hold good concerning the seventh power. Now this seventh power, which was a power existing in the indefinite power, which was produced prior to all the Ages, this is, he says, the seventh power, respecting which Moses utters the following words: "And the Spirit of God was wafted over the water;" that is, says (the Simonian), the Spirit which contains all things in itself, and is an image of the indefinite power about which Simon speaks, - "an image from an incorruptible form, that alone reduces all things into order." For this power that is wafted over the water, being begotten, he says, from an incorruptible form alone, reduces all things into order. When, therefore, according to these (heretics), there ensued some such arrangement, and (one) similar (to it) of the world, the Deity, he says, proceeded to form man, taking clay from the earth. And He formed him not

uncompounded, but twofold, according to (His own) image and likeness. Now the image is the Spirit that is wafted over the water; and whosoever is not fashioned into a figure of this, will perish with the world, inasmuch as he continues only potentially, and does not exist actually. This, he says, is what has been spoken, "that we should not be condemned with the world." If one, however, be made into the figure of (the Spirit), and be generated from an indivisible point, as it has been written in the Announcement, (such a one, albeit) small, will become great. But what is great will continue unto infinite and unalterable duration, as being that which no longer is subject to the conditions of a generated entity. How then, he says, and in what manner, does God form man? In Paradise; for so it seems to him. Grant Paradise, he says, to be the womb; and that this is a true (assumption) the Scripture will teach, when it utters the words, "I am He who forms thee in thy mother's womb." For this also he wishes to have been written so. Moses, he says, resorting to allegory, has declared Paradise to be the womb, if we ought to rely on his statement. If, however, God forms man in his mother's womb - that is, in Paradise - as I have affirmed, let Paradise be the womb, and Eden the after-birth, "a river flowing forth from Eden, for the purpose of irrigating Paradise," (meaning by this) the navel. This navel, he says, is separated into four principles; for on either side of the navel are situated two arteries, channels of spirit, and two veins channels of blood. But when, he says, the umbilical vessels proceed forth from Eden, that is, the caul in which the fetus is enveloped grows into the (fetus) that is being formed in the vicinity of the epigastrium, - (now) all in common denominate this a navel, - these two veins through which the blood flows, and is conveyed from Eden, the after-birth, to what are styled the gates of the liver; (these veins, I say,) nourish the fetus. But the arteries which we have spoken of as being channels of spirit, embrace the bladder on both sides, around the pelvis, and connect it with the great artery, called the aorta, in the vicinity of the dorsal ridge. And in this way the spirit, making its way through the ventricles

to the heart, produces a movement of the fetus. For the infant that was formed in Paradise neither receives nourishment through the mouth, nor breathes through the nostrils: for as it lay in the midst of moisture, at its feet was death, if it attempted to breathe; for it would (thus) have been drawn away from moisture, and perished (accordingly). But (one may go further than this); for the entire (fetus) is bound tightly round by a covering styled the caul, and is nourished by a navel, and it receives through the (aorta), in the vicinity of the dorsal ridge, as I have stated, the substance of the spirit.

CHAPTER 10 SIMON'S EXPLANATION OF THE FIRST TWO BOOKS OF MOSES

The river, therefore, he says, which proceeds out of Eden is divided into four principles, four channels - that is, into four senses, belonging to the creature that is being born, viz., seeing, smelling, taste, and touch; for the child formed in Paradise has these senses only. This, he says, is the law which Moses appointed; and in reference to this very law, each of his books has been written, as the inscriptions evince. The first book is Genesis. The inscription of the book is, he says, sufficient for a knowledge of the universe. For this is (equivalent in meaning with) generation, (that is,) vision, into which one section of the river is divided. For the world was seen by the power of vision. Again, the inscription of the second book is Exodus. For what has been produced, passing through the Red Sea, must come into the wilderness, - now they say he calls the Red (Sea) blood, - and taste bitter water. For bitter, he says, is the water which is (drunk) after (crossing) the Red Sea; which (water) is a path to be trodden, that leads (us) to a knowledge in (this) life of (our) toilsome and bitter lot. Altered, however, by Moses - that is, by the Logos - that bitter (water) becomes sweet. And that this is so we may hear in common from all who express themselves according to the (sentiments of the) poets: - "Dark at the root, like milk, the flower, Gods call it 'Moly,' and hard for mortal men To dig, but power divine is boundless."

CHAPTER 11 SIMON'S EXPLANATION OF THE THREE LAST BOOKS OF THE

PENTATEUCH What is spoken by the Gentiles is sufficient for a knowledge of the universe to those who have ears (capable) of hearing. For whosoever, he says, has tasted this fruit, is not the only one that is changed by Circe into a beast; but also, employing the power of such a fruit, he forms anew and molds afresh, and re-entices into that primary peculiar character of theirs, those that already have been altered into beasts. But a faithful man, and beloved by that sorceress, is, he says, discovered through that milk-like and divine fruit. In like manner, the third book is Leviticus, which is smelling, or respiration. For the entire of that book is (an account) of sacrifices and offerings. Where, however, there is a sacrifice, a certain savor of the fragrance arises from the sacrifice through the incense-offerings; and in regard of this fragrance (the sense of) smelling is a test. Numbers, the fourth of the books, signifies taste, where the discourse is operative. For, from the fact of its speaking all things, it is denominated by numerical arrangement. But Deuteronomy, he says, is written in reference to the (sense of) touch possessed by the child that is being formed. For as touch, by seizing the things that are seen by the other senses, sums them up and ratifies them, testing what is rough, or warm, or clammy, (or cold); so the fifth book of the law constitutes a summary of the four books preceding this. All things, therefore, he says, when unbegotten, are in us potentially, not actually, as the grammatical or geometrical (art). If, then, one receives proper instruction and teaching, and (where consequently) what is bitter will be altered into what is sweet, - that is, the spears into pruning-hooks, and the swords into plowshares, - there will not be chaff and wood begotten for fire, but mature fruit, fully formed, as I said, equal and similar to the unbegotten and indefinite power. If, however, a tree continues alone, not producing fruit fully formed, it is utterly destroyed. For somewhere near, he says, is the axe (which is laid) at the roots of the tree. Every tree, he says, which does not produce good fruit, is hewn down and cast into fire.

CHAPTER 12 FIRE A PRIMAL

PRINCIPLE, ACCORDING TO SIMON

According to Simon, therefore, there exists that which is blessed and incorruptible in a latent condition in every one – (that is,) potentially, not actually; and that this is He who stood, stands, and is to stand. He has stood above in unbegotten power. He stands below, when in the stream of waters He was begotten in a likeness. He is to stand above, beside the blessed indefinite power, if He be fashioned into an image. For, he says, there are three who have stood; and except there were three Aeons who have stood, the unbegotten one is not adorned. (Now the unbegotten one) is, according to them, wafted over the water, and is re-made, according to the similitude (of an eternal nature), a perfect celestial (being), in no (quality of) intelligence formed inferior to the unbegotten power: that is what they say - I and you, one; you, before me; I, that which is after you. This, he says, is one power divided above (and) below, generating itself, making itself grow, seeking itself, finding itself, being mother of itself, father of itself, sister of itself, spouse of itself, daughter of itself, son of itself, mother, father, a unit, being a root of the entire circle of existence. And that, he says, the originating principle of the generation of things begotten is from fire, he discerns after some such method as the following. Of all things, (i.e.) of whatsoever there is a generation, the beginning of the desire of the generation is from fire. Wherefore the desire after mutable generation is denominated "to be inflamed." For when the fire is one, it admits of two conversions. For, he says, blood in the man being both warm and yellow, is converted as a figured flame into seed; but in the woman this same blood is converted into milk. And the conversion of the male becomes generation, but the conversion of the female nourishment for the fetus. This, he says, is "the flaming sword, which turned to guard the way of the tree of life." For the blood is converted into seed and milk, and this power becomes mother and father - father of those things that are in process of generation, and the augmentation of those things that are being nourished; (and this power is) without further want, (and) self-sufficient. And, he says, the tree of life is guarded, as we have

stated, by the brandished flaming sword.

And it is the seventh power, that which (is produced) from itself, (and) which contains all (powers, and) which reposes in the six powers. For if the flaming sword be not brandished, that good tree will be destroyed, and perish. If, however, these be converted into seed and milk, the principle that resides in these potentially, and is in possession of a proper position, in which is evolved a principle of souls, (such a principle,) beginning, as it were, from a very small spark, will be altogether magnified, and will increase and become a power indefinite (and) unalterable, (equal and similar) to an unalterable age, which no longer passes into the indefinite age.

CHAPTER 13 HIS DOCTRINE OF EMANATION FURTHER EXPANDED

Therefore, according to this reasoning, Simon became confessedly a god to his silly followers, as that Libyan, namely, Apsethus - begotten, no doubt, and subject to passion, when he may exist potentially, but devoid of propensions. (And this too, though born from one having propensions, and uncreated though born) from one that is begotten, when He may be fashioned into a figure, and, becoming perfect, may come forth from two of the primary powers, that is, Heaven and Earth. For Simon expressly speaks of this in the "Revelation" after this manner: "To you, then, I address the things which I speak, and (to you) I write what I write. The writing is this: there are two offshoots from all the Aeons, having neither beginning nor end, from one root. And this is a power, viz., Sige, (who is) invisible (and) incomprehensible. And one of these (offshoots) appears from above, which constitutes a great power, (the creative) Mind of the universe, which manages all things, (and is) a male. The other (offshoot), however, is from below, (and constitutes) a great Intelligence, and is a female which produces all things. From whence, ranged in pairs opposite each other, they undergo conjugal union, and manifest an intermediate interval, namely, an incomprehensible air, which has neither beginning nor end. But in this is a father who sustains all things, and nourishes things that have beginning and

end. This is he who stood, stands, and will stand, being an hermaphrodite power according to the pre-existent indefinite power, which has neither beginning nor end. Now this (power) exists in isolation. For Intelligence, (that subsists) in unity, proceeded forth from this (power), (and) became two. And that (father) was one, for having in himself this (power) he was isolated, and, however, He was not primal though pre-existent; but being rendered manifest to himself from himself, he passed into a state of duality. But neither was he denominated father before this (power) would style him father. As, therefore, he himself, bringing forward himself by means of himself, manifested unto himself his own peculiar intelligence, so also the intelligence, when it was manifested, did not exercise the function of creation. But beholding him, she concealed the Father within herself, that is, the power; and it is an hermaphrodite power, and an intelligence. And hence it is that they are ranged in pairs, one opposite the other; for power is in no wise different from intelligence, inasmuch as they are one. For from those things that are above is discovered power; and from those below, intelligence. So it is, therefore, that likewise what is manifested from these, being unity, is discovered (to be) duality, an hermaphrodite having the female in itself. This, (therefore,) is Mind (subsisting) in Intelligence; and these are separable one from the other, (though both taken together) are one, (and) are discovered in a state of duality."

CHAPTER 14 SIMON INTERPRETS HIS SYSTEM BY THE MYTHOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF HELEN OF TROY; GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF IN CONNECTION WITH THE TROJAN HEROINE; IMMORALITY OF HIS FOLLOWERS; SIMON'S VIEW OF CHRIST; THE SIMONISTS' APOLOGY FOR THEIR VICE Simon then, after inventing these (tenets), not only by evil devices interpreted the writings of Moses in whatever way he wished, but even the (works) of the poets. For also he fastens an allegorical meaning on (the story of) the wooden horse and Helen with the torch, and on very many other (accounts), which he

transfers to what relates to himself and to Intelligence, and (thus) furnishes a fictitious explanation of them. He said, however, that this (Helen) was the lost sheep. And she, always abiding among women, confounded the powers in the world by reason of her surpassing beauty. Whence, likewise, the Trojan war arose on her account. For in the Helen born at that time resided this Intelligence; and thus, when all the powers were for claiming her (for themselves), sedition and war arose, during which (this chief power) was manifested to nations. And from this circumstance, without doubt, we may believe that Stesichorus, who had through (some) verses reviled her, was deprived of the use of his eyes; and that, again, when he repented and composed recantations, in which he sung (Helen's) praises, he recovered the power of vision. But the angels and the powers below - who, he says, created the world - caused the transference from one body to another of (Helen's soul); and subsequently she stood on the roof of a house in Tyre, a city of Phoenicia, and on going down thither (Simon professed to have) found her. For he stated that, principally for the purpose of searching after this (woman), he had arrived (in Tyre), in order that he might rescue her from bondage. And after having thus redeemed her, he was in the habit of conducting her about with himself, alleging that this (girl) was the lost sheep, and affirming himself to be the Power above all things. But the filthy fellow, becoming enamored of this miserable woman called Helen, purchased her (as his slave), and enjoyed her person. He, (however,) was likewise moved with shame towards his disciples, and concocted this figment. But, again, those who become followers of this impostor - I mean Simon the sorcerer - indulge in similar practices, and irrationally allege the necessity of promiscuous intercourse. They express themselves in the manner following: "All earth is earth, and there is no difference where any one sows, provided he does sow." But even they congratulate themselves on account of this indiscriminate intercourse, asserting that this is perfect love, and employing the expressions, "holy of holies," and "sanctify

one another." For (they would have us believe) that they are not overcome by the supposed vice, for that they have been redeemed. "And (Jesus), by having redeemed Helen in this way," (Simon says,) "has afforded salvation to men through his own peculiar intelligence. For inasmuch as the angels, by reason of their lust for pre-eminence, improperly managed the world, (Jesus Christ) being transformed, and being assimilated to the rulers and powers and angels, came for the restoration (of things). And so (it was that Jesus) appeared as man, when in reality he was not a man. And (so it was) that likewise he suffered - though not actually undergoing suffering, but appearing to the Jews to do so - in Judea as 'Son,' and in Samaria as 'Father,' and among the rest of the Gentiles as 'Holy Spirit.'" And (Simon alleges) that Jesus tolerated being styled by whichever name (of the three just mentioned) men might wish to call him. "And that the prophets, deriving their inspiration from the world-making angels, uttered predictions (concerning him)." Wherefore, (Simon said,) that towards these (prophets) those felt no concern up to the present, who believe on Simon and Helen, and that they do whatsoever they please, as persons free; for they allege that they are saved by grace. For that there is no reason for punishment, even though one shall act wickedly; for such a one is not wicked by nature, but by enactment. "For the angels who created the world made," he says, "whatever enactments they pleased," thinking by such (legislative) words to enslave those who listened to them. But, again, they speak of a dissolution of the world, for the redemption of his own particular adherents.

CHAPTER 15 SIMON'S DISCIPLES ADOPT THE MYSTERIES; SIMON MEETS ST. PETER ...; ACCOUNT OF SIMON'S CLOSING YEARS The disciples, then, of this (Magus), celebrate magical rites, and resort to incantations. And (they profess to) transmit both love-spells and charms, and the demons said to be senders of dreams, for the purpose of distracting whomsoever they please. But they also employ those denominated Paredroi. "And

they have an image of Simon (fashioned) into the figure of Jupiter, and (an image) of Helen in the form of Minerva; and they pay adoration to these." But they call the one Lord and the other Lady. And if any one amongst them, on seeing the images of either Simon or Helen, would call them by name, he is cast off, as being ignorant of the mysteries. This Simon, deceiving many in Samaria by his sorceries, was reprov'd by the Apostles, and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts. But he afterwards abjured the faith, and attempted these (aforesaid practices). And journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles; and to him, deceiving many by his sorceries, Peter offered repeated opposition. This man, ultimately repairing to... (and) sitting under a plane tree, continued to give instruction (in his doctrines). And in truth at last, when conviction was imminent, in case he delayed longer, he stated that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They, then, executed the injunction given; whereas he remained (in that grave) until this day, for he was not the Christ. This constitutes the legendary system advanced by Simon, and from this Valentinus derived a starting-point (for his own doctrine. This doctrine, in point of fact, was the same with the Simonian, though Valentinus) denominated it under different titles: for "Nous," and "Aletheia," and "Logos," and "Zoe," and "Anthropos," and "Ecclesia," and Aeons of Valentinus, are confessedly the six roots of Simon, viz., "Mind" and "Intelligence," "Voice" and "Name," "Ratiocination" and "Reflection." But since it seems to us that we have sufficiently explained Simon's tissue of legends, let us see what also Valentinus asserts.

APPENDIX 4 - ZOROASTER AND ORPHEUS

Mithraism was a sect of the Magian religion. The Magi were, according to tradition, an Iranian caste, or priestly tribe, and they kept alive in their homeland the ancient paganism of their ancestors. This was very similar to the animism of the early Hindu Scriptures known as the Vedas, which date from the second millennium BC.

However, the most popular form of Magian religion before the rise of Mithraism under the Roman Empire, was Zoroastrianism. This was well known to the Greeks of the East, and later to the Romans, and many intellectual Greeks in the homeland adopted elements of Zoroastrianism into their philosophies and mystic systems, including even such well-known figures as Plato. Zoroastrianism revered the memory and the writings (or alleged writings) of the prophet Zarathustra. The Greeks changed the form of the prophet's name to Zoroaster. Zoroastrianism was a dualistic cult, believing in the cosmic battle of two principles, that of Good, embodied in the God Ahura Mazda (Ohrmazd), and that of Evil, embodied in the Satanic figure of Angra Mainyu (Ahriman). It believed in a system of cosmic cycles of 7 periods of 1000 years each, and in the repeated embodiment or reincarnation of the Good spirit in the form of successive Saviour figures through the ages, Zarathustra being himself the supreme embodiment, followed by Ukhshyat-ereta (whose name means "Let Truth be embodied!"), the second Saviour-figure (Saoshyant) etc. In many ways, Zoroastrianism was a revolt against, or a reformation of, traditional Iranian religion, and was at first strongly opposed by the Magian hierarchy. Later it was incorporated into the Magian mainstream. The Mithraic cult absorbed elements of Zoroastrianism from its own Magian priesthood. Zoroastrianism is even today a thriving, if numerically rather insignificant, religion. It is the faith of the Parsis (vulgarly, and incorrectly, known as the "fire-worshippers") of India. They have preserved it in their land of exile in a more strongly monotheistic form, after having been ousted from their homeland in Iran by the Muslims.

As regards Classical religion, the influence of Zoroastrianism is well attested. It seems that the learning and religion of Ancient Greece and Rome owed much more to oriental religion, particularly Iranian religion, than the Greeks or Romans were, in general, willing to admit. This is no more than

could be expected, as the Greeks (from whom the Romans borrowed heavily in matters of religion), inherited an empire in the East from the Iranian Persians, through the campaigns of Alexander the Great at the end of the fourth century before Christ, and they swiftly adopted oriental manners and modes of thought. Even before Alexander, the Persians had been the dominant power in the Mediterranean world for two hundred years, and the Persians were themselves heirs to the learning, science, culture and religion of ancient Babylon and Egypt. Compared to the Greeks, these were the true "ancients". The East looked down on the simplistic philosophy and childish mythology of the Greeks and their Italian colonies. The higher ranks of the spiritual and philosophical circles in Greece concurred with the orientals on this point and readily plagiarized their eastern masters.

In its tendency towards monotheism, in its exaltation of the prophet and Saviour figure, in its scheme of world-history manifesting in the material sphere the cosmic battle between God and Satan, in its angelology and extensive demonology, and in many other ways, Zoroastrianism has a curious similarity to the Biblical Scriptures, to Christianity and later Judaism. It is much disputed amongst secular scholars as to who borrowed from whom between the Hebrews and the Zoroastrians.

The origins of great movements, in the ancient, as in the modern, world, can sometimes be traced back to the least significant events - an unusual coincidence of time and place, perhaps, in which seminal figures met and there occurred a mingling of intellectual, religious or scientific ideas. In the case of the Hebrew prophetic faith in Israel, Zoroastrianism in Iran and the Orphic mystery religion in Greece (one of the earliest oriental influences on that country), a report of such an event has survived the wreck of history. This reveals that the twin streams of Zoroastrianism and the Orphic mystery-religion had a common source in the great river of Biblical, prophetic, revelation. In this instance, the findings of history and modern archaeology combine to confirm the veracity of the report.

The point in time and space where these three great movements met, mingled and diverged is recorded in a defence of Christianity (called an "Apology") composed for the benefit of the Roman Emperor

Antoninus in the middle of the second century AD by the early Christian writer, Melito of Sardis. His account is as follows:

(Melito is describing how the ancient, pagan, gods were deified historical figures:) "The Syrians worshipped Athi, a Hadibite, who sent the daughter of Belat, a person skilled in medicine, and she healed Simi, the daughter of Hadad king of Syria; and some time afterwards, when Hadad himself had the leprosy upon him, Athi entreated Elisha the Hebrew, and he came and healed him of his leprosy. The people of Mesopotamia also worshipped Cuthbi, a Hebrew woman, because she delivered Bakru, the paternal king of Edessa, from his enemies. With respect to Nebo, who is worshipped in Mabug, why should I write to you? For, lo! all the priests who are in Mabug know that it is the image of Orpheus, a Thracian Magus. Hadran, again, is the image of Zaradusht {= Zarathustra, Zoroaster}, a Persian Magus. For both of these Magi practiced magic at a well which was in a wood in Mabug, in which was an unclean spirit, and it assaulted and disputed the passage of every one who passed by in all that country in which the town of Mabug is situated; and these Magi, in accordance with what was a mystery in their Magian system, bade Simi, the daughter of Hadad, to draw water from the sea and pour it into the well, so that the spirit should not come up and commit assault. In like manner, the rest of mankind made images to their kings and worshipped them; of which matter I will not write further."

In this account, the scene is set in the time of one Hadad, king of Syria (Hadad stands for Ben-Hadad, a common name in the Syrian royal line). The era is about 850 BC. King Hadad had a daughter called Simi. Simi became ill, but was healed through the attention of the daughter of Balat, who had been sent on this healing mission to the king's daughter by a woman called Athi from the city Hadib. This Athi, in turn, was an acquaintance of the great Hebrew prophet, Elisha, in whose ministry many miracles of healing are known to have occurred. Now, some time after the healing of princess Simi, her own father, king Hadad, fell ill of leprosy. The kind and thoughtful Athi once again intervened and requested the prophet Elisha himself to go and pray for the king. As a result, Hadad, too, was healed. We can be sure that these amazing events in the royal palace had an impact throughout the kingdom

of Syria.

Now, in that very same era, there were two Magi, devotees of Iranian paganism, plying their mystic trade in the Syrian city of Mabug. One of them came from Thrace in Northern Greece and the other came from Persia. Seemingly, they had met in this great oriental emporium, and had begun to practice their occult art there together. A poltergeist in a well at Mabug caught their attention. Local superstition affirmed that this poltergeist buffeted travellers as they passed by the well and, indeed, tried to prevent their passage. The two Magi determined to exorcise the evil spirit. In order to accomplish their aims they contacted the king's daughter, Simi, over whom they appear to have claimed some kind of spiritual authority. They instructed the princess to perform the necessary magical rite, which involved Simi's bringing seawater to the sweet-water well and pouring it in. Whether Simi complied with their instruction, and whether their exorcism was successful, is left unstated. However, these two Magi became, in time, two of the most famous prophets in paganism. One of them was Zoroaster, the prophet of Persian dualism, and the other was Orpheus, founder of the Orphic mystery-religion of Greece.

The Syrian royal court, in whose circles these two religious innovators operated, was strongly influenced by the ministry of the Hebrew prophet, Elisha. Elisha himself was no innovator, but a successor to the prophetic mantle of the great Elijah, and, like him, an upholder of the traditional faith of Israel. Accordingly, the innovation on the side of the Magi, which was in the direction of a form of monotheism and a system of belief reminiscent of the Hebraic tradition, we can conclude to have arisen by contact with the prophetic circle of Elisha.

The date of the prophet Zoroaster has frequently been disputed. That this report in Melito accurately represents his era, around 850 BC, can be demonstrated by an examination of Greek legend relating to Zoroaster in the light of certain discoveries of modern archaeology in the Near East. A widespread Greek tradition was that Zoroaster, the Persian Magus, was at one time in conflict with the famous king of Assyria, called Ninus, the founder of Nineveh. In one line of tradition, the Magus is named thus, Zoroaster; in another, he is

referred to as Oxyartes, which is simply a Greek transcription of the Iranian name Ukhshyat-ereta, "Let Truth Be Embodied", the re-embodied Zoroaster, or second Saviour figure in the Zoroastrian scheme of world-ages. So, Zoroaster-Oxyartes, according to this Greek tradition, was a contemporary of Ninus.

But who was Ninus? Ninus means "King of Nineveh". It is an eponym, more a title than a name. There was a third millennium BC Ninus (Ninus I), who was identified in antiquity with Nimrod or Enmekar, and a ninth century BC Ninus (Ninus II). (See further <http://www.christianhospitality.org/6-days-creation.htm#s065d>.) The latter had a famous, or, rather, infamous, wife, called Semiramis (reigned as sole queen 810-805 and traditionally for longer, 42 years, i.e. to 769 BC). Semiramis' notoriety was due to her fondness for beating men at their own business. She dressed in trousers like a man and went out to war like a king. The eastern women's custom of wearing pantaloons and trousers sprang from the example furnished by Semiramis. Now, Semiramis is identifiable as a historical figure. Her original name was Sammuamat. Her name has been discovered by modern archaeologists in the ruins of Assyria. Her husband (the "Ninus" or "King of Nineveh" of the Greek legends) was Shamshi-Adad V. He flourished around 820 BC. Shamshi-Adad V, or Ninus, living around 820 BC, is said to have fought against Zoroaster-Oxyartes, according to the Greeks. Coincidentally, in the account of Melito of Sardis, Zoroaster lived in the time of Elisha, i.e. precisely around the year 820 BC. In Wetzel's "A Chronology of Biblical Christianity", Ben-Hadad I, whose name corresponds to the Hadad of Melito, began to rule Syria in 880 BC, Elisha succeeded Elijah 868 BC, Ben-Hadad was succeeded by Hazael in 842 BC, Shamshi-Adad V began to rule in Assyria 823BC, Adad-Nirari III succeeded in Assyria in 810 BC, Elisha passed on 808 BC. This means Elisha was contemporary with Ben-Hadad I, or Hadad, king of Syria, from 868 to 842 BC, and with Shamshi-Adad V, or Ninus, of Assyria from 823-811 BC. It would make sense for the two Magi, Zoroaster and Orpheus, to have been in Syria around 850 BC, in contact with the court of Ben-Hadad (Hadad), and for Zoroaster to have later migrated to the area east of Assyria where he came into conflict with, and finally perished at the hands of, Ninus, or Shamshi-Adad V.

Further strengthening our confidence in the reliability of Melito's account, we find that the historical Ninus, Shamshi-Adad V, conducted a military campaign against certain tribes, including Iranian tribes, to the east of Assyria. This campaign was commemorated on a monument discovered in the ruins of the palace of the Assyrian king. One of the leaders whom Shamshi-Adad V defeated in this campaign had an Iranian name, whose form corresponds exactly to the Greek Oxyartes, the defeated Iranian opponent of Ninus. On the monument, in the ancient script of Assyria, this name is spelt Wuksuarta (the name is usually transcribed, incorrectly, Munsuarta). This, undoubtedly is the historical Oxyartes. To Shamshi-Adad V, he will have been just another Iranian rebel chief, but to the Magi who had accepted his reformed version of the Iranian national religion, he was nothing less than the re-embodied Zoroaster, the second World-Saviour in the cosmic battle between Good and Evil.

This Zoroastrian idea of reincarnation can surely, in the light of these discoveries, be traced back to its source. Elisha, whose influence was strong in the Syrian court, was well-known to have had a "double portion" of the same Spirit that was upon Elijah, his prophetic predecessor. Elisha was, as it were, a second Elijah. Is it coincidence that Wuksuarta or Oxyartes, the Magus, now claimed that he himself was a re-embodiment of the spirit of his predecessor, Zoroaster? The particular variation in the Zoroastrian system was that this second World-Saviour, Oxyartes, followed the first, Zoroaster, after an interval of 1000 years. In fact, it came to be believed that every 1000 years a new World-Saviour would be born into the world, embodying in each case, Zoroaster's spirit.

This doctrine enables us to identify the first Zoroaster and, at the same time, to understand why Oxyartes should have thought of himself as a reincarnation of this man's spirit. (See further <http://www.christianhospitality.org/6-days-creation.htm#s132w>.) In the writings of the Babylonian priest, Berossus, we find Semiramis, the notorious wife of Ninus, mentioned in the king-list, and 975 years before her era Zoroaster (so named), i.e. the first or original Zoroaster, described by Berossus, not as a prophet, but as a king of the Medes who invaded and captured Babylon. (The figure 975 is the total number of years assigned by

Berosus to the dynasties intervening between Zoroaster and the point in his king list where he mentioned Semiramis. This traditional figure is unlikely to represent an exact tally of the intervening years, though it might have entered Zoroastrian tradition on the mistaken understanding that it did. Nevertheless, an estimate of the same interval based on the number of intervening reigns, rather than the number of years as stated, results in an almost identical date for Zoroaster around the middle of the 18th century BC.) This implies Zoroaster was born somewhat earlier, i.e. 1000 years more or less, before the era of Ninus (Shamshi-Adad V) and Semiramis. Now, Berosus is known to have accurately transcribed many of the historical records of Mesopotamia. On numerous points his account is confirmed by the researches of modern archaeologists and historians. The place in Berosus' king-list occupied by this Zoroaster, around the 18th century BC, corresponds to that of the king called Gaddash, or Gandash. Just as in Berosus, this king is known from the cuneiform writings of the Babylonians to have invaded southern Mesopotamia and initiated a new dynasty in Babylon, the "Kassite" dynasty, which endured for several centuries. Moreover, the Kassites' original homeland was in the highlands east of Babylonia, corresponding to the territory known to the Greeks of Berosus' era as Media, the land of the Medes. The conclusion must be that Berosus' Zoroaster, king of the Medes - the first and original Zoroaster who lived 1000 years before the era of Semiramis, Ninus and Oxyartes - was this first conquering king of the Kassites, Gaddash.

Zoroaster is a Greek transcription of the Iranian Zarathustra. The name is also found in the form Zaradusht (as in Melito), Zaradas, Zerdusht etc. etc. It means "herder" (lit. "camel herder"), and seems to be the ancient Iranian name of the constellation Orion, which the Babylonians called the "True Herder of Heaven." It was believed Zoroaster prayed to Orion that he would be consumed by the heavenly fire, like his ancestor Nimrod, and that his prayer was answered. Nimrod was believed to have been exalted to the stars as Orion, and the ashes of his earthly remains were preserved as objects of worship by his deluded followers. Likewise Zoroaster.

Why would Oxyartes (Wuksuarta) believe himself to be a re-embodiment of this Kassite king Gaddash

(Zardash/Zoroaster), and identify himself, by name, as the second Zoroaster, or, simply, Zoroaster? Surely because the Kassite king was famous as the first conqueror of Babylon who originated from the highlands of Media. As the Median Gaddash, or Zoroaster, conquered Babylon, and was the first to do so, so the Median Magus, Wuksuarta, would conquer Assyria now. As it turned out, this aspiration was disappointed. Wuksuarta was more successful as a mystic than as a warrior, and he was defeated by the Assyrian king, Shamshi-Adad V. What Wuksuarta left behind him, in the ruin of his military career, was a reformed Magian religion, Zoroastrianism, which perpetuated even to the present day the name of this otherwise totally obscure king of the Kassites, Gaddash, the first and original bearer of the name Zoroaster.

Traditional Evidence in the Early Church Writers of Orpheus' Borrowing from the Hebrew Scriptures and of His Seminal Influence on Greek Paganism

Orpheus is a figure who appears in pictures on the walls of Christian catacombs in Rome. The following quotations from early church writers explain why. Orpheus was believed to have repented of his paganism at the end of his career and professed the truth of Hebrew monotheism. Given the connection evidenced here, between the Hebrew prophet, Elisha, Orpheus and Zoroaster (Oxyartes), such an event is by no means improbable.

Justin Martyr, Hortatory Address to the Greeks, Ch. 14f.: For I think that some of you, when you read even carelessly the history of Diodorus, and of those others who wrote of these things, cannot fail to see that both Orpheus, and Homer, and Solon, who wrote the laws of the Athenians, and Pythagoras, and Plato, and some others, when they had been in Egypt, and had taken advantage of the history of Moses, afterwards published doctrines concerning the gods quite contrary to those which formerly they had erroneously promulgated. [Ch. 15] TESTIMONY OF ORPHEUS TO MONOTHEISM: At all events, we must remind you what Orpheus, who was, as one might say, your first teacher of polytheism, latterly addressed to his

son Musaeus, and to the other legitimate auditors, concerning the one and only God. And he spoke thus: — “I speak to those who lawfully may hear: All others, ye profane, now close the doors, And, O Musaeus! hearken thou to me, Who offspring art of the light-bringing moon: The words I utter now are true indeed; And if thou former thoughts of mine hast seen, Let them not rob thee of the blessed life, But rather turn the depths of thine own heart Unto the place where light and knowledge dwell. Take thou the Word divine to guide thy steps, And walking well in the straight certain path, Look to the one and universal King — One, self-begotten, and the only One, Of whom all things and we ourselves are sprung. All things are open to His piercing gaze, While He Himself is still invisible. Present in all His works, though still unseen, He gives to mortals evil out of good, Sending both chilling wars and tearful griefs; And other than the great King there is none. The clouds for ever settle round His throne, And mortal eyeballs in mere mortal eyes Are weak, to see Jove reigning over all. He sits established in the brazen heavens Upon His golden throne; under His feet He treads the earth, and stretches His right hand To all the ends of ocean, and around Tremble the mountain ranges and the streams, The depths, too, of the blue and hoary sea.” And again, in some other place he says: — “There is one Zeus alone, one sun, one hell, One Bacchus; and in all things but one God; Nor of all these as diverse let me speak.” And when he swears he says: — “Now I adjure thee by the highest heaven, The work of the great God, the only wise; And I adjure thee by the Father’s voice. Which first He uttered when He established The whole world by His counsel.” What does he mean by “I adjure thee by the Father’s voice, which first He uttered?” It is the Word of God which he here names “the voice,” by whom heaven and earth and the whole creation were made, as the divine prophecies of the holy men teach us; and these he himself also paid some attention to in Egypt, and understood that all creation was made by the Word of God; and therefore, after he says, “I adjure thee by the Father’s voice, which first He uttered,” he adds this besides, “when by His counsel He established the whole world.” Here he calls the Word “voice,” for the sake of the poetical meter. And that this is so, is manifest from the fact, that a little further on, where the meter permits him, he names it “Word.” For he said: — “Take thou the Word divine to guide thy steps.”

Ibid. 17: And the poet Homer, using the license of poetry, and rivaling the original opinion of Orpheus regarding the plurality of the gods, mentions, indeed, several gods in a mythical style, lest he should seem to sing in a different strain from the poem of Orpheus, which he so distinctly proposed to rival, that even in the first line of his poem he indicated the relation he held to him. For as Orpheus in the beginning of his poem had said, “O goddess, sing the wrath of Demeter, who brings the goodly fruit,” Homer began thus, “O goddess, sing the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus,” preferring, as it seems to me, even to violate the poetical meter in his first line, than that he should seem not to have remembered before all else the names of the gods. But shortly after he also clearly and explicitly presents his own opinion regarding one God only, somewhere, saying to Achilles by the mouth of Phoenix, “Not though God Himself were to promise that He would peel off my old age, and give me the rigor of my youth,” where he indicates by the pronoun the real and true God. And somewhere he makes Ulysses address the host of the Greeks thus: “The rule of many is not a good thing; let there be one ruler.” And that the rule of many is not a good thing, but on the contrary an evil, he proposed to evince by fact, recounting the wars which took place on account of the multitude of rulers, and the fights and factions, and their mutual counterplots. For monarchy is free from contention. So far the poet Homer.

Justin Martyr, *On the Sole Government of God*, Ch. 2: Even Orpheus, too, who introduces three hundred and sixty gods, will bear testimony in my favor from the tract called *Diathecae*, in which he appears to repent of his error by writing the following: — [There follows the same verses quoted above beginning: “I speak ...” and ending with “... hoary sea”.]

Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, 3. 2: For what did it profit Homer to have composed the Trojan war, and to have deceived many; or Hesiod, the register of the theogony of those whom he calls gods; or Orpheus, the three hundred and sixty-five gods, whom in the end of his life he rejects, maintaining in his precepts that there is one God?

Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, Ch. 18: Homer speaks of “Old Oceanus, The sire of gods, and Tethys;” and Orpheus (who, moreover, was the

first to invent their names, and recounted their births, and narrated the exploits of each, and is believed by them to treat with greater truth than others of divine things, whom Homer himself follows in most matters, especially in reference to the gods) — he, too, has fixed their first origin to be from water: — “Oceanus, the origin of all.” For, according to him, water was the beginning of all things, and from water mud was formed, and from both was produced an animal, a dragon with the head of a lion growing to it, and between the two heads there was the face of a god, named Heracles and Kronos. This Heracles generated an egg of enormous size, which, on becoming full, was, by the powerful friction of its generator, burst into two, the part at the top receiving the form of heaven (Ouranos), and the lower part that of earth (Ge). The goddess Ge, moreover, came forth with a body; and Ouranos, by his union with Ge, begat females, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos; and males, the hundred-handed Cottys, Gyges, Briareus, and the Cyclopes Brontes, and Steropes, and Argos, whom also he bound and hurled down to Tartarus, having learnt that he was to be ejected from his government by his children; whereupon Ge, being enraged, brought forth the Titans. “The godlike Gala bore to Ouranos Sons who are by the name of Titans known, Because they vengeance took on Ouranos, Majestic, glitt’ring with his starry crown.”

Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation of the Heathen, Ch. 7: But the Thracian Orpheus, the son of Oeagrus, hierophant and poet at once, after his exposition of the orgies, and his theology of idols, introduces a palinode of truth with true solemnity, though tardily singing the strain: — “I shall utter to whom it is lawful; but let the doors be closed, Nevertheless, against all the profane. But do thou hear, O Musaeus, offspring of the light-bringing moon, For I will declare what is true. And let not these things Which once appeared in your breast rob you of dear life; But looking to the divine word, apply yourself to it, Keeping right the seat of intellect and feeling; and walk well In the straight path, and to the immortal King of the universe alone Direct your gaze.” Then proceeding, he clearly adds: — “He is one, self-proceeding; and from Him alone all things proceed, And in them He Himself exerts his activity: no mortal Beholds Him, but He beholds all.” Thus far Orpheus at last understood that he had been in error: — “But linger no longer, O man, endued with varied wisdom; But turn and retrace your steps, and propitiate God.” For if, at

the most, the Greeks, having received certain scintillations of the divine word, have given forth some utterances of truth, they bear indeed witness that the force of truth is not hidden, and at the same time expose their own weakness in not having arrived at the end.

Idem, Stromata 1. 14: The Greeks say, that after Orpheus and Linus, and the most ancient of the poets that appeared among them, the seven, called wise, were the first that were admired for their wisdom. Of whom four were of Asia — Thales of Miletus, and Bias of Priene, Pittacus of Mitylene, and Cleobulus of Lindos; and two of Europe, Solon the Athenian, and Chilon the Lacedaemonian; and the seventh, some say, was Periander of Corinth; others, Anacharsis the Scythian; others, Epimenides the Cretan, whom Paul knew as a Greek prophet, whom he mentions in the Epistle to Titus, where he speaks thus: “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. And this witness is true.” You see how even to the prophets of the Greeks he attributes something of the truth, and is not ashamed, when discoursing for the edification of some and the shaming of others, to make use of Greek poems.

Ibid 21: And Orpheus, who sailed with Hercules, was the pupil of Musaeus {evidently an earlier Musaeus than his son of the same name, and anciently identified with Moses [Musa in Arabic]}.

Idem, Stromata, 5. 14: And the same Orpheus speaks thus: — “But to the word divine, looking, attend, Keeping aright the heart’s receptacle Of intellect, and tread the straight path well, And only to the world’s immortal King Direct thy gaze.” And again, respecting God, saying that He was invisible, and that He was known to but one, a Chaldean by race — meaning either by this Abraham or his son — he speaks as follows: — “But one a scion of Chaldean race; For he the sun’s path knew right well, And how the motion of the sphere about The earth proceeds, in circle moving Equally around its axis, how the winds Their chariot guide o’er air and sea.” Then, as if paraphrasing the expression, “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool,” he adds: — “But in great heaven, He is seated firm Upon a throne of gold, and ’neath His feet The earth. His right hand round the ocean’s bound He stretches; and the hills’ foundations shake To the center at His wrath, nor can endure His mighty

strength. He all celestial is, And all things finishes upon the earth. He the Beginning, Middle is, and End. But Thee I dare not speak. In limbs And mind I tremble. He rules from on high.” And so forth. For in these he indicates these prophetic utterances: “If Thou openest the heaven, trembling shall seize the mountains from Thy presence; and they shall melt, as wax melteth before the fire;” and in Isaiah, “Who hath measured the heaven with a span, and the whole earth with His fist? Again, when it is said: — “Ruler of Ether, Hades, Sea, and Land, Who with Thy bolts Olympus’ strong-built home Dost shake. Whom demons dread, and whom the throng Of gods do fear. Whom, too, the Fates obey, Relentless though they be. O deathless One, Our mother’s Sire whose wrath makes all things reel; Who mov’st the winds, and shroud’st in clouds the world, Broad Ether cleaving with Thy lightning gleams, — Thine is the order ’mongst the stars, which run As Thine unchangeable behests direct. Before Thy burning throne the angels wait, Much-working, charged to do all things, for men. Thy young Spring shines, all prank’d with purple flowers; Thy Winter with its chilling clouds assails; Thine Autumn noisy Bacchus distributes.” Then he adds, naming expressly the Almighty God: — “Deathless Immortal, capable of being To the immortals only uttered! Come, Greatest of gods, with strong Necessity. Dread, invincible, great, deathless One, Whom Ether crowns.”... By the expression “Sire of our Mother” (Metropator) he not only intimates creation out of nothing, but gives occasion to those who introduce emissions of imagining a consort of the Deity. And he paraphrases those prophetic Scriptures — that in Isaiah, “I am He that fixes the thunder, and creates the wind; whose hands have founded the host of heaven;” and that in Moses, “Behold, behold that I am He, and there is no God beside me: I will kill, and I will make to live; I will smite, and I will heal: and there is none that shall deliver out of my hands.” “And He, from good, to mortals planteth ill, And cruel war, and tearful woes,” according to Orpheus. Such also are the words of the Parian Archilochus. “O Zeus, thine is the power of heaven, and thou Inflict’st on men things violent and wrong.” Again let the Thracian Orpheus sing to us: — “His right hand all around to ocean’s bound He stretches; and beneath His feet is earth.” These are plainly derived from the following: “The Lord will save the inhabited cities, and grasp the whole land in His hand like a nest; “It is the Lord that made the earth by His power,” as saith Jeremiah, “and set up the earth by His

wisdom.”

Ibid 6. 2: You will also find that Homer, the great poet, took from Orpheus, from the Disappearance of Dionysus, those words and what follows verbatim: — “As a man trains a luxuriant shoot of olive.” And in the Theogony, it is said by Orpheus of Kronos: — “He lay, his thick neck bent aside; and him All-conquering Sleep had seized.” These Homer transferred to the Cyclops. And Hesiod writes of Melampous: — “Gladly to hear, what the immortals have assigned To men, the brave from cowards clearly marks;” and so forth, taking it word for word from the poet Musaeus.

APPENDIX 5 - PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN AGAINST ALL HERESIES

PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, AGAINST ALL HERESIES. [TRANSLATED BY THE REV. S. THELWALL.] CHAPTER 1 EARLIEST HERETICS: SIMON MAGUS, MENANDER, SATURNINUS, BASILIDES, NICOLAUS [THE WORK BEGINS AS A FRAGMENT]

Of which heretics I will (to pass by a good deal) summarize some few particulars. For of Judaism’s heretics I am silent — Dositheus the Samaritan, I mean, who was the first who had the hardihood to repudiate the prophets, on the ground that they had not spoken under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Of the Sadducees I am silent, who, springing from the root of this error, had the hardihood to adjoin to this heresy the denial likewise of the resurrection of the flesh. The Pharisees I pretermit, who were “divided” from the Jews by their superimposing of certain additaments to the law, which fact likewise made them worthy of receiving this very name; and, together with them, the Herodians likewise, who said that Herod was Christ. To those I betake

myself who have chosen to make the gospel the starting-point of their heresies. Of these the first of all is Simon Magus, who in the Acts of the Apostles earned a condign and just sentence from the Apostle Peter. He had the hardihood to call himself the Supreme Virtue, that is, the Supreme God; and moreover, (to assert) that the universe had been originated by his angels; that he had descended in quest of an erring daemon, which was Wisdom; that, in a phantasmal semblance of God, he had not suffered among the Jews, but was as if he had suffered. After him Menander, his disciple (likewise a magician), saying the same as Simon. Whatever Simon had affirmed himself to be, this did Menander equally affirm himself to be, asserting that none could possibly have salvation without being baptized in his name. Afterwards, again, followed Saturninus: he, too, affirming that the innascible Virtue, that is God, abides in the highest regions, and that those regions are infinite, and in the regions immediately above us; but that angels far removed from Him made the lower world; and that, because light from above had flashed refulgently in the lower regions, the angels had carefully tried to form man after the similitude of that light; that man lay crawling on the surface of the earth; that this light and this higher virtue was, thanks to mercy, the salvable spark in man, while all the rest of him perishes; that Christ had not existed in a bodily substance, and had endured a quasi-passion in a phantasmal shape merely; that a resurrection of the flesh there will by no means be. Afterwards broke out the heretic Basilides. He affirms that there is a supreme Deity, by name Abraxas, by whom was created Mind, which in Greek he calls Nous; that thence sprang the Word; that of Him issued Providence, Virtue, and Wisdom; that out of these subsequently were made Principalities, Powers, and Angels; that there ensued infinite issues and processions of angels; that by these angels 365 heavens were formed, and the world, in honor of Abraxas, whose name, if computed, has in itself this number. Now, among the last of the angels, those who made this world, he places the God of the Jews latest, that is, the God of the Law and of the Prophets, whom he denies to be a God, but affirms to be an angel. To him, he says, was allotted the seed of Abraham, and accordingly he it was who transferred the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan; affirming him to be turbulent above the other angels, and accordingly given to the frequent arousing of seditions and wars, yes, and the shedding of human

blood. Christ, moreover, he affirms to have been sent, not by this maker of the world, but by the above-named Abraxas; and to have come in a phantasm, and been destitute of the substance of flesh: that it was not He who suffered among the Jews, but that Simon was crucified in His stead: whence, again, there must be no believing on him who was crucified, lest one confess to having believed on Simon. Martyrdoms, he says, are not to be endured. The resurrection of the flesh he strenuously impugns, affirming that salvation has not been promised to bodies. A brother heretic emerged in Nicolaus. He was one of the seven deacons who were appointed in the Acts of the Apostles. He affirms that Darkness was seized with a concupiscence — and, indeed, a foul and obscene one — after Light: out of this permixture it is a shame to say what fetid and unclean (combinations arose). The rest (of his tenets), too, are obscene. For he tells of certain Aeons, sons of turpitude, and of conjunctions of execrable and obscene embraces and per-mixtures, and certain yet baser outcomes of these. He teaches that there were born, moreover, daemons, and gods, and spirits seven, and other things sufficiently sacrilegious, alike and foul, which we blush to recount, and at once pass them by. Enough it is for us that this heresy of the Nicolaitans has been condemned by the Apocalypse of the Lord with the weightiest authority attaching to a sentence, in saying “Because this thou holdest, thou hatest the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which I too hate.”

CHAPTER 2 OPHITES, CAINITES, SETHITES

To these are added those heretics likewise who are called Ophites: for they magnify the serpent to such a degree, that they prefer him even to Christ Himself; for it was he, they say, who gave us the origin of the knowledge of good and of evil. His power and majesty (they say) Moses perceiving, set up the brazen serpent; and whoever gazed upon him obtained health. Christ Himself (they say further) in His gospel imitates Moses' serpent's sacred power, in saying: “And as Moses upreared the serpent in the desert, so it behooveth the Son of man to be upreared.” Him they introduce to bless their eucharistic (elements). Now the whole parade and doctrine of this error flowed from the following source. They say that from the supreme primary

Aeon whom men speak of there emanated several other inferior Aeons. To all these, however, there opposed himself an Aeon whose name is Ialdabaoth. He had been conceived by the permixture of a second Aeon with inferior Aeons; and afterwards, when he had been desirous of forcing his way into the higher regions, had been disabled by the permixture of the gravity of matter with himself to arrive at the higher regions; had been left in the midst, and had extended himself to his full dimensions, and thus had made the sky. Ialdabaoth, however, had descended lower, and had made him seven sons, and had shut from their view the upper regions by self-distention, in order that, since (these) angels could not know what was above, they might think him the sole God. These inferior Virtues and angels, therefore, had made man; and, because he had been originated by weaker and mediocre powers, he lay crawling, worm-like. That Aeon, however, out of which Ialdabaoth had proceeded, moved to the heart with envy, had injected into man as he lay a certain spark; excited whereby, he was through prudence to grow wise, and be able to understand the things above. So, again, the Ialdabaoth aforesaid, turning indignant, had emitted out of himself the Virtue and similitude of the serpent; and this had been the Virtue in paradise — that is, this had been the serpent — whom Eve had believed as if he had been God the Son. He plucked, say they, from the fruit of the tree, and thus conferred on mankind the knowledge of things good and evil. Christ, moreover, existed not in substance of flesh: salvation of the flesh is not to be hoped for at all. Moreover, also, there has broken out another heresy also, which is called that of the Cainites. And the reason is, that they magnify Cain as if he had been conceived of some potent Virtue which operated in him; for Abel had been procreated after being conceived of an inferior Virtue, and accordingly had been found inferior. They who assert this likewise defend the traitor Judas, telling us that he is admirable and great, because of the advantages he is vaunted to have conferred on mankind; for some of them think that thanksgiving is to be rendered to Judas on this account: viz., Judas, they say, observing that Christ wished to subvert the truth, betrayed Him, in order that there might be no possibility of truth's being subverted. And others thus dispute against them, and say: Because the powers of this world were unwilling that Christ should suffer, lest through His death salvation should be prepared for mankind, he, consulting for the salvation of mankind, betrayed

Christ, in order that there might be no possibility at all of the salvation being impeded, which was being impeded through the Virtues which were opposing Christ's passion; and thus, through the passion of Christ, there might be no possibility of the salvation of mankind being retarded. But, again, the heresy has started forth which is called that of the Sethites. The doctrine of this perversity is as follows. Two human beings were formed by the angels — Cain and Abel. On their account arose great contentions and discords among the angels; for this reason, that Virtue which was above all the Virtues — which they style the Mother — when they said that Abel had been slain, willed this Seth of theirs to be conceived and born in place of Abel, in order that those angels might be escheated who had created those two former human beings, while this pure seed rises and is born. For they say that there had been iniquitous permixtures of two angels and human beings; for which reason that Virtue which (as we have said) they style the Mother brought on the deluge even, for the purpose of vengeance, in order that that seed of permixture might be swept away, and this only seed which was pure be kept entire. But (in vain): for they who had originated those of the former seed sent into the ark (secretly and stealthily, and unknown to that Mother-Virtue), together with those "eight souls," the seed likewise of Ham, in order that the seed of evil should not perish, but should, together with the rest, be preserved, and after the deluge be restored to the earth, and, by example of the rest, should grow up and diffuse itself, and fill and occupy the whole orb. Of Christ, moreover, their sentiments are such that they call Him merely Seth, and say that He was instead of the actual Seth.

CHAPTER 3 CARPOCRATES, CERINTHUS, EBION

Carpocrates, furthermore, introduced the following sect. He affirms that there is one Virtue, the chief among the upper (regions): that out of this were produced angels and Virtues, which, being far distant from the upper Virtues, created this world in the lower regions: that Christ was not born of the Virgin Mary, but was generated — a mere human being — of the seed of Joseph, superior (they admit) above all others in the practice of righteousness and in integrity of life; that He suffered among the Jews; and that His soul alone was received in heaven as having been more firm

and hardy than all others: whence he would infer, retaining only the salvation of souls, that there are no resurrections of the body. After him brake out the heretic Cerinthus, teaching similarly. For he, too, says that the world was originated by those angels; and sets forth Christ as born of the seed of Joseph, contending that He was merely human, without divinity; affirming also that the Law was given by angels; representing the God of the Jews as not the Lord, but an angel. His successor was Ebion, not agreeing with Cerinthus in every point; in that he affirms the world to have been made by God, not by angels; and because it is written, “No disciple above his master, nor servant above his Lord,” sets forth likewise the law as binding, of course for the purpose of excluding the gospel and vindicating Judaism.

CHAPTER 4 VALENTINUS, PTOLEMY AND SECUNDUS, HERACLEON

Valentinus the heretic, moreover, introduced many fables. These I will retrench and briefly summarize. For he introduces the Pleroma and the thirty Aeons. These Aeons, moreover, he explains in the way of syzygies, that is, conjugal unions of some kind. For among the first, he says, were Depth and Silence; of these proceeded Mind and Truth; out of whom burst the Word and Life; from whom, again, were created Man and the Church. But (these are not all); for of these last also proceeded twelve Aeons; from Speech, moreover, and Life proceeded other ten Aeons: such is the Triacontad of Aeons, which is made up in the Pleroma of an ogdoad, a decad, and a duodecad. The thirtieth Aeon, moreover, willed to see the great Bythus; and, to see him, had the hardihood to ascend into the upper regions; and not being capable of seeing his magnitude, desponded, and almost suffered dissolution, had not some one, — he whom he calls Horos, to wit, — sent to invigorate him, strengthened him by pronouncing the word “Iao.” This Aeon, moreover, which was thus reduced to despondency, he calls Achamoth, (and says) that he was seized with certain regretful passions, and out of his passions gave birth to material essences. For he was panic-stricken, he says, and terror-stricken, and overcome with sadness; and of these passions he conceived and bare. Hence he made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and whatever is in them: for which cause all things made by him are infirm, and frail, and capable of falling, and mortal, inasmuch as he

himself was conceived and produced from despondency. He, however, originated this world out of those material essences which Achamoth, by his panic, or terror, or sadness, or sweat, had supplied. For of his panic, he says, was made darkness; of his fear and ignorance, the spirits of wickedness and malignity; of his sadness and tears, the humidities of founts, the material essence of floods and sea. Christ, moreover, was sent by that First-Father who is Bythus. He, moreover, was not in the substance of our flesh; but, bringing down from heaven some spiritual body or other, passed through the Virgin Mary as water through a pipe, neither receiving nor borrowing aught thence. The resurrection of our present flesh he denies, but (maintains that) of some sister-flesh. Of the Law and the prophets some parts he approves, some he disapproves; that is, he disapproves all in reprobating some. A Gospel of his own he likewise has, beside these of ours. After him arose the heretics Ptolemy and Secundus, who agree throughout with Valentinus, differing only in the following point: viz., whereas Valentinus had feigned but thirty Aeons, they have added several more; for they first added four, and subsequently four more. And Valentinus’ assertion, that it was the thirtieth Aeon which strayed out from the Pleroma, (as falling into despondency,) they deny; for the one which desponded on account of disappointed yearning to see the First-Father was not of the original triacontad, they say. There arose, besides, Heracleon, a brother-heretic, whose sentiments pair with Valentinus’; but, by some novelty of terminology, he is desirous of seeming to differ in sentiment. For he introduces the notion that there existed first what he terms (a Monad); and then out of that Monad (arose) two, and then the rest of the Aeons. Then he introduces the whole system of Valentinus.

CHAPTER 5 MARCUS AND COLARBASUS

After these there were not wanting a Marcus and a Colarbasus, composing a novel heresy out of the Greek alphabet. For they affirm that without those letters truth cannot be found; nay more, that in those letters the whole plenitude and perfection of truth is comprised; for this was why Christ said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.” In fact, they say that Jesus Christ descended, that is, that the dove came down on Jesus; and, since the dove is styled by the Greek name *peristera*, it has in itself this number DCCCI.

These men run through their W, Y, C, F, U, T— through the whole alphabet, indeed, up to A and B — and compute ogdoads and decads. So we may grant it useless and idle to recount all their trifles. What, however, must be allowed not merely vain, but likewise dangerous, is this: they feign a second God, beside the Creator; they affirm that Christ was not in the substance of flesh; they say there is to be no resurrection of the flesh.

CHAPTER 6 CERDO, MARCION, LUGAN, APELLES

To this is added one Cerdo. He introduces two first causes, that is, two Gods — one good, the other cruel: the good being the superior; the latter, the cruel one, being the creator of the world. He repudiates the prophecies and the Law; renounces God the Creator; maintains that Christ who came was the Son of the superior God; affirms that He was not in the substance of flesh; states Him to have been only in a phantasmal shape, to have not really suffered, but undergone a quasipassion, and not to have been born of a virgin, nay, really not to have been born at all. A resurrection of the soul merely does he approve, denying that of the body. The Gospel of Luke alone, and that not entire, does he receive. Of the Apostle Paul he takes neither all the epistles, nor in their integrity. The Acts of the Apostles and the Apocalypse he rejects as false. After him emerged a disciple of his, one Marcion by name, a native of Pontus, son of a bishop, excommunicated because of a rape committed on a certain virgin. He, starting from the fact that it is said, “Every good tree beareth good fruit, but an evil evil,” attempted to approve the heresy of Cerdo; so that his assertions are identical with those of the former heretic before him. After him arose one Lucan by name, a follower and disciple of Marcion. He, too, wading through the same kinds of blasphemy, teaches the same as Marcion and Cerdo had taught. Close on their heels follows Apelles, a disciple of Marcion, who after lapsing into his own carnality, was severed from Marcion. He introduces one God in the infinite upper regions, and states that He made many powers and angels; beside Him, withal, another Virtue, which he affirms to be called Lord, but represents as an angel. By him he will have it appear that the world was originated in imitation of a superior world. With this lower world he mingled throughout (a principle of) repentance, because he had not made it so perfectly as that

superior world had been originated. The Law and the prophets he repudiates. Christ he neither, like Marcion, affirms to have been in a phantasmal shape, nor yet in substance of a true body, as the Gospel teaches; but says, because He descended from the upper regions, that in the course of His descent He wove together for Himself a starry and airy flesh; and, in His resurrection, restored, in the course of His ascent, to the several individual elements whatever had been borrowed in His descent: and thus — the several parts of His body dispersed — He reinstated in heaven His spirit only. This man denies the resurrection of the flesh. He uses, too, one only apostle; but that is Marcion’s, that is, a mutilated one. He teaches the salvation of souls alone. He has, besides, private but extraordinary lections of his own, which he calls “Manifestations”, of one Philumene, a girl whom he follows as a prophetess. He has, besides, his own books, which he has entitled books of Syllogisms, in which he seeks to prove that whatever Moses has written about God is not true, but is false.

CHAPTER 7 TATIAN, CATAPHRYGIANS, CATAPROCLANS, CATHESCHINETANS

To all these heretics is added one Tatian, a brother-heretic. This man was Justin Martyr’s disciple. After Justin’s death he began to cherish different opinions from his. For he wholly savors of Valentinus; adding this, that Adam cannot even attain salvation: as if, when the branches become salvable, the root were not! Other heretics swell the list who are called Cataphrygians, but their teaching is not uniform. For there are (of them) some who are called Cataproclans; there are others who are termed Cataeschinetans. These have a blasphemy common, and a blasphemy not common, but peculiar and special. The common blasphemy lies in their saying that the Holy Spirit was in the apostles indeed, the Paraclete was not; and in their saying that the Paraclete has spoken in Montanus more things than Christ brought forward into (the compass of) the Gospel, and not merely more, but likewise better and greater. But the particular one they who follow Aeschines have; this, namely, whereby they add this, that they affirm Christ to be Himself Son and Father.

CHAPTER 8 BLASTUS, TWO THEODOTI, PRAXEAS

In addition to all these, there is likewise Blastus, who would latently introduce Judaism. For he says the passover is not to be kept otherwise than according to the law of Moses, on the fourteenth of the month. But who would fail to see that evangelical grace is escheated if he recalls Christ to the Law? Add to these Theodotus the Byzantine, who, after being apprehended for Christ's Name, and apostatizing, ceased not to blaspheme against Christ. For he introduced a doctrine by which to affirm that Christ was merely a human being, but deny His deity; teaching that He was born of the Holy Spirit indeed of a virgin, but was a solitary and bare human being, with no pre-eminence above the rest (of mankind), but only that of righteousness. After him brake out a second heretical Theodotus, who again himself introduced a sister-sect, and says that the human being Christ Himself was merely conceived alike, and born, of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, but that He was inferior to Melchizedek; because it is said of Christ, "Thou art a priest unto eternity, after the order of Melchizedek." For that Melchizedek, he says, was a heavenly Virtue of pre-eminent grace; in that Christ acts for human beings, being made their Deprecator and Advocate: Melchizedek does so for heavenly angels and Virtues. For to such a degree, he says, is he better than Christ, that he is apator (fatherless), ameter (motherless), agenealogetos (without genealogy), of whom neither the beginning nor the end has been comprehended, nor can be comprehended. But after all these, again, one Praxeas introduced a heresy which Victorinus was careful to corroborate. He asserts that Jesus Christ is God the Father Almighty. Him he contends to have been crucified, and suffered, and died; beside which, with a profane and sacrilegious temerity, he maintains the proposition that He is Himself sitting at His own right hand.

APPENDIX 6 - PETER IN ROME?

AN EXAMINATION OF QUOTATIONS USED TO PROVE PETER'S PERSONAL PRESENCE IN ROME

"On the other hand, the chief value for historical study of these late texts, which now in increasing number assert that Peter was in Rome and became a martyr there, concerns only the history of dogma; they attest the development of the tradition. In theory the possibility cannot be excluded that perhaps here and there the basis of the tradition is a good earlier source which we no longer possess. Yet even if this is so, we must be fundamentally skeptical toward these later texts, when we see how in this very period the development of Christian legend flourishes and how it seeks to fill out the gaps in the New Testament narrative. Where, in addition, contradictions between these texts and the early sources appear, their trustworthiness must be challenged from the start. With this reserve, however, it is interesting to get acquainted with at least the earliest of these witnesses, those of the second and third centuries."

Oscar Cullmann, *Peter — Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, trans. Floyd V. Filson (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1953), p. 115.

THE QUOTATIONS WITH COMMENT

Braces {} in the text of a quotation contain observations on the text, square brackets [] contain aids to understanding the translation

1. [Dionysius of Corinth](#)
2. [Irenaeus](#)
3. [Clement of Alexandria](#)
4. [Gaius \(Caius\) of Rome](#)
5. [Tertullian](#)
6. [The pseudo-Clementines](#)
7. [Eusebius of Caesarea](#)

The historical evidence that Peter was present in Rome resolves itself into a few short quotations from six, reliable, Early Church writers, which are capable of divergent interpretations, and more

extensive material found in an expurgated version of a heretical tract dating from the first half of the third century AD. The six quotations, beginning in chronological order with the earliest, are examined in detail below, and the heretical tract summarized at the appropriate place in chronological sequence.

[1] DIONYSIUS BISHOP OF CORINTH

c. AD 150-170 (apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. II. xxv. 8, for the original Greek, click [here](#)):

"You** have thus by such an admonition*** bound together the planting of the Romans and Corinthians that came from Peter and Paul. For both of them indeed, having planted INTO**** our Corinth, likewise taught us. And likewise, having taught together INTO**** Italy,† they suffered martyrdom at the same time."

NOTES

* Eusebius introduces the quotation from Dionysius with the following assertion: "And that they [Peter and Paul] both suffered martyrdom at the same time is stated by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his epistle to the Romans, in the following words"

** The First Church of Rome.

*** Dionysius is here referring to an ecclesiastical letter sent to him and the Church in Corinth over which he presided by Soter, Bishop of the First Church of Rome.

**** My emphasis. Greek *eis*, "into", "towards", not "in" in a simple locative sense.

† Note: Italy not Rome.

Dionysius is replying to a missive from Soter, bishop of the First Church of Rome, for which he expresses fulsome praise. In his reply, he dwells on the common, apostolic, roots of the Church in Corinth and the Church in Rome, mentioning that

Peter "planted into" (Greek *phuteuô + eis*) "Corinth" and "directed teaching into" (lit. "taught into", Greek: *didaskô + eis*) Corinth and Italy (not into Rome itself). Dionysius uses the common New Testament and early ecclesiastical figure of "planting" to describe the original impartation of the Word of God (as though of a seed) in the hearts of its hearers, and the founding thereby of the local Church.

There are three things to say immediately about this passage. One is that the directing of teaching INTO a country or city, or "planting" a Church or the Gospel INTO a place, is a far different thing from preaching or teaching there *viva voce*, or being personally present there. In fact, Dionysius uses these expressions in elucidation of his earlier statement, literally translated, that a "planting of the Romans and the Corinthians came AWAY FROM [Gk. *phuteia genêtheisa apo*] Peter and Paul" – which clearly, or at least most naturally, represents a process going on at a remove.

The second point relates to the detail of the "planting of the Romans and Corinthians that came from Peter and Paul". As regards the precise meaning of this phrase, the possibilities are these:

- A. Peter and Paul planted (in Dionysius' sense) the Romans and Peter and Paul planted the Corinthians
- B. Peter planted the Romans and Peter and Paul planted the Corinthians
- C. Paul planted the Romans and Peter and Paul planted the Corinthians
- D. Peter and Paul planted the Romans and Peter planted the Corinthians
- E. Peter and Paul planted the Romans and Paul planted the Corinthians
- F. Peter planted the Romans and Paul planted the Corinthians
- G. Paul planted the Romans and Peter planted the Corinthians.

Dionysius proceeds to narrow down the choice to A, B, or C, by saying that Peter and Paul both planted into Corinth. The New Testament, however, discounts Paul's participation in the planting of the Roman Church (see below), so the choice is further narrowed down to B: Peter planted the Romans and Peter and Paul planted the Corinthians. Now, the proponent of the Peter in Rome theory might say, this proves Peter was in Rome, because here he is

demonstrated to have planted the Roman Church. Of course, it proves no such thing, because the unique phraseology of Dionysius indicates a planting at a distance, a planting INTO (*eis*), or a planting that came AWAY FROM (*apo*) Peter and Paul.

Dionysius, in further explanation or elucidation of the phrase "planting of the Romans and Corinthians", provides us with another, pertinent, item of information. "Both Peter and Paul planted into our city of Corinth," he says, "and further, they both TAUGHT INTO our Corinth, and both the apostles TAUGHT INTO ... " – we would expect him to say: "both the apostles taught into Rome." Now, we know they did not both "plant into" Rome - only Peter "planted into" Rome - but both, surely "taught into" Rome, did they not? Paul was personally present in Rome for a considerable time and taught the Roman Christians by his epistles as well as by his viva voce preaching and teaching. And the proponents of the Peter in Rome theory, holding up Dionysius' statement that Peter "planted into" Rome as evidence that Peter was personally present there, would be expecting this final "... and both the apostles taught into Rome". But what does Dionysius say? "... AND both the apostles taught into ITALY (!)" Now, he has been talking about Corinth and ROME up to now. Why change the subject to ITALY? This is such a pointed change of emphasis that only one conclusion can be drawn naturally from it: Dionysius believed at least ONE of the apostles DID NOT teach into Rome, but rather directed teaching into some other location in Italy. Now, everyone knows, and Dionysius knew, that Paul "taught into" Rome. The Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament Epistles prove that point. The most reasonable conclusion to be drawn, therefore, from Dionysius' remarkable change of emphasis IS THAT DIONYSIUS KNEW PETER DID NOT TEACH INTO ROME AT ALL, which is as much as to say, PETER NEVER WAS PERSONALLY PRESENT IN ROME. So, the earliest traditional proof offered of Peter's presence in Rome turns out to be strong, *prima facie*, evidence of exactly the opposite.

The deductions gleaned here from the fragment of Dionysius' epistle are confirmed by the few items of information bearing on this subject that can be extracted from other sources. It could not be said, on the strength of the contemporary, historical,

evidence of Paul's Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles, that Paul ever was responsible for a "planting of the Romans"; he did not set up, directly or indirectly, a new fellowship there, as the Church in Rome was already fully established when Paul first communicated with it. In fact, Paul says that he was reluctant to visit Rome at first because he did not wish to build on another man's foundations (Romans 15. 21-22). Peter, on the other hand, does seem to have been responsible for such a "planting of the Romans", at least in the indirect sense that his preaching and his authority was what influenced and motivated the founders of the first Christian community in Rome. (For more on this, see below, [Secondary Quotations \[5\]](#).) The evidence outlined in the document, "[The First Church of Rome](#)", indicates that the earliest Church in the capital sprang up as a consequence of the ministry of Peter in Jerusalem immediately after Pentecost. One probable scenario envisions Jewish residents of Rome who had been pilgrims to the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem in AD 33, as mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2. 10), and who had been converted by the preaching of Peter, returning to Rome with their new-found faith. Alternatively, or, additionally, the missionaries Andronicus and Junia, mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, organized the earliest Messianic, or Jewish Christian, community in Rome, having been originally members of the apostolic circle in Jerusalem after Pentecost (Romans 16. 7), and, consequently, under the spiritual influence of Peter, who was the spokesman of the apostles in Jerusalem, and the leader of the Jewish mission.

On the other hand, both Peter and Paul could be counted as having "planted into" Corinth. Paul planted the Word originally in Corinth by the first viva voce preaching there, according to the Acts of the Apostles (18. 1-18) and his Epistles to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 4. 15, 9 *passim*, II Corinthians 10. 13-16), and also there was a group in Corinth who claimed Peter ("Cephas") as their chief doctrinal authority, and this group was schismatic, i.e. it formed at least a loose fellowship of its own (I Corinthians 1. 10-12, cf. 3. 1-15, 9. 7, where Paul uses the word "plant", i.e. found the church in Corinth, in this very context, 3. 22, 4. 14-15, 9. 1-12, and cf. 9. 11-12, where Paul uses the word "sow" of the Word preached to the Corinthians): Peter might be said to have "planted into" Corinth in the sense that he was responsible, to whatever degree, for the existence of this

schismatic group. As regards Peter's directing teaching INTO ITALY, the New Testament confirms an indirect connection between Peter and Italy, for it was through Peter (and a vision that he had in Joppa) that the first Gentile was converted, and that was Cornelius, the Roman centurion of the "Italic Company", Acts 10. 1ff. The Cohors Italica, or Italian Cohort, is what is referred to here, which consisted of Italian volunteers, and which is known to have served in Syria (Gruter, Inscr. p. 434: Cohors militum Italicorum voluntaria, quae est in Syria). Any of these soldiers, who had been positively influenced by the testimony of Cornelius, or Cornelius himself, could have taken the Gospel message back home to Italy. Such incidental confirmations of Dionysius' account inspire our confidence in the passage that effectively denies Peter ever exercised a personal teaching ministry in Rome.

[2] IRENAEUS OF LYONS

(1) c. AD 180, Adv. Haer. III. i. 1, apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. V. viii. 2-4 (for the original Greek, click [here](#)):

"Matthew also produced amongst the Hebrews, in their own dialect, a written account of a Gospel of Peter and Paul, in Rome, whilst they* were [still] evangelizing and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure,** Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter; and Luke, for his part, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish the Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."

NOTES

* Peter and Paul.

** Lit. "exodus", here, seemingly, a reflection of the use of the word by Peter himself in II Peter 1. 15, and in Luke 9. 31.

The usual translation of this passage, based on the very early, but inaccurate and barbarous, Latin translation of Adversus Haereses, is that Matthew issued his Gospel "whilst Peter and Paul in Rome were evangelizing and founding the Church". However, a glance at the original Greek text of Irenaeus reveals a more probable interpretation of the text, reproduced above, viz. that Matthew issued "in Rome" a written account of the "Gospel of Peter and Paul", whilst they were still evangelizing and founding the Church, in contrast to the Gospel of Mark which was transmitted to posterity after their "departure" (i.e. death). Clearly, an altogether different thing! Tertullian refers tantalizingly to just such a gospel (see below, [Secondary Quotations 4](#)): "quibus [sc. Romanis] evangelium et Petrus et Paulus sanguine quoque suo signatum reliquerunt." "To whom [the Romans] Peter and Paul conjointly bequeathed a gospel even sealed with their own blood."

The faulty Latin translation is as follows: "Ita Matheus in Hebraeis ipsorum lingua scripturam edidit Evangelii CUM PETRUS ET PAULUS ROMAE EVANGELIZARENT ET FUNDARENT ECCLESIAM {"whilst Peter and Paul in Rome were evangelizing and founding the Church"}. Post vero excessum Marcus discipulus et interpres Petri et ipse quae a Petro annuntiata erant per scripta nobis tradidit, et Lucas autem sectator Pauli quod ab illo praedicabatur Evangelium in libro condidit. Postea et Johannes discipulus Domini qui et supra pectus ejus recumbat et ipse edidit Evangelium Ephesi Asiae commorans." Normally, the Latin is very literal, so much so that the underlying Greek, if it is no longer extant, can be reconstructed from it with tolerable certainty. In this case, the translator has allowed himself more freedom, but has botched the interpretation. A literal translation would have preserved the form of the original Greek better: Ita Matheus in Hebraeis ipsorum lingua scripturam edidit Evangelii Petri et Pauli Romae evangelizantium et fundantium Ecclesiam [or, a little less literally, cum evangelizarent et fundarent Ecclesiam].

The external and internal evidence supports the corrected version. As for the external evidence: let us assume that the traditional interpretation is correct, that Matthew issued his Gospel "whilst Peter and Paul in Rome were evangelizing and founding the Church". Now, on the supposition that

the phrase "in Rome", specifying the geographical location of the evangelizing, should be read as applying to both apostles, Peter and Paul, and not to the latter only (whose name, nevertheless, it immediately follows), then the passage presumes that Peter was at some time personally present in Rome. How likely is it that Irenaeus would introduce, in this rather oblique and obscure way, such an idea, unless he had traditional authority for doing so? Hardly anything at all is said about Matthew in the New Testament or early, ecclesiastical, tradition, except for what is said here, and in a few notes preserved by Eusebius, so it should not surprise us that Irenaeus simply records the anecdote about Matthew without further comment, but Peter is a different matter altogether. Peter's activity is well attested in the New Testament, and his story, as the chief spokesman of the apostles in Jerusalem and leader of the Jewish mission, would be of obvious interest to the Church worldwide. Is it likely that Peter could have visited the capital of the Roman Empire at roughly the same period as Paul and it have escaped the notice of every ecclesiastical historian and commentator between the New Testament writers themselves and Irenaeus? And if so, is it credible that Irenaeus would have inserted this priceless, historical, datum as a kind of aside to his anecdotal information about the production of the Gospels? If a tradition antedating Irenaeus could be proved to have existed which did attest Peter's presence in the capital, there might be some external grounds for accepting the usual interpretation; but no such tradition existed (only Dionysius conclusively predates Irenaeus). Therefore, Irenaeus' words must be interpreted in the light of the historical evidence of the New Testament, as it relates to the whereabouts of Peter and Paul. Irenaeus is well known to have had the greatest respect for the New Testament Scriptures, to which he deferred in preference to extrabiblical tradition, and the New Testament evidence unequivocally favours the corrected interpretation, or, at the minimum, the interpretation which restricts the geographical expression to Paul. Peter is not connected with Rome anywhere in the New Testament.

The internal evidence, too, favours the corrected interpretation. The corrected interpretation explains the otherwise pointless reference to Peter and Paul: what would Peter and Paul's evangelization of Gentile Rome have to do with the Gospel of Matthew which was specifically targeted at a

Hebrew audience? On the traditional interpretation, no special reference is included to Jews in Rome. And why introduce the particular period of Peter and Paul's ministry as a marker, when no other connection is drawn, on the traditional interpretation, between these apostles and Matthew's Gospel? In the corrected interpretation, Matthew's Gospel is designated the Gospel of Peter and Paul, and the temporal and topical reference is introduced as an understandable expansion on that designation. Also Matthew's Gospel is specifically said to have been produced amongst the Hebrews in Rome.

Secondly, the corrected interpretation brings into proper relief the contrast between the time when Matthew's Gospel was published, that is, during the lifetime of Peter and Paul, and the time when Mark handed down his Gospel to posterity, that is, after their "exodus" (= martyrdom). This contrast is sharper in the corrected version, because, in that, it is the "Gospel of Peter and Paul" that Matthew produces in their lifetime, whilst Mark "also" hands down Peter's Gospel, but after the apostles' death. In the traditional interpretation the contrast is dulled, inasmuch as Matthew's Gospel is not there designated the "Gospel of Peter and Paul". Furthermore, in the corrected version, the Gospel of Peter and Paul published by Matthew in the apostles' lifetime, is contrasted successively and appropriately with (1) the Gospel of Peter transmitted to posterity by Mark and (2) the Gospel of Paul written up by Luke, only after the apostles' death.

Thirdly, Peter and John were chief Apostles, and Paul had equivalent status, according to Paul himself (Gal. 2. 9, II Cor. 11. 5, 12. 1). Paul refers to Peter and John as foundational "pillars" (Gal. 2. 9). Matthew, whilst being one of the original Twelve, is not bracketed with these chief Apostles either in the New Testament or in later ecclesiastical literature. The reference in this tradition to the authoritative foundations of the Church Universal, as well as of Irenaeus in the context in which it appears to the Gospels themselves as the authoritative foundational pillar of the Church (see the fifth point below), suggests the emphasis here in each instance should be on the foundational Apostles as authorities behind the Gospels rather than on any lesser Apostle, such as Matthew. The omission of a superior Apostolic

authority behind the Gospel of Matthew, on the traditional interpretation, makes it the only one of the four Gospels in this tradition which lacks an ascription to a particular chief Apostle. However, in the corrected version, Matthew is the Gospel of Peter and Paul, Mark is the Gospel of Peter, Luke the Gospel of Paul, and John, the Gospel of John himself.

Furthermore, fourthly, the publication or transmission of the other Gospels in this tradition is, in each case, described in terms of two elements: (1) the superior Apostolic authority behind the Gospel, and (2) the time of publication or transmission. Additionally, in the last case, John's Gospel, a third element is added (3) the city where the Gospel was published. So, Mark's Gospel was (1) based on Peter's message, and (2) handed down to posterity after the "exodus" of Peter and Paul; Luke's Gospel was (1) based on Paul's message, and (2) written up likewise after the "exodus" of Peter and Paul; John's Gospel was (1) based on the message of John himself, and (2) issued after the writing of Mark and Luke, during John's residence in Asia; finally - the additional element - (3) John's Gospel was published in the city of Ephesus. On the traditional interpretation, Matthew's Gospel would be the exception to the rule, as only one element (2) would be present (viz. relating to its publication during the supposed ministry of Peter and Paul in Rome). On the corrected interpretation, not only two, but actually three elements are present, as in the case of John's Gospel: (1) the chief Apostles whose message it was based on, viz. Peter and Paul, (2) the time it was published, viz. during the lifetime and foundational ministry of Peter and Paul, and (3) the city where it was published, viz. the city of Rome.

Fifthly, the Church referred to as being founded by Peter and Paul seems to be the Universal Church, not some local assembly in Rome, as would be required by the traditional interpretation (i.e. if we were to read: "whilst Peter and Paul in Rome were evangelizing and founding the Church"). In this passage relating to Matthew's Gospel, the foundation "of the Church" by the Apostles is mentioned, and then Irenaeus says Mark "did ALSO hand down TO US in writing what had been preached by Peter." I.e. "the Church" in the earlier phrase seems to be equivalent to the "us" in the following phrase, which means that the reference in

the former instance is to the foundation of the Universal Church - the Body of Christ's followers worldwide - not to any local Church in Rome. Earlier in the same passage, also, and in the immediately succeeding section, Irenaeus uses the word "us" to denote the Christian recipients IN GENERAL of the doctrine of the Apostles, Adv. Haer. III. i. 1 ad init., 2 ad init., and he also refers to the Gospel transmitted to "us" by the Apostles, both in its spoken and written form, as being the FOUNDATIONAL ground and pillar of "our" faith (Adv. Haer. III. iii. 1 ad init.): "We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the GOSPEL {my emphasis} has come down to US {my emphasis}, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to US in the Scriptures, TO BE THE GROUND AND PILLAR OF OUR FAITH {my emphasis}." The context, accordingly, inclines one to interpret this phrase ("whilst they [Peter and Paul] were [still] evangelizing and laying the foundations of the Church") as a reference to the founding and evangelizing of the Universal Church, not specifically the Church in Rome, by the two principal Apostles, Peter mainly to the Hebrews, and Paul mainly to the Gentiles. Now, the Universal Church was founded in Jerusalem at Pentecost, before Peter had ever been out of Palestine, and, by Paul amongst the Gentiles, on his first missionary journey to Cyprus and Asia Minor, so it could not be said to have been founded in any sense by them at Rome.

Sixthly, though this is harder to prove, as the "feel" of a language is a subjective thing, the flow of the Greek favours the corrected version. The accents, whether tonal or accentual, in the phrase *graphên exÊnegken euaggEliou tou pEtrou kai tou pAULou* favor the connection of "Gospel" with "Peter and Paul" (the accute accent is represented in upper case): the word *euaggEliou* would be left hanging if it was not followed by a word or words connected with it, and there would be a disjunction in order to start the supposed new temporal phrase *tou pEtrou kai tou pAULou en rÔme euaggelizomEnôn kai themeliOUntôn tèn ekklêsIan*. This disjunction is made worse by the long build up to the word *euaggEliou*, (1) Matthew (2) amongst the Hebrews (3) in their own dialect (4) a written version (5) produced (6) OF A GOSPEL The last word needs further definition, as in the corrected version. My own experience reading the Greek for the first

time was automatically to read *euaggeliou* in connection with *tou Petrou kai tou Paulou*.

Seventhly, if *euaggeliou* is detached from Peter and Paul, it means Matthew produced a written version (lit. a writing, *graphên*) of A GOSPEL, *euaggeliou*, not THE Gospel, as one would expect (and as the Greek reads in the case of the other Gospels: *ta ... kêrussomena* [Mark], *to ... euaggelion* [Luke], *to euaggelion* [John]). However, if Peter and Paul are attached to *euaggeliou*, then the use of the indefinite is explained: it is actually a written account of A Gospel culled from both Peter and Paul. To have said THE Gospel of Peter and Paul would have put unwanted emphasis on the definite article, i.e. on the identity of the Gospel preached by Peter and Paul as written down in the Gospel, rather than on the source of the information, which is what was intended.

(There is an apparent contradiction between Clement of Alexandria [[see below](#)] and Irenaeus: Clement says the Gospel of Mark was composed during the lifetime of Peter, whereas Irenaeus says that the Gospel of Mark was handed down to posterity after the "exodus" [Gk. *exodos*, meaning here the martyrdom] of Peter and Paul. This is only an apparent contradiction, as it was the "handing down" of the Gospel that Irenaeus says occurred after the "exodus" of Peter, not the actual writing of it. Irenaeus' point is that the Church worldwide still had access to Peter's authentic teaching in the form of the Gospel of Mark, "handed down" to the Christians of succeeding generations, despite Peter's departure. In fact, Peter seems to have been martyred shortly after the writing of the Gospel of Mark. This follows, because Clement of Alexandria connects Mark with Rome in his traditional account of how the Gospel came to be written, and the only time Mark is known to have had contact with Rome was during the time of Paul's imprisonment in the early 60s, i.e. in the same decade, and in the same half of the decade, when Peter and Paul were martyred by Nero. Cp. II Timothy 4. 11, Colossians 4. 10, Philemon 24 and Clement of Alexandria on I Peter 5. 13.)

If it seems strange that Matthew should have been present in Rome at such an early period, prior to the composition of Mark's Gospel during Paul's imprisonment, and during Peter's public ministry, that is prior to c. AD 61-62, and there have

composed the first Gospel narrative, without leaving a trace in the New Testament of his presence in these western regions or of his remarkable literary work, perhaps we should reevaluate a passage in one of Paul's epistles, which has long been held to refer to a different Gospel writer. The passage is II Corinthians 8. 16-24, particularly verse 18:

II Cor. 8. 16-24: "16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. 17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 18 *And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;* 19 *And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind* [for the Greek, click [here](#)]; 20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: 21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. 23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. 24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf."

Since ancient times verse 18 has been taken to be a reference to the Gospel of Luke, and certainly Luke was one of Paul's "fellow-travellers" and was also the author of a Gospel. But if the phrase "praise in the gospel" is in fact an allusion to a written Gospel, this could not be Luke's, for, according to the traditions preserved by Irenaeus and Eusebius (and there is no reason to doubt them) Luke's Gospel was composed after Mark's, which in turn was composed during Paul's imprisonment c. AD 61-62. Here Paul refers to the existence of a Gospel long before his imprisonment, and one which was commended throughout all the churches. According to the traditions referred to, this could only be Matthew's Gospel. In that case, the passage provides evidence of the historical background of Matthew's visit to more westerly regions, viz. that he accompanied Paul for at least part of his last

missionary journey with a commission from the churches of Judaea to attend upon the collection of donations from the Gentile churches meant for the poor brethren in Judaea. Who better for this job than Matthew the tax-collector? Certainly the Jewish brethren, especially those who questioned Paul's motives, would have thought Matthew an acceptable candidate: Luke's interests were too closely bound up with those of Paul himself for him to have been trusted by the anti-Pauline faction in Jerusalem. The statement that this Gospel was highly regarded in *all the churches*, which would include Gentile as well as Jewish churches, suggests further that it had already been translated into Greek. Now, Luke could have been responsible for such a *translation* of Matthew's Gospel, which would have been an obvious boon to Paul's missionary work, and would also have provided Luke with material for his own Gospel later, and in that sense the ancient tradition could be correct that saw in this verse a reference to the literary work of Luke.

An examination of Eusebius' traditions relating to Matthew's Gospel tends to confirm this conclusion. One passage is recorded as a *logos* (traditional account) in Hist. Ecc. III. xxiv. 6:

"For Matthew, having previously preached to Hebrews, as he was about to go to others, committed to writing in his native tongue the Gospel according to himself, and thus supplied through the written word the lack of his own presence to those from whom he was sent forth."

The Hebrews who were the recipients of Matthew's Gospel, according to this passage, do not seem to have had any other means of hearing an eyewitness account of the life story of Jesus except by the personal presence of Matthew. That could hardly be said of the Hebrews in the Jewish homeland, as they were well served in this regard by Peter, James the brother of the Lord, and many other eyewitnesses. It would, however, aptly describe the situation of believing Hebrews in Rome. Their distance from the homeland and their separation from other major centers of the Jewish Diaspora made their need of a written record of the Gospel more urgent. In fact, this passage replicates the sentiments expressed a little later by believers in Rome, according to a tradition recorded by Clement of Alexandria (see [Quotation \[3\]](#) below), when they induced Mark to

put in writing for them the Gospel preached by Peter. As on this similar occasion in Mark's case, the Roman Hebrew Christians seem to have used the limited opportunity they were afforded, presumably whilst he was present in Rome for the Jewish charitable collection, to elicit from Matthew the priceless written account of the life story of Jesus. Note also that this passage refers to Matthew's immediate intention to go amongst the Gentiles ("others"), as he seems, in fact, to have done, according to this understanding of II Cor. 8. 18. The date of Matthew's visit to Rome would have been some time between AD 54 (the death of Claudius and the return of Jews to Rome) and AD 58 (the date of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which does not mention Matthew as present in Rome at that time).

Papias on Matthew's Gospel apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. III. xxxix. 16:

"Matthew, however, made an orderly arrangement of the sayings [Gk. *logia*, viz. of Jesus] in the Hebrew dialect, then each interpreted [or, translated] them as he had the capacity to do so."

Here is a reference to translations of the Gospel of Matthew such as, it is suggested, are referred to in II Cor. 8. 18.

A tradition (*logos*) about Pantaenus of Alexandria apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. V. x. 3:

"The tradition is that he [Pantaenus] found there [in India] that, among some of those there who had acquired a knowledge of Christ, the Gospel according to Matthew had preceded his coming; for Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them and had left them the written account of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which was preserved until the time mentioned [viz. the time of Pantaenus towards the end of the 2nd century AD]."

This passage confirms the inference drawn from II Cor. 8. 18 that the Gospel of Matthew had spread far and wide amongst the Jewish and Gentile churches in the early Apostolic age.

From Origen's Commentaries on the Gospel according to Matthew apud Eusebius Hist. Ecc. VI. xxv. 4:

"Having learnt by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are unquestionable in the Church of God under heaven, that first was written that according to Matthew, who was once a tax-collector but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it for those who from Judaism came to believe, composed in an orderly arrangement in Hebrew letters. Secondly, that according to Mark, who wrote it in accordance with Peter's instructions"

It is remarkable that in all these fragments of tradition the location of the composition is not stated to have been the Jewish homeland, but reference is made only to the nationality or earlier religion of the Jewish believers for whom the Gospel was composed, as would be expected if the Gospel was written amongst the Hebrew Christians at Rome.

Another passage of Irenaeus is held up as evidence of the founding of the Roman Church by Peter and Paul, but that is also based on a mistranslation:

IRENAEUS OF LYONS (2), Adv. Haer. III. iii. 2-3 (the original Greek is no longer extant for §2, only the early Latin translation; the Greek of §3 is found in Eusebius Hist Ecc. V. vi. 1-3, for which click [here](#)):

"2. Quoniam valde longum est in hoc tali volumine omnium ecclesiarum enumerare successiones, maximæ et antiquissimæ et omnibus cognitæ a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo Romæ fundatæ et constitutæ ecclesiae eam quam habet ab apostolis traditionem et annunciatam hominibus fidem, per successiones Episcoporum pervenientem usque ad nos, indicantes, confundimus omnes eos, qui quoquomodo, vel per coecitatem et malam sententiam præterquam oportet colligunt. Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam, propter potentiolem principalitatem, necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos, qui sunt undique fideles; in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique, conservata est ea, quæ est ab

apostolis traditio. 3. [The Greek is preserved from this point on, click [here](#).]

"Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings, by pointing for evidence to that tradition derived from the apostles of the Church founded and organized at Rome, [that] most great, and [that] most ancient [Church], and [that] which was approved to all by* the two most famous Apostles, Peter and Paul, as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For the whole Church is bound to agree with this Church,** on account of a more authentic*** primacy, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere. ****3. The blessed apostles,† then, having founded and built up the Church,†† committed into the hands of Linus the ministerial office of the episcopate. Of this Linus Paul makes mention in the Epistle to Timothy.††† To him succeeded Anenctetus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric, who had both been an eye-witness of the blessed apostles, and had conversed with them, and still had the message of the apostles ringing in his ears and their tradition before his eyes. And he was not the only one, for many were still living at that time who had received instruction from the apostles. In the time of this Clement no small dissension arose amongst the brethren in Corinth, and the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful

letter†††† to the Corinthians, urging them to peace, and reinvigorating their faith and that tradition which it had recently received from the apostles."

NOTES

* Lit. granted recognition to everyone from: omnibus cognitae a.

** Viz. the earliest Church of Rome which ALSO preserved the apostolic faith, that is, under the bishops Linus through Alexander, and, by implication, not any later, "unauthorized", fellowship there, even if it traced its "succession of bishops" back to that early, apostolic, church (see the following note).

*** (This note is strictly incidental to the present discussion, but relevant in other ways. To understand the historical context, the reader should refer to [The First Church of Rome paragraph 45ff.](#)) "More authentic" for the following reasons. Literally or chronologically speaking, the First Church (at Santa Prassede) had the primacy, because it was the earliest church organized in the capital. However, it was not the earliest Church which was ALSO "approved to all by the two most famous Apostles Peter and Paul". The other Church in Rome (at Santa Pudenziana) was the earliest Church to be so accredited. The bishops Linus through Alexander served in that other Church: according to second-century tradition, its first bishop, Linus, had been an acquaintance of Paul (II Tim. 4. 21) and its third and most famous pastor, Clement, had been [ordained by Peter \(probably in Caesarea in Palestine\)](#) and had been a fellow-worker of Paul (Phil. 4. 3). Then Sixtus, originally ordained a bishop by the fifth pastor, Alexander, crossed over to the apostate First Church and became the first bishop there (as opposed to the

heretical "fathers" Simon Magus and Cerdo it had been led by prior to this). Now, Irenaeus accepted that the Bishops of the First Church in Rome in his day could trace their line back, through the apostate Sixtus, to the early, truly apostolic, Bishops, Clement and Linus etc. of Santa Pudenziana. The First Church claimed "apostolic succession" through these early Bishops. For this reason also the First Church preserved amongst them the apostolic writings of Clement (the Letter to the Corinthians). Irenaeus turned this "apostolic succession" idea against the Gnostics of the First Church. He claimed that the literal or chronological primacy of the First Church was trumped by the "more authentic" primacy of the other Church. The latter possessed a true "primacy" of doctrine and life. Theirs was the authentic, original (or "primal"), faith of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Any church which did not have this "more authentic primacy" was an "unauthorized meeting". The truly apostolic primacy of those early Bishops of Rome could be proven by the doctrine preserved till Irenaeus' own day in the Letter of Clement, and by the fact that all the Catholic churches throughout the world agreed with that doctrine, and traced it back to the New Testament Apostles. The First Church was compelled to acknowledge this apostolic doctrine because it recognized the writings of Clement. By this argument, Irenaeus "put to confusion" the Gnostics who found a home in the First Church.

**** The original Greek is preserved from this point on.

† Irenaeus does not name these apostles, and does not use the same designation "most famous" as he does a little earlier (§2) when referring to Peter and Paul. A little later he uses the words "blessed apostles" and "apostles", seemingly, to refer to the apostles in general, whose teaching the next generation reverently

preserved.

†† This could be the local Church in Rome or the Universal Church, though, on balance, the former is more probable.

††† II Timothy 4. 21.

†††† I.e. what is now known as I Clement.

¶ Seemingly the Church in Rome, though some have thought the Church in Corinth is what is referred to. Perhaps it should be translated "which he [viz. Clement] had received"

In the earlier part of this citation (§2), where the passage occurs which juxtaposes the names Peter, Paul and Rome, no Greek original is extant and we have only the poor Latin version to rely on, but even the Latin has been bungled by modern interpreters. The Latin of the phrase in question reads as follows: *maximae et antiquissimae et omnibus cognitae a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo Romae fundatae et constitutae ecclesiae eam quam habet ab apostolis traditionem*, lit. "the tradition which it [viz. the Church] has from the apostles, [namely that] Church [which is] the greatest and most ancient and has been accredited to all by the two most famous apostles, Peter and Paul, founded and constituted at Rome". In this passage, the juxtaposition of the words *Romae fundatae et constitutae ecclesiae*, "the Church founded and constituted at Rome" to the words *a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo*, "by the two most famous apostles, Peter and Paul", has led to the conclusion that Irenaeus is saying the Church in Rome was founded and constituted by Peter and Paul. Though this is a possible interpretation of the Latin, it is more natural to connect the phrase specifying the active agents, viz. *a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis*, with the preceding phrase, *omnibus cognitae*, i.e. "accredited to all by the two most famous apostles, Peter and Paul", as it follows that immediately, whereas, on the other interpretation, the phrase specifying the active agents is separated from the phrase to which it supposedly belongs (*fundatae et constitutae ecclesiae*) by the locative *Romae*. (The use of the past participle *cognitus* with the dative, comparable to *omnibus cognitae* here, meaning "known,

acknowledged, approved to [one]", is attested in the [Perseus online Lewis-Short Latin Dictionary](#), s.v. *cognosco* III. B. 2.) Those who wish to hold doggedly to the less probable interpretation, in order to use this text as evidence of Peter's personal presence in the city, will have to prove further that Peter and Paul founded and constituted the Church in Rome by going to Rome themselves, for, as we have already seen, Dionysius of Corinth indicates by his particular phraseology that the founding (or "planting") and constituting (or "teaching") of a Church could be done at a distance. It is remarkable that Eusebius failed to preserve the original Greek of this passage, though he did cite what would be, on the Petrine theory, a less significant passage immediately following it, and was careful otherwise to cite any passage from Irenaeus (and other writers) which marked important milestones in the history of the early Church. His omission is incomprehensible if the passage in the original Greek did actually refer, or even could have been understood as referring, to a founding of the Church in Rome by Peter and Paul.

[3] CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

(1) c. AD 200 (from *Adumbrationes*, a translation into Latin, ascribed to Cassiodorus, of Clement's biblical commentaries, written originally in Greek, this from the commentary on I Peter, 5. 13, "Marcus, my son, saluteth you"):

"Marcus, Petri sectator, praedicante Petro evangelium palam Romae coram quibusdam Caesareanis equitibus et multa Christi testimonia proferente, petitus ab eis, ut possent quae dicebantur memoriae commendare, scripsit ex his, quae a Petro dicta sunt, evangelium quod secundum Marcum vocitatur."

"Mark, the adherent of Peter, whilst Peter, by his preaching, was bringing the Gospel to public attention in Rome amongst certain noblemen* of Caesar's [household], along with

many evidences of Christ's authenticity,** [Mark, I say,], being requested by them*** to provide a means whereby they could commit to memory what had been communicated verbally, wrote, based on what had been communicated verbally by Peter, the Gospel which is ascribed to Mark."

NOTES

* Latin: equites, lit. knights.

** Lit.: "Mark, the adherent of Peter, whilst Peter, [as he was] preaching, was bringing to public knowledge in Rome before certain noblemen of Caesar the gospel and many evidences of Christ" This translation reads both euangelium and testimonia as objects of the verb proferente, rather than euangelium as the object of praedicante.

*** Viz. the noblemen.

According to Clement of Alexandria (as quoted loosely by Eusebius of Caesarea [see below] and in the Latin translation ascribed to Cassiodorus [above]), the writing of Mark's Gospel came about in the following way: Mark wrote down his account of Peter's public preaching at the request of certain Roman noblemen who had heard in Rome testimonies of the great miracles performed in Peter's ministry. Peter himself was made aware of Mark's literary endeavor by a spiritual revelation (implying, if not demanding, Peter's absence from the scene of composition) and approved it.

The best representation of Clement's actual words is found in what is believed to be Cassiodorus' translation into Latin (above) of the original Greek work of Clement, which was a commentary on some of the New Testament Epistles (the so-called Catholic Epistles). This translation is called *Adumbrationes*. Some think it formed part of the larger work known as *Hypotyposesis*, which was Clement's commentary on the books of the whole Bible. The tradition recorded here in *Adumbrationes* is identical to the one Eusebius paraphrases from the *Hypotyposesis*, but in this case we have the advantage of possessing a direct translation of Clement's words into Latin rather than Eusebius' paraphrase.

The idea that this passage provides evidence of Peter's presence in Rome has arisen by the juxtaposition of the word translated "in Rome" (*Romae*) to the phrase about Peter's preaching. The Latin would indeed allow the kind of translation which is favored by the majority of modern commentators: "... as he [Peter] was preaching publicly [*palam*] in Rome before [*coram*] certain noblemen of Caesar's household, and was providing many testimonies of the truth of Christ" On this, the modern, popular, interpretation, Peter is present in Rome preaching. However, the translation offered above is equally viable, from a linguistic point of view, and has other recommendations in its favor.

The preferred translation envisages a situation in which Peter's public preaching, attended by miraculous demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's power, has brought to the attention of certain noblemen in Rome the claims of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On this interpretation, the emphasis is not on Peter's dealings with Rome, but on Mark's (we may presume, during the time of Peter's continuing, public, ministry, and of Paul's imprisonment, as hinted at in the New Testament, II Timothy 4. 11, Colossians 4. 10, Philemon 24). I.e. Mark, perhaps during a visit to Rome in the 60s, was requested by the Roman noblemen to write an account of Christ's ministry, based on the message he himself had heard from the lips of Peter. Understood like this, the passage implies Peter was absent from Rome. It accords with the historical evidence of the New Testament, connecting Mark with Rome at the time of Paul's imprisonment and during the public ministry of Peter, whereas the popular interpretation introduces the idea, unattested in the New Testament, that Peter was personally present in Rome.

This rather weighty, historical, consideration is one reason why the passage should be translated along the lines suggested here. Another is the context of the passage. The Latin being ambiguous, and the original Greek no longer extant, except as it can be reconstructed from the paraphrase of Eusebius, the context must be conclusive as to which interpretation best represents the original.

The wider context is preserved by Eusebius in his paraphrase of Clement's *Hypotyposesis* in the passage immediately following the reference to the

composition of Mark's Gospel. This context makes plain that Peter required to be shown the whole of what had transpired between the noblemen and Mark BY A VISION OR SPIRITUAL REVELATION, and that, in turn, implies, if not demands, that he was absent from the scene of the original request put to Mark by the noblemen in Rome, and from the scene of Mark's subsequent writing activity, whether that was in Rome or not. The context is brought out in both the following paraphrases of the Hypotyposes by Eusebius.

(2) A loose rendition of Clement's words is found in Eusebius Hist. Ecc. II. xiv. 5 - xv. 2 (for the Greek, click [here](#)): EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA PARAPHRASING CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (A): (The emphases in this translation, represented by CAPITALS, are my own) "{First Eusebius tells the story of Simon Magus and his arrival in and worship at Rome:} 14. [5] ... But this did not last long. [6] For immediately, during the reign of Claudius, the all-good and gracious Providence, which watches over all things, leads Peter, that strongest and greatest of the apostles, and the one who on account of his virtue was the speaker for all the others, against* Rome as against** some great destroyer of natural life. He it was who like a noble commander of God, clad in divine armor,*** [earlier] carried off the precious merchandise of the light of the understanding from the East to those who dwelt in the West,**** proclaiming the light itself, and the Word which brings salvation to souls, and preaching the kingdom of heaven. 15. [1] So, then, THROUGH THE VISIT OF THE DIVINE WORD TO THEM,† the power of Simon [Magus] was extinguished, and immediately was destroyed along with the man himself. And such a RAY OF GODLINESS shone forth on the minds of Peter's hearers,†† that they were not satisfied with the once hearing or with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with all manner of entreaties importuned Mark, to whom the Gospel is ascribed, he being the companion of Peter, that he would leave in writing a record of the teaching which had been delivered to them verbally; and did not let the man alone till they prevailed upon him; and so to them we owe the Scripture called the Gospel by Mark. [2] On learning what had been done THROUGH THE REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT,††† it is said that the apostle [Peter] was delighted with the enthusiasm of the men, and sanctioned the composition for reading in the Churches. Clement gives the narrative in the sixth

book of the Hypotyposes,†††† and with him agrees the bishop of Hierapolis named Papias. And Mark is mentioned by Peter in his first epistle which THEY SAY he¶¶ put into an ordered form¶¶¶ in Rome itself, as is indicated by the latter himself, when he calls the city, by a figure, Babylon, as he does in the following words: "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.""

NOTES

* Gk. *epi*, with the accusative, "against" or "in opposition to" Rome, not "to" or even "toward" Rome, as is clear from the immediately following phrase. Almost identical wording is used in Hist. Ecc. VII. xxvii. 2, relating to the ecclesiastical opposition offered to Paul of Samosata the Bishop of Antioch: (for the Greek click [here](#)) "But the rest of the pastors of the churches, different ones from different places, AS THOUGH AGAINST A DESTROYER (Gk. *ὁς ἐπὶ λυμῶνα*, the same words as in the paraphrase of Clement) OF THE FLOCK OF CHRIST, gathered together in synods, every one of them IN OPPOSITION TO (*epi*) ANTIOCH, brooking no delay." This passage, too, has been understood as indicating a physical movement to Antioch, but the idea that all the bishops gathered physically to Antioch is inherently improbable, given the difficulty of movement in those days (second half of the third century AD), and rendered more unlikely by Eusebius' comment a little later on in the passage (VII. xxviii. 2) that the synods occurred "frequently on different occasions". The context of the words in this case is revealing. These synods were assembled to oppose Paul of Samosata who had adopted, as bishop of Antioch, the doctrine that the heretic Artemon (or Artemas) had originally propounded in Rome in the late second to early third century. (It was even alleged that this heresy of Artemon was, in some form or another, the doctrine espoused by ALL the leaders of the First Church of Rome from the time of the Apostles up to the days of Bishop Victor in the second half of the second century, Anonymous Treatise against the Heresy of Artemon, apud Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. xxviii. 3.) That, presumably, is why the city name in the case of Antioch is treated by Eusebius as if it was a personal enemy of the Catholics. It was the RECOGNIZED BISHOP of Antioch and the WHOLE CHURCH of Antioch under him that the Catholic bishops were opposed to, not simply a lone heretic or a single, heretical, congregation. The similar wording in Eusebius'

paraphrase of Clement suggests a similar situation (Eusebius himself being aware of the connection between early Roman Artemonism and the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, Hist. Ecc. V. xxviii. 1): that Peter organized opposition in the Catholic Church to the whole of the First Church in Rome which had gone into Artemonizing heresy under the leadership of Simon Magus. The phraseology is Eusebius' way of pointing out the parallel between the Monarchian heresy of Paul of Samosata that was still a danger in his day and the ancient Gnostic heresy of Simon Magus.

** Gk. *epi*, with the accusative.

*** Note the similar, martial, imagery in Cyril of Jerusalem ([see below](#)), and Cyril describes Peter's contest with Simon as a SPIRITUAL battle conducted through the power of prayer, whilst in the Apostolic Constitutions ([see below](#)), the spiritual battle is prosecuted at a remove from the scene of Simon's activity.

**** Seemingly a reference to the conversion of Cornelius.

† Viz. to the Romans; not "through the visit of PETER to them", but through the visit of the WORD or message of Peter to them, suggesting indirect transmission of this Word to Rome, as in the Apostolic Constitutions.

†† A rather flowery and vague phrase, but again emphasizing the transmission of the message, not the personal presence, of Peter.

††† Implying, if not demanding, the absence of Peter from the scene of the action in Rome.

†††† Here Eusebius adds a few other items of information not derived from Clement, but of relevance because they relate to the same verse, I Peter 5. 13, that Clement is commenting on.

¶ Mark or Peter? Mark, apparently, as a reference is made in the next phrase to the "latter" [Gk. *touton*], meaning Peter, which implies this earlier unidentified "he" is the former, viz. Mark.

¶¶ Gk. *Suntaxai*, in this case, perhaps a reference to the translation of the epistle from Peter's Aramaic to Greek and the improvement of the syntax and literary structure.

A version of the same source drawn on by Eusebius or an alternative form of the text of Eusebius itself is preserved in a citation of Sophronius (fl. early 7th century AD) on the Life of Mark preserved in the 1550 Textus Receptus of Stephanus (p. 58), as an introduction to the Gospel of Mark. The wording of this excerpt is almost identical to that of the Latin translation of Cassiodorus, and seems to reproduce

some of the original Greek of Clement (for the Greek click [here](#)):

Mark, a disciple and interpreter of Peter, since he had been a hearer of Peter's preaching, having been (so) requested in Rome by the brethren, put into a brief ordered form a Gospel. Peter, having prayed about this, approved it, and gave it forth with his authentication to be read out in the Church. So Clement wrote in the sixth book of the Hypotyposesis. Also Papias the bishop of Hierapolis preserves a record of this Mark, as does Peter in the First Epistle, designating Rome symbolically by the name Babylon. 'The Church which is in Babylon,' he says, 'along with the elect (lady), salutes you, as does Mark my son.'

In this citation the words "in Rome" are clearly associated with Mark, not Peter, no location is specified for Peter's "preaching," and the subject of the verb *suntassô* ("put into ordered form"), applied to the written Gospel, is Mark, not Peter, which tends to confirm the interpretation of the original of Clement suggested here.

(3) Another paraphrase of the same account of Clement is found in Eusebius (with my emphasis in capitals): Hist. Ecc. VI. xiv. 4-7 (for the Greek, click [here](#)): EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA PARAPHRASING CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (B): "Again, in the same books [Hypotyposesis] Clement has set down a tradition which he had received from the elders before him, in regard to the order of the Gospels, to the following effect. He says that the Gospels containing the genealogies were written first, and that the Gospel according to Mark received this formalization from Peter,* before witnesses in Rome, when he had [already] preached the Word and given forth the Gospel by the Spirit.** Those present [there], being numerous, entreated Mark, inasmuch as he had attended him from an early period, and remembered what had been said, to write down what had been spoken. On his composing the Gospel, he handed it to those who had made the request to him; WHICH COMING TO PETER'S KNOWLEDGE,*** he made no vigorous attempt either to hinder or

encourage."

NOTES

* A stop is usually placed after "formalization" (*oikonomia*). In this translation, the stop - which has no ancient authority - is removed. Retaining the stop allows (though it does not necessitate) an interpretation which represents Peter as present in Rome, contrary to the implication of the last phrase in this citation. With the stop retained, the passage reads: " the Gospel according to Mark received this formalization: Peter having preached the Word to popular approval [or, less precisely, "publicly", Gk. *dêmosiai*] at Rome and by the Spirit proclaimed the Gospel, those present [there], being numerous etc. ..."

** A comparison with the earlier paraphrase in Eusebius, where the events in Rome are said to have been transmitted to Peter by a "revelation of the SPIRIT," suggests that in this paraphrase, too, Eusebius is reproducing the account of the indirect, SPIRITUAL, not physical, contact Peter had with Rome in the original work of Clement.

*** Again implying Peter's absence from the scene of action in Rome in the underlying tradition.

A citation from Theophylact, Archbishop of Bulgaria, in Stephanus' *Textus Receptus* 1550 (p. 58), confirms the visionary nature of Peter's involvement and the presence of Mark in Rome (not Peter) as a companion of Paul when he wrote the Gospel (for the Greek, click [here](#)):

The Gospel according to Mark was put together in Rome ten years after the Ascension of Christ. For this Mark was a disciple of Peter, and Peter calls him his 'son', evidently meaning his spiritual son. He was also called John, and nephew of Barnabas. He was, furthermore, a fellow-traveller with Paul - though he mostly used to accompany Peter - and accompanied (him) in Rome. Now the believers in Rome requested him not only to preach without writing, but also to compose for them in writing the polity according to Christ. And so, persuaded with difficulty by them, he put it down in writing. Then it was revealed to Peter from God that Mark had put a Gospel into writing.

And thus, having seen it, and having confirmed it as the truth, he afterwards despatched him as bishop to Egypt.

This SPIRITUAL contact of Peter with events in Rome in Clement of Alexandria is reminiscent of an account in the Apostolic Constitutions of how Peter defeated Simon Magus in Rome. Peter is only specifically located at Caesarea in Palestine, in this passage of the Apostolic Constitutions, but by the Spirit (i.e. a vision) he is made aware of the false miracle of levitation that Simon Magus is at that very point in time performing in Rome, and, by the Spirit, Peter binds the demonic power working in Simon Magus and causes him to fall down to earth, thus ruining Simon Magus' reputation and his health. It is significant that Eusebius mentions Peter's routing of Simon Magus in the same context as the account which he paraphrases from Clement of Alexandria, and the account from Clement likewise implies the physical absence of Peter from Rome as well as his spiritual interest in events going on there. There seems, in other words, to be a connection between Clement's tradition and that incorporated in the Apostolic Constitutions. Here, precisely as in the *Adumbrationes* and Eusebius' paraphrase, Peter is WELL KNOWN and has PUBLIC APPROVAL in Rome, and is also physically absent from the scene of action in Rome.

(The account in the Apostolic Constitutions [perhaps third century AD] reads as follows [Book VI. viii]: ".... And Simon [Magus] meeting me Peter, first at *Caesarea Stratonis* {Caesarea is the only location in this account specifically represented as being frequented by Peter}, where the faithful Cornelius, a Gentile, believed on the Lord Jesus by me {the Roman centurion Cornelius, of the "Italic Company", was converted at Caesarea through a *vision* that appeared to Peter, Acts 10. 1 - 11. 18}, endeavored to pervert the word of God; there being with me the holy children, Zacchaeus, who was once a publican, and Barnabas; and Nicetas and Aquila, brethren of Clement the bishop and citizen of Rome {note the potential connection between Rome and Caesarea through these brethren}, who was the disciple of Paul, our fellow-apostle and fellow-helper in the Gospel. I thrice discoursed before them with him concerning the True Prophet, and concerning the monarchy of God {the tradition preserved in a quasi-orthodox form

here, relating to the disputation between Peter and Simon Magus on the True Prophet, was expanded in the early third century AD, by a heretical writer with Elkesaite leanings, into the pseudo-Clementine romance, see below, [Quotation \[6\]](#); and when I had overcome him by the power of the Lord, and had put him to silence, I drove him away into Italy {in this more orthodox tradition, there is a geographical separation between Peter, seemingly in Caesarea, and Simon, in Italy}. [ix] Now when he was in Rome {not "when he and I were in Rome"}, he mightily disturbed the Church, and subverted many, and brought them over to himself, and astonished the Gentiles with his skill in magic, insomuch that once, in the middle of the day, he went into their theater, and commanded the people that they should bring me also by force into the theater, and promised he would fly in the air; and when all the people were in suspense at this, *I prayed by myself* {Peter is absent from the Roman theater, in this tradition, but is in contact with the situation spiritually}. And indeed he was carried up into the air by demons, and did fly on high in the air, saying that he was returning into heaven, and that he would supply them with good things from thence. And the people making acclamations to him, as to a God, *I stretched out my hands to heaven, with my mind* {still Peter is spiritually apprised of the situation}, and besought God through the Lord Jesus to throw down this pestilent fellow, and to destroy the power of those demons that made use of the same for the seduction and perdition of men, to dash him against the ground, and bruise him, but not to kill him. And then, *fixing my eyes on Simon* {implying, in the light of the earlier statements about Peter's whereabouts, that Peter is here in a visionary state}, I said to him: "If I be a man of God, and a real apostle of Jesus Christ, and a teacher of piety, and not of deceit, as thou art, Simon, I command the wicked powers of the apostate from piety, by whom Simon the magician is carried, to let go their hold, that he may fall down headlong from his height, that he may be exposed to the laughter of those that have been seduced by him." When I had said these words, Simon was deprived of his powers, and fell down headlong with a great noise, and was violently dashed against the ground, and had his hip and ankle-bones broken; and the people cried out, saying, "There is one only God, whom Peter rightly preaches in truth." {In this tradition, as in the less dramatic account of Clement of Alexandria, the Romans have certainly *heard* of Peter and his message, and his

preaching has PUBLIC APPROVAL, the approval of the assembled *dêmos*, or people, of Rome} And many left him; but some who were worthy of perdition continued in his wicked doctrine. And after this manner the most atheistical heresy of the Simonians was first established in Rome; and the devil wrought by the rest of the false apostles also."

Similarly in the apocryphal Vercelli Acts of Peter, which go back to a heretical, Docetic, source *c.* AD 200, Peter is shown what Simon is doing in Rome by a vision given to him in Jerusalem (*op. cit.* ch. v) "[V.] And as they [the few faithful Christians left in Rome after Simon had deceived the majority] prayed and fasted, God was already teaching Peter at Jerusalem of that which should come to pass. For whereas the twelve years which the Lord Christ had enjoined upon him were fulfilled, he showed him a vision after this manner, saying unto him: Peter, that Simon the sorcerer whom thou didst cast out of Judaea, convicting him, hath again come before thee (prevented thee) at Rome. And that shalt thou know shortly (or, and that thou mayest know in few words): for all that did believe in me hath Satan made to fall by his craft and working: whose Power Simon approveth himself to be." In these apocryphal Acts Peter then makes his way immediately to Rome.

Another account, clearly from a similar line of tradition, is summarized as follows by Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, VI. 14f.:

"14. The inventor of all heresy was Simon Magus: that Simon, who in the Acts of the Apostles thought to purchase with money the unsaleable grace of the Spirit, and heard the words, Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, and the rest: concerning whom also it is written, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. This man, after he had been cast out by the Apostles, came to Rome, and gaining over one Helena a harlot, was the first that dared with blasphemous mouth to say that it was himself who appeared on Mount Sinai as the Father, and afterwards appeared among the Jews, not in real flesh but in seeming, as Christ Jesus, and afterwards as the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send as the Paraclete. And he so deceived the City of Rome that Claudius set up his statue, and wrote beneath it, in the language of the Romans, "Simoni Deo Sancto," which being interpreted

signifies, "To Simon the Holy God." 15. As the delusion was extending {as it was extending, not as it finally flourished in Rome}, Peter and Paul, a noble pair, chief rulers of the Church, arrived {i.e. where it was extending: Rome is not specifically mentioned here} and set the error right; and when the supposed God Simon wished to shew himself off, they straightway shewed him as a corpse. For Simon promised to rise aloft to heaven, and came riding in a demons' chariot on the air; but the servants of God fell on their knees, and having shewn that agreement of which Jesus spoke, that If two of you shall agree concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done unto them, they launched the weapon of their concord in prayer {here again it is very clearly a SPIRITUAL battle, and note the martial imagery as in [Eusebius, paraphrase \(A\)](#)} against Magus, and struck him down to the earth. And marvelous though it was, yet no marvel. For Peter was there, who carrieth the keys of heaven: and nothing wonderful, for Paul was there, who was caught up to the third heaven, and into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful far a man to utter {again the SPIRITUAL means of combat is emphasized}. These brought the supposed God down from the sky to earth, thence to be taken down to the regions below the earth. In this man first the serpent of wickedness appeared; but when one head had been cut off, the root of wickedness was found again with many heads.")

[4] GAIUS (or CAIUS) OF ROME

c. AD 200 (apud Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. II. xxv. 7, for the Greek, click [here](#)):

"And I can show the trophies* of the apostles.** For if you choose to go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way, you will find the trophies of those who founded this church .***"

NOTES

* Greek *tropaia* = memorials, or, more specifically, sepulchral memorials.

** He refers only to unnamed "apostles" as founders of the Church of Rome, as Irenaeus does ([§2 above](#), Adv. Haer. III. iii. 3); he does not

mention Peter and Paul.

*** Viz. the First Church of Rome.

Gaius says that "trophies" of the apostles who founded the Roman church were located on the Vatican Hill and on the Ostian Way in Rome in Gaius' own day. This is anti-Montanist apologetic, therefore presumably Montanists were disputing the apostolic origin or authority of the First Church and Gaius was defending it against them.

Eusebius introduces this quotation with the following statement (ibid. II. xxv. 5-6): "It is, therefore, *found on enquiry* that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was impaled [or, crucified] under Nero {here he details the traditional time, but not the location, of Peter's martyrdom}. This information gains credit from *the designation "of Peter" and "of Paul" which has clung to the cemeteries of that place TO THE PRESENT DAY* (Gk. *kai pistoutai ge tēn 'istorian 'ē Petrou kai Paulou eis deuro kratēsasa epi tōn autothi koimētērion prosrēsis*), and no less from Gaius, a member of the Church, who arose under Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, who, in a published disputation with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian [or, Montanist] heresy, speaks as follows concerning *the places where the sacred corpses of the aforesaid apostles ARE laid* (Gk. *katatetheitai*)" Note the tense here. Eusebius says Gaius is referring to the places in Rome where the tombs of Peter and Paul stood IN EUSEBIUS' OWN DAY (c. AD 324). That may well be true, if, as seems most probable, the bodies of Peter and Paul were transferred to Rome in the middle of the third century AD (see further on this below); but Eusebius cites no evidence whatsoever that in Gaius' day (c. AD 200) there were tombs of Peter and Paul in those locations, only, as Gaius says, "trophies" of the UNNAMED "apostles who founded" the Church of Rome.

Eusebius' argument concerns the chronology, not the location, of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul. He expressly quotes Gaius and Dionysius of Corinth to confirm the information that Paul was martyred under Nero - the location, Rome, in this case specified - and that Peter likewise was impaled or crucified under Nero - *no location specified in his case*. He points to the cemeteries in Rome which in his day were named after Peter and Paul and cites Gaius as a witness that these cemeteries marked the

burial-places of the earliest, martyred, (and unidentified,) missionaries to the city. In the immediately preceding section (II. xxv. 4) he cites the testimony of Tertullian (a Greek rendering of Apol. 5) that this first assault on Christianity in Rome was the work of Nero. He proceeds in the immediately following section to cite Dionysius of Corinth [1] to the effect that Peter and Paul suffered contemporaneously. His reasoning is that the cemeteries in Rome on the Vatican and the Ostian Way mark the burial-grounds of the earliest Christians to be martyred in Rome during the reign of Nero and that the traditional designation "of Peter" (the Vatican site) and "of Paul" (the Ostian Way site) CONNECTS the martyrdoms of both Peter and Paul with that period of persecution. No more and no less can be read into Eusebius' words.

Returning now to the citation from Gaius. He refers to the memorials of some otherwise unidentified "apostles" who founded the First Church of Rome. One possibility is that these apostles included Andronicus and Junia, who, at the time when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (c. AD 58), were in prison for the Faith, and may well have been martyred and buried in Rome thereafter. In that case, and later in the third century AD, the Bishop of Rome used the locations of these memorials to reinter the translated bodies of Peter and Paul - where they were when Eusebius wrote this account - as he now wished to promote the two latter as the real apostolic founders of the Roman Church.

The transfer of the Apostles' remains seems to have been a consequence of the Paschal controversy ([see the concluding paragraphs below](#)). It was, apparently, an attempt to provide an apostolic authority for Rome such as the Asians claimed for their churches, evidenced by the presence amongst them of apostolic tombs. Gaius' dispute with the Montanists, whose cult originated in Asia, had also to do with the rivalry between Asia and Rome. One group of Roman Montanists, the adherents of Blastus, even had the same Paschal practice as the Asian churches. Though Gaius' dispute was with a different sect of Montanists, viz. the followers of Proclus, these Montanists also seem to have argued that their Asian practices had an apostolic authority superior to that of Rome, since, like the orthodox Asian Christians, they pointed to the tombs of Philip the Evangelist and his prophetess daughters in Hierapolis as tokens of the antiquity of the Asian

churches (Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. III. xxxi. 4). They seem also to have pointed to the ABSENCE of such apostolic tombs in Rome, and Gaius rebutted their polemic by directing their attention to the sepulchral monuments on the Vatican and the Ostian Way, which he claimed commemorated the "apostles" who founded the Church of Rome. An argument along these lines, however, would have been fatally flawed: apostles like Andronicus and Junia, or the long forgotten founders of the Church in Rome who perished in Nero's holocaust in the Vatican gardens, could hardly be held to have had a doctrinal authority equal or superior to the likes of John and Philip. Hence, of course, the "need", so soon to be answered by the translation of the remains of Peter, for the presence of an apostolic tomb of greater weight.

[5] TERTULLIAN

(1) c. AD 210, De Baptismo iv. 2-4:

"[2] ne quis ergo dicat, 'numquid ipsis enim aquis tinguimur quae tunc in primordio fuerunt?' non utique ipsis, si non ex ea parte ipsis qua genus quidem unum, species vero complures. quod autem generi attributum est etiam in species redundat. [3] ideoque nulla distinctio est mari quis an stagno, flumine an fonte, lacu an alveo diluatur, nec quicquam refert inter eos quos Ioannes in Iordane et quos Petrus in Tiberim* tinxit: nisi si et ille spado quem Philippus inter vias fortuita aqua tint plus salutis aut minus rettulit. [4] igitur omnes aquae de pristina originis praerogativa sacramentum sanctificationis consequuntur invocato deo. supervenit enim statim spiritus de caelis et aquis superest sanctificans eas de semetipso, et ita sanctificatae vim sanctificandi combibunt."

"Let no one say, "Why then, are we, pray, baptized with the very waters which then existed in the first beginning?" Not with those waters, of

course, except in so far as the genus indeed is one, but the species very many. But what is an attribute to the genus reappears likewise in the species. And accordingly it makes no difference whether a man be washed in a sea or a pool, a stream or a fount, a lake or a trough; nor is there any distinction between those whom John baptized in the Jordan and those whom Peter baptized in Tiberias,** unless withal the eunuch whom Philip baptized in the midst of his journeys with chance water, derived [therefrom] more or less of salvation than others. All waters, therefore, in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origin, do, after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification; for the Spirit immediately supervenes from the heavens, and rests over the waters, sanctifying them from Himself; and being thus sanctified, they imbibe at the same time the power of sanctifying."

NOTES

* The reading of the oldest witness, Codex Trecensis 523, saec. xij, etc., according to the modern editors; var.: Tiberi. The suggested reading is Tiberiada.

** Reading Tiberiada, "Tiberias", instead of the impossible Tiberim, "Tiber", which latter is held to support the notion that Peter was physically present in Rome.

According to the commonly accepted reading, Tertullian represents Peter as having baptized in the "Tiber", meaning the River Tiber which flows through Rome. Even if the text is read "Tiber", that is a different thing from saying that Peter baptized in Rome itself, because there were a number of cities located on the banks of the Tiber. However, the context of the phrase demands a different reading. Firstly, the other locations Tertullian refers to in the same passage are biblical, New Testament ones, so the Tiber would, to that extent, be out of place. Secondly, and conclusively, the location referred to in this instance COULD NOT BE A

RIVER, but must be some other type of water source. This follows, because the statement in which it occurs is put forward by Tertullian as an elucidation or illustration of his argument that there is no essential difference between the various kinds of water source which might be used for baptism, whether river, fountain, lake or sea, or, as he goes on to say, that there is NO DIFFERENCE between (1) John's baptizing in the River Jordan and (2) Peter's baptizing in Tiberias (so we should read it), or (3) Philip's baptizing in a pond or some such chance water by the road. The reading in the second example could not be "Tiber", because the Tiber, like the preceding Jordan, is a RIVER, and it would be a non-sequitur. Tiberias makes perfect sense in the context, as it is an inland LAKE, Lake Tiberias, otherwise known as the Sea of Galilee. There is no difference, Tertullian is saying, between the RIVER that John baptized in and the LAKE that Peter baptized in, or between those and the CHANCE WATER by the roadside in which Philip baptized the eunuch (THREE DIFFERENT water sources). The Roman name Tiberias for this stretch of water occurs in the New Testament, as one of the places frequented by Peter. There is nothing, of course, in the New Testament connecting Peter with the Tiber.

The reading of the oldest witness to the text of Tertullian's *De Baptismo*, Codex Trecensis 523, saec. xij, as reproduced in modern editions, is "in Tiberim" ("into the Tiber"), which could easily have arisen from an original reading "in Tiberiada" ("into Tiberias"): in medieval manuscripts the cases were commonly represented simply by a stroke over the last letter of a word, the appropriate vocalisation of the case being expected to be supplied by the reader, so that an original "in Tiberiada", as it would appear if written plene, would normally be written "in Tiberī". (I have not had the opportunity to examine Codex Trecensis 523, but it is possible that the case is actually represented in that MS by a stroke; if so, it would not be the first time that a faulty reading, and with it a theological misinterpretation, has arisen through the carelessness of modern editors.) Now, this same, abbreviated, scribal form could also be read plene as "in Tiberim", "into the Tiber". A poor copy with a faint stroke will further have produced the variant "in Tiberi", which also occurs. A medieval scribe could be forgiven for reading the abbreviated scribal form as the accusative of the common Latin name Tiber (Tiberim), rather than as the unusual and uncouth-sounding Greek accusative of the name

Tiberias (Tiberiada), precisely, in part, because of the abundance of medieval myth connecting Peter with Rome.

Another passage in Tertullian is supposed to provide evidence of Peter's physical presence in Rome:

TERTULLIAN (2) Praescriptio Haereticorum xxxvi. 1 - xxxvii. 2:

xxxvi. [1] Age iam, qui uoles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuae, percurre ecclesias apostolicas apud quas ipsae adhuc cathedrae apostolorum suis locis praesident, apud quas ipsae authenticae litterae eorum recitantur sonantes uocem et repraesentantes faciem uniuscuiusque. [2] Proxima est tibi Achaia, habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia, habes Philippos; si potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum; si autem Italiae adiaces, habes Romam unde nobis quoque auctoritas praesto est. [3] Ista quam felix ecclesia cui totam doctrinam apostoli cum sanguine suo profuderunt, ubi Petrus passioni dominicae adaequatur, ubi Paulus Ioannis exitu coronatur, ubi apostolus Ioannes posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur; [4] uideamus quid didicerit, quid docuerit: cum Africanis quoque ecclesiis contesseratis, [5] unum Deum Dominum nouit, creatorem uniuersitatis, et Christum Iesum ex uirgine Maria filium Dei creatoris, et carnis resurrectionem, legem et prophetas cum euangelicis et apostolicis litteris miscet, et inde potat fidem; eam aqua signat, sancto spiritu uestit, eucharistia pascit, martyrium exhortatur et ita aduersus hanc institutionem neminem recipit. [6] Haec est institutio, non dico iam quae futuras haereses praenuntiabat sed de qua haereses prodierunt. Sed non sunt ex illa, ex quo factae sunt aduersus illam. [7] Etiam de oliuae nucleo mitis et optimae et necessariae

asper oleaster oritur; etiam de papauere ficus gratissimae et suauiissimae uentosa et uana caprificus exsurgit. [8] Ita et haereses de nostro frutice, non nostro genere, ueritatis grano sed mendacio siluestres. xxxvii. [1] Si haec ita se habent, ut ueritas nobis adiudicetur, quicumque in ea regula incedimus quam ecclesiae ab apostolis, apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo tradidit, constat ratio propositi nostri definientis non esse admittendos haereticos ad ineundam de scripturis prouocationem quos sine scripturis probamus ad scripturas non pertinere. [2] Si enim haeretici sunt, christiani esse non possunt, non a Christo habendo quod de sua electione sectati haereticorum nomine admittunt.

"(36) Come now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi; (and there too) you have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there comes even into our own hands [viz. at Carthage] the very authority (of apostles themselves). How blessed is THAT CHURCH FOR WHICH*† apostles poured forth the complete doctrine along with their blood, in that location where** Peter suffers a death like that of the Lord, in that location where** Paul is crowned with a departure [to higher realms identical to that] of John [the Baptist], in that location where** the Apostle John, after being immersed in burning oil and suffering no ill

effects, is remitted to an island [exile]. Let us see what kind of teaching she will have received, and what doctrine she will have promulgated; in common league with the Churches of Africa, she recognizes One Lord God, the Creator of the universe, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator; and the Resurrection of the flesh; the law and the prophets she unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles, from which she drinks in her faith. This she seals with the water (of baptism), arrays with the Holy Ghost, feeds with the Eucharist, cheers with martyrdom, and against such a discipline thus (maintained) she admits no gainsayer. This is the discipline which I no longer say foretold that heresies should come, but from which they proceeded. However, they were not OF HER, † because they were opposed TO HER. † Even the rough wild-olive arises from the germ of THE FRUITFUL, RICH, AND GENUINE OLIVE; † also from the seed of the MELLOWEST AND SWEETEST FIG † there springs the empty and useless wild-fig. In the same way heresies, too, come from OUR PLANT, † although not of OUR † kind; (they come) from THE GRAIN OF TRUTH, † but, owing to their falsehood, they have only wild leaves to show. (37) Since this is the case, in order that the truth may be adjudged to belong to US, † "as many as walk according to the rule," which THE CHURCHES † have handed down from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God, the reason of OUR † position is clear, when it determines that heretics ought not to be allowed to challenge an appeal to the Scriptures, since WE, † without the Scriptures, prove that they have nothing to do with the Scriptures. For as they are heretics, they cannot be true Christians, because it is not from Christ that they

get that which they pursue of their own mere choice, and from the pursuit incur and admit the name of heretics."

NOTES

* Latin: *Ista quam felix ecclesia cui*

** Latin: *ubi.*

† My emphasis.

This quotation from Tertullian, which is supposed to demonstrate Peter's martyrdom in Rome, refers only to a general "that" [Latin: *ista*] Church, not specifically the Roman Church at all. The context proves Tertullian is talking about the Universal Church, or, rather, the Universal Church in its several local manifestations. The whole point of his enumeration of different apostolic churches at the beginning of the passage is to show that the Universal Church is a united witness to Truth, in contradistinction to the heretical sects. He happens to mention the Roman Church second but last in his enumeration; then he mentions the Carthaginian Church (*nobis*, "us", meaning Tertullian's own Church in Carthage), which is able to resort to Rome, at no great distance from Carthage, as a witness to apostolic truth. Then he says "How blessed is THAT CHURCH FOR WHICH [*Ista quam felix ecclesia cui*] apostles poured forth the complete doctrine along with their blood, in that location where [*ubi*] Peter suffers a death like that of the Lord, in that location where [*ubi*] Paul is crowned with a departure [to higher realms identical to that] of John [the Baptist], in that location where [*ubi*] the Apostle John, after being immersed in burning oil and suffering no ill effects, is remitted to an island [exile]. Let us see what kind of teaching she will have received, and what doctrine she will have promulgated; in common league with the Churches of Africa, she recognizes One Lord God ... etc." The Latin *ista* looks forward to the *cui* ("that ... for which"), rather than back to the Roman Church or some other Church Tertullian has already mentioned. Then also the repetition of the word *ubi*, emphasizes the idea that the same doctrine is to be found in the various apostolic churches WHERESOEVER located. Tertullian exhorts his readers to examine, with him, the kind of doctrine that Church "WILL HAVE" (pluperfect tense) received and promulgated, viz. in whatever location they might choose to look, rather than the kind of

doctrine a single, specific, Church (e.g. Rome) actually HAS taught or DOES teach. The whole drift of Tertullian's argument is AGAINST the idea that a single Church in a single location (e.g. Rome) is to be accepted as the sole true witness to the Apostolic faith. Tertullian then proceeds to enumerate the points of doctrine which unite the UNIVERSAL CHURCH or the "Churches" (plural, xxxvii. 1, not any single Church), and which separate this True Universal Church, with which Tertullian himself identifies, from the heretical groups.

[6] THE PSEUDO-CLEMENTINES

at earliest c. AD 200-250 - passim: Peter was personally present in Rome opposing Simon Magus: This is the First Church of Rome's own heretical, Elkesaite-like, tradition, dating from the earlier part of the third century AD, falsely ascribed to the orthodox and highly-respected Bishop Clement of Rome (late first century AD). These heretical writings do clearly represent Peter as being personally present in the capital. They emerged, strange to say, after the originator of the Elkesaite heresy himself arrived in Rome around the turn of the third century AD. Bishop Hippolytus, who was no friend of the corrupt bishops of the First Church of Rome, represents this man as being, even before his arrival in the city, when he lived far away in the Near East, aware of the minutiae of ecclesiastical business in the First Church of Rome, and as having constructed his system as a further development of the heretical system of the Roman bishop Callistus (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 9. 8). This implies he and they operated in the same heretical circles. The myth of Peter's presence in Rome can be traced back to the same, highly dubious, source.

[7] EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

c. AD 324, *Hist. Ecc. III. i. 1-3* (for the Greek, click [here](#)):

"[1] Meanwhile the holy apostles and disciples of our Savior were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to TRADITION,* was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus. [2] Peter APPEARS** to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion; this latter who also ended up in Rome,*** was impaled down on his head,**** he himself having requested that he should suffer in this way. [3] What DO WE NEED TO SAY CONCERNING PAUL,† who preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero? THESE FACTS ARE RELATED BY ORIGEN† in the third volume of his Commentary on Genesis."

NOTES

* Source (a) (refer to the argument below) with my emphasis.

** Source (b) with my emphasis.

*** Source (c). The Greek reads *‘os kai epi telei en ‘Romēi genomenos.*

**** Greek: *aneskolopisthē kata kephalēs.*

† Source (d) with my emphasis.

Eusebius here records that Peter "ended up" in Rome. One point should be clarified straightaway. This passage about Peter is usually cited as a quotation from or paraphrase of Origen, on the basis of the wording of the lines following it. This ascription is not supported by the contextual evidence. Eusebius immediately follows his reference to Peter with a remark of his own, "What do WE NEED TO SAY concerning Paul etc.", and then goes on to explain his diffidence by citing Origen as an already existing authority, viz. for the martyrdom of Paul in Rome under Nero. In other words, Eusebius did not need to say anything about Paul's martyrdom because that had already been dealt with by Origen. So, Origen was talking about Paul, not Peter. (In this case, too, the original text, the text of Origen, has "gone missing".)

The point about this false ascription to Origen is important, because if the statement had been derived from Origen, and it clearly referred to Peter's personal presence in Rome, it would be much more significant than if it were, as it seems to be, an unauthenticated assertion of Eusebius himself. Eusebius lived at a time when the pseudo-Clementine tradition had been current for a half century - he glances at it himself, with a sceptical eye, in Hist. Ecc. III. xxxviii - and the tomb of Peter on the Vatican, confirming popular confidence in that tradition, was, by the time Eusebius wrote, a well-known landmark in the city. The historical significance of a report about Peter's personal presence in Rome, deriving from the milieu of Eusebius himself, would be minimal.

First, then, (a) Eusebius cites a TRADITION mentioning the dispersal of the Apostles to far-off destinations, next (b) comes Eusebius' SURMISE ("Peter APPEARS to have preached ... " etc.) respecting Peter's missionary labours in Asia, which seems to be based on the locations Peter addresses in I Peter 1. 1, then (c) Eusebius asserts, WITHOUT QUOTING ANY AUTHORITY FOR IT, that Peter, who "also ended up in Rome", was impaled or crucified, as he himself had requested, and finally (d) comes the PASSAGE DERIVED FROM ORIGEN regarding the martyrdom of Paul in Rome, to which he gives automatic credit.

It is Eusebius' invariable custom elsewhere in the Ecclesiastical History to qualify his statements about the connection of Peter and Rome with some such phrase as "they say ... ", or by the citation of a respected, traditional, authority. This can be confirmed by an examination of the quotations above from the Ecclesiastical History. In one other case, he does not cite a provably early, ecclesiastical, authority, but refers to a story current in his own day that Philo, the Alexandrian philosopher, had some kind of contact with Peter's circle at Rome in the days of Claudius (II. xvii. 1): "There is also a tradition that he [Philo] at Rome in the reign of Claudius came into the circle of Peter's acquaintance [Gk. *eis 'omilian elthein Petrôî*], since he [Peter] was preaching at that period to some people who [made their way] thither." (For the Greek, click [here](#).) It is highly unlikely that a personal meeting between the two Jews, as well as Peter's public preaching (*kêruttonti*), could have transpired in Rome at the very time when Claudius

had banned all religious or other assembling of Jews in the city, or, alternatively (if the latter part of his reign is what is referred to), at the time when he had expelled all Jews from Rome. Therefore, the contact (*'omilia*), if the story (*logos*) is true in any sense, must have been remote, or, as it says, through the circle of Peter's followers in Rome, who had heard his preaching in Caesarea and subsequently traveled to the capital.

The statement about Peter in the passage under consideration here in Quotation [7] is unusual inasmuch as it is presented by Eusebius as an unauthenticated assertion, resting on no authority, named or unnamed. Also, it uses an ambiguous word to describe Peter's presence in Rome, viz. *genomenos*, the past participle of *gi(g)nomai*. If Eusebius had wanted to say that Peter "came to Rome", he could have said it much clearer than this, using the normal Greek words, *erkhomai*, *aphikneomai*, etc., or *paraginomai*, rather than using *gi(g)nomai*. *Genomenos*, in combination with the preceding words *epi telei*, could mean "having been present at the end", or it could mean something like "having ended up". Now, to say that Peter "ended up" in Rome is not the same as saying that Peter came to Rome in his lifetime. It could just as well mean that Peter remains "ended up" ENTOMBED in Rome, that Rome was, in that sense, Peter's final resting place. Almost certainly that is the meaning Eusebius intended in this passage. It accords with his account earlier in the Ecclesiastical History (II. xxv. 5, see under Quotation [4] above) of how Paul was martyred in Rome, the location of that event being specifically named by Eusebius, and of how Peter was likewise martyred in the reign of Nero, no location in Peter's case being specified by Eusebius, whilst he refers to the fact that both Peter and Paul lay entombed in Rome at the time he was writing. So likewise in this passage, Eusebius cites Origen as his authority for the martyrdom of Paul in Rome (the location specified) under Nero, and Peter's martyrdom is described, without a location being named, whilst Peter is said "also" to have "ended up" in Rome, i.e., on the interpretation suggested here, entombed in Rome. Again in Hist. Ecc. III. xxxi. 1 Eusebius refers to the era and mode of Peter's martyrdom and to the location of his burial in Rome in Eusebius' own day, but says nothing of the location of his martyrdom.

A rather odd expression is used to define the circumstances or manner of Peter's martyrdom. Peter is said to have been crucified *kata kephalês*. *Kata* is a preposition used to describe motion in a downward, slanting direction, and *kephalê* is the word for head, apex, pinnacle, consummation etc. These two words are not the proper way to say that Peter was crucified "upside down", though many modern translators elect to translate them that way. More probable translations are that the Apostle was impaled "down upon (or, into) the head", or, alternatively, "down upon the apex [of the stake]" (crucifixion could be either by impaling or by suspension on a simple stake or by suspension on a stake with cross-beam), or, on the analogy of I Corinthians 11. 4 and LXX Esther 6. 12, "with covered, or bowed and covered, head" (not "head-downwards"!).

Now Eusebius, contrary to his invariable custom, cites no traditional authority for this assertion, yet speaks of it as though it were a well-known fact. He also comments that Peter had "himself requested that he should suffer in this way" – again as though it were a well-known fact. The failure to cite an authority, named or unnamed, for these assertions is explicable if there was actually nothing new in them that needed substantiation. For the first assertion, this would be the case if Eusebius was relying on his earlier reference to the impalement or crucifixion of Peter in Hist. Ecc. II. xxv. 5; there he says that Peter and Paul "are learned by enquiry" (*'istorountai*) to have suffered under Nero, Peter by impalement or crucifixion (*anaskolopizô*, as in this passage). As regards the idea that Peter requested to suffer like his Master by crucifixion, the scriptural references to Peter's martyrdom available to Eusebius include material interpretable in that sense. These references are found in the Gospel of John. John 21. 18f.: "Verily, verily, I [Jesus] say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, *thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." Also John 13. 36f.: "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? {In Latin this reads, Quo vadis? – whence the Quo vadis legend.} Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but *thou shalt follow me afterwards.* Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I

follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." Eusebius' comment that Peter had "himself requested that he should suffer in this way" is explicable from the same passages of the New Testament, because Peter said "Why cannot I follow thee [Christ] now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

If Eusebius was relying only on these proof-texts and on the tradition he refers to in Hist. Ecc. II. xxv. 5 for his account of Peter's martyrdom, as seems most likely, in view of his failure to cite any other authority, then the phrase *kata kephalês*, which introduces an extra-biblical detail about the mode of his martyrdom, must have been derived from the same, earlier-mentioned, tradition. Perhaps Eusebius was reluctant to identify the source of this tradition because it was of a dubious character. Evidence has been cited [elsewhere](#) that Peter perished in Jerusalem in the persecution initiated against James the brother of the Lord in AD 62, but was reburied at Rome in the middle of the third century. Elements of this historical context (e.g. the names of Albinus and Agrippa) were preserved like [literary fossils](#) in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* and *Acts of Peter and Paul*, which latter some believe to have been the work of the Marcellus who became Pope a short time before Eusebius wrote his Ecclesiastical History. Possibly an early form of the *Acts of Peter and Paul* was the source of Eusebius' tradition, as in its extant form it refers to the mode of Peter's crucifixion "upside down" and magnifies the importance of the apostolic tombs in Rome, and Eusebius likewise here mentions both the burial of Peter in Rome and the unusual form of Peter's martyrdom ("the latter [Peter] WHO ALSO ENDED UP {i.e., according to the interpretation preferred here, buried} IN ROME, was impaled down through the head"). It is an interesting fact that the death of James at the hands of a Jewish mob in Jerusalem in AD 62, as recorded by Hegesippus (apud Eusebius, Hist Ecc. II. xxiii. 17-18), was *by means of a wooden stake brought down upon his head*. The Greek word here is *xulon* = *wooden stake*, lit. *tree*, and it is used in the New Testament as a word for the *cross*, or *execution stake*, upon which Christ perished, Acts 5. 30, 13. 29, Gal. 3. 13, I Pet. 2. 24. Furthermore, the phrase used by Hegesippus to describe the downward motion upon the head is precisely *kata kephalês*. (For the Greek, click [here](#).) The passage reads as follows: "So they went up and threw down the just man [from the Temple wall], and said to each other, 'Let us stone

James the Just.' And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall; but he turned and knelt down and said, 'I entreat thee, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of the Rechabites, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, 'Cease, what do ye? The just one prayeth for you. And one of them, who was a fuller, took the wooden stake [*xulon*] with which he beat out clothes and struck the just man down on the head [*kata kephalês*]. And thus he suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot, by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple. He became a true witness, both to Jews and Greeks, that Jesus is the Christ." (The same incident is referred to more briefly by Clement, in the sixth book of his *Hypotyposesis*, apud Eusebius *Hist. Ecc.* II. i. 5; Clement too uses the word *xulon*.) Hegesippus records that this method of murder was resorted to even whilst the stoning was in progress. Since the companions of James were stoned along with James in AD 62, according to Josephus (*Ant.* XX. ix. 1), and since, on this reconstruction, Peter was included amongst these companions (James, not Peter, was bishop of the Jerusalem church, and was therefore alone mentioned by name by Josephus), what is more probable than that Peter perished the same way? Eusebius himself believed it was so.

CONCLUSION

These are the lynch pins which the advocates of the "Peter in Rome" theory rely on to prove their case, a case, they assure us, which is accepted as proven by the greatest historical authorities. DO THESE QUOTATIONS, THEN, IN ANY WAY PROVE THAT PETER WAS PERSONALLY PRESENT AT ANY TIME IN ROME? The first point to make is that none of these quotations are from a source contemporary with the event itself, viz. Peter's ministry in the middle of the first century AD. The earliest (Dionysius) dates from about one hundred years later! Therefore, they DO NOT CONSTITUTE ANYTHING APPROACHING HISTORICAL PROOF by the normal canons of historical evidence. This fact alone DEMOLISHES

THE CASE OF THE ADVOCATES OF THE "PETER IN ROME" THEORY. These quotations represent a TRADITION, and a late tradition, at that. Furthermore, of these, [1] names Italy, and pointedly excludes Rome, as the recipient of teaching from the Apostle Peter, the effect of which is to make it less credible that Peter ever was personally present in the capital; [2] relies on two ambiguous expressions in Greek and Latin respectively, which the context in both cases and other internal evidence suggest do not represent Peter as being present in Rome, and which must, in the end, be interpreted in the light of the historical evidence of the New Testament: this, likewise, does not support the notion that Peter was personally present in Rome; [3] in its fragmentary state, and in the most natural understanding of the words (with the qualification that all this is transmitted through secondhand authorities) represents Peter as absent from Rome; [4] does not mention Peter at all (!); [5] in one case mentions Tiberias in Galilee, not Rome, and even if the contextually impossible reading "Tiber" is accepted, the Tiber is not the same thing as Rome - there were a number of other cities on the banks of the Tiber; in the other case, an ambiguous Latin expression is explained by the context as referring to the Universal Church, in its several manifestations in different locations throughout the world, not the local Church in Rome; [6] can be dismissed, as it forms the major theme of a heretical, and provably unhistorical, romance, written almost 200 years after the event (though it does show what heretical groups in Rome at the beginning of the third century were saying then about Peter's presence in the imperial capital); and [7] is an unauthenticated assertion of Eusebius which only tells us that Peter "ended up in Rome": in view of its late date, well after the dispersal of the pseudo-Clementine tradition and the reburial of Peter in Rome, this is of practically no historical significance if it refers to a physical presence of Peter in Rome during his lifetime, and is actually, much more probably, a reference to Peter's final entombment in Rome in the third century AD. This, in brief, is the tissue of heretical myth and misinterpreted, overburdened, orthodox, tradition upon which the vast superstructure of the Roman Petrine primacy has been built.

The earliest tradition handed down by sub-Apostolic elders and preserved in fragments, e.g. by Clement of Alexandria, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Hippolytus, Tertullian ([see below](#)), etc., seems to

locate Peter in Caesarea at the time of the events which form the background to his dealings with Rome. In Caesarea, according to this tradition, Peter came into contact with Clement and Aquila, both originating from Rome (and perhaps soldiers in the Cohors Italica?). In Caesarea also he disputed with Simon Magus on the subject of the True Prophet. Simon Magus thereafter journeyed to Rome. Peter ordained Clement to a ministerial work in his native city of Rome and Clement returned home. The Gospel spread in the noble Roman households to which Clement and Aquila belonged, viz. the household of Flavius Clemens, the later consul of that name, and the household of the Acilii and of Priscilla, the aristocratic mother of the senator Pudens. Two factions developed in the Roman Christian community, one centered on Simon Magus and the other around Clement and the like-minded brethren of the household of Priscilla. The populace of Rome was drawn into this factional dispute by the public acclaim courted by Simon Magus. This culminated in a display of magic power by Simon in a theatre at Rome. Simon attempted to prove his divine status, and his superiority to the Apostle Peter revered by the opposite faction, by levitating himself in public. Peter meanwhile, still resident in the East, was apprised of this situation by the Holy Spirit, and saw the whole thing played out in a vision. He bound the demonic powers which operated in Simon and thus caused him to fall unceremoniously down to earth. The Roman audience proclaimed the doctrine of Peter, preached by the faction of Clement and Aquila, to be superior to the magic of Simon Magus. Members of the believing Roman families requested Mark, Peter's attendant, to write down the Gospel preached by Peter, which Mark did, shortly before Peter's martyrdom. This was what is now known as the Gospel of Mark. These events, too, were made known to Peter, still resident in the East, by spiritual revelation, and he approved of what Mark had done. This seems to be the tradition as it was current up to around AD 200. Peter was closely associated with Rome, but that association was SPIRITUAL and secondary, through his acquaintance with Roman missionaries and believing brethren.

The First Church of Rome began to emphasize the personal presence of Peter in Rome about the first half of the third century. The heretical pseudo-Clementine traditions reflect this phase. Soon there developed a full-scale cult at his tomb, once Peter's

remains had been transported, seemingly (see the next paragraph) from their original location in Jerusalem, to the Vatican, with a temporary removal to the Platonica at San Sebastian, and the idea began to circulate that he had been martyred in the imperial capital under Nero. It is likely that this cult sprang out of the quite recent and very heated controversy over the timing of the Passover or Easter fast which occurred at the end of the second century AD, because apostolic tombs and their locations played an important part in the Passover dispute. At that time the bishop of the First Church of Rome was in conflict with the eastern churches of Asia under Polycrates, who held to the Jewish celebration of the Passover practiced by the Apostle John. Now, the Asian churches pointed to the tombs of the apostolic founders of their churches as evidence of the strength of the apostolic presence and the vitality of the apostolic tradition in their area, e.g. John's tomb at Ephesus in Asia and Philip's at Hierapolis. This argument seems to have weighed heavy on the bishop of Rome. To be sure, the Roman bishop claimed Peter - rightly or wrongly - as the apostolic authority for elements of his Passover practice, but he HAD NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT ANY TOMB OF PETER IN ROME, WHICH IS REMARKABLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. If there had been a tomb of Peter in Rome at the time of the Passover dispute (c. AD 170-190), we can be absolutely certain that the bishop of the First Church would have used it as an argument against the easterners and their vaunted tombs.

However, this defect was soon remedied. It was no more than a single generation later that the First Church of Rome claimed they had amongst them an apostolic tomb, in addition to that of Paul, to counter the claims of the easterners, and that was none other than the tomb of the Apostle Peter, the supposed authority for the Roman Church's Passover practice! The evidence outlined in the document, "[The First Church of Rome](#)", shows that Peter's remains were transferred surreptitiously from the East by the First Church and reburied on the Vatican, not without strong resistance from the eastern churchmen. Thereafter the presence of Peter's tomb in Rome was held up as proof of the apostolic authority of the Roman see against the claims of every other church in the world. The fiction of Peter's martyrdom in Rome and of the presence of his tomb in the capital since the time of Nero had become an important prop in the First

Church of Rome's Passover argument, and the Passover dispute was used as the Roman Church's excuse to excommunicate the eastern churches. As the Roman Church asserted her dominance over the East, the maintenance of the fiction became essential.

The only traditional connection between Peter and Rome up to that time was the sub-Apostolic one reconstructed here. The First Church of Rome seems to have adapted this tradition by de-emphasizing the visionary experiences of Peter and transporting him physically to Rome. Clement, a major figure in the sub-Apostolic tradition, now became the reputed author of a series of autobiographical dialogues, known as the pseudo-Clementine literature, which provided "historical" evidence of Peter's physical presence in Rome. The Apostle's sojourn in the capital, his martyrdom there and the existence of his tomb on the Vatican, were all conveniently explained. It was a parody of the Asian story of how John came to Ephesus, taught, died and was buried there. Texts which told a contrary story, if there were such in the West, were consigned to the ash-heap. After all, the price of exposure was a steep one: no less than the collapse of the Roman Church's claims to primacy over the Churches of the East, and, indeed, over the Churches of the whole Catholic communion.

SECONDARY QUOTATIONS

There are several other passages in early writers which have been used as evidence of Peter's presence in Rome. In these cases, the straws clutched at are even more insubstantial.

1) I Clement, v. 1 - vi. 2, c. AD 96 (for the Greek, click [here](#)): "But let us cease from the examples of old time, and let us come to those who became champions [of the Faith] in the most recent times. Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. 2. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. 3. Let us set

before our eyes the illustrious apostles. 4. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors, and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. 5. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, 6. after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, 7. having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience. CHAPTER vi. 1. To these men who spent their lives in the practice of holiness, there was added [or, was gathered, Gk. *sunêthroisthê*] a great multitude of the elect, who, having through envy endured many indignities and tortures, furnished us with [lit. became amongst us] a most excellent example. 2. Through envy, those women, the Danaids and Dircae, being persecuted, after they had suffered terrible and unspeakable torments, finished the course of their faith with steadfastness, and though weak in body, received a noble reward."

This passage, of course, has nothing at all to say about Peter's presence in Rome. The idea that it does is dependent on a forced and very fanciful interpretation of the word *sunêthroisthê* at vi. 1. Because this letter was an official missive from the Church at Rome, under bishop Clement, to the Church at Corinth, and the passage at vi. 1 says that to Peter and Paul there "was gathered" a great multitude of martyrs who became "amongst us" (taken to mean "us Romans") a most excellent example, some have thought this is a description of great gatherings of Christians at Rome under Peter and Paul, during the persecution of Nero. However, this interpretation depends on a number of assumptions: a) that the verb in vi. 1 is to be translated "was gathered", rather than "was added"; b) that the phrase "amongst us" refers to Roman Christians and not to Christians in general, even though the letter several times in this same passage uses the first person plural to exhort the Corinthian Christians as a body united in fellowship to the Christian Church at Rome ("let US cease from the examples of old time," and "let US come to those who became champions [of the faith] in the most recent times. Let US take the noble examples of OUR own generation," v. 1, "let US set before OUR

eyes," v. 3); it also assumes c) that the gathering of martyrs to Peter and Paul (if we are to translate it that way) was to these apostles during their earthly ministry, rather than to them after their martyrdom in heaven, this latter interpretation being much more likely, as a mention of the departure of Paul from this world to the "holy place" (heaven) immediately precedes the passage in question (at v. 7), and Paul, like these other martyrs, is there said to have provided the Church with a grand example of Christian endurance. The departure of Peter to the "place of glory" is similarly mentioned at v. 4.

2) Ignatius, c. AD 108, To the Romans, iv. 3 (for the Greek, click [here](#)): "I do not command you like Peter and Paul; they were Apostles, I am a convict; they were free, I am even until now a slave"

This text, too, has nothing to say about Peter's presence in Rome. Ignatius is writing to the Christians in Rome, and requests, but does not command, as might the Apostles Peter and Paul, that the Roman Christians refrain from attempting to save him from martyrdom. His wish is to die for Christ. The Greek says literally "Not as [or, like] Peter and Paul do I command you" (*oukh 'ôs Petros kai Paulos diatassomai 'umin*). The Greek does not include the idea that Peter and Paul actually commanded the Romans. This would be reading too much into the Greek. Furthermore, Ignatius uses an almost identical expression when writing to the Christians at Tralles in Asia (To the Trallians, iii. 3): "I did not think myself competent, as a convict, to command you like an Apostle" (Gk.: *'ina ... 'ôs apostolos 'umin diatassômai*). No-one has suggested that here Ignatius is referring to an Apostle who actually commanded the Trallians. In both cases Ignatius is renouncing any apostolic authority he might have been held to have over the churches he was writing to. Even if we were to read much more into the Greek than is actually there, and presume that Peter and Paul did command the Romans, the contrast and comparison (*oukh 'ôs*) that Ignatius draws between himself and them, would suggest he was thinking of a WRITTEN instruction sent from abroad by the two Apostles to the Roman Christians, as he himself was communicating now with them in writing from abroad. There is, in any event, no warrant for understanding this text as a reference to a physical

presence of the Apostle Peter in Rome.

3) Hippolytus, Refut. VI. xv. = ed. Miller VI. 20 (67r) (for the Greek, click [here](#)): "This Simon, deceiving many in Samaria by his sorceries, was reproved by the Apostles, and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts. But he afterwards abjured the faith, and attempted these (aforesaid practices). And journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles; and to him, deceiving many by his sorceries, Peter offered repeated opposition. This man, ultimately repairing to <Sebas?>te (and) sitting under a plane tree, continued to give instruction (in his doctrines). And in truth at last, when conviction was imminent, in case he delayed longer, he stated that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They, then, executed the injunction given; whereas he remained (in that grave) until this day, for he was not the Christ."

Here we have another account drawing on the tradition that connected Peter, Simon Magus and Rome. However, the most orthodox, complete, version of this tradition is found in the Apostolic Constitutions, which locate Peter at Caesarea, and represent Peter as having disputed with Simon there. Subsequently, when Simon attempted to spread his heresy in Rome, Peter kept in spiritual contact with events in the capital, and defeated Simon by the power of prayer. This may be presumed to be the situation envisioned by Hippolytus when he asserts that "to him [Simon Magus], deceiving many by his sorceries, Peter offered repeated opposition." Just before this statement, Hippolytus says that "Journeying as far as Rome, he [Simon] fell in with the Apostles." A mind influenced by the apocryphal legends which originated from, and expanded on, the orthodox tradition, would immediately think here of Peter and Paul as the Apostles Simon fell in with. However, Hippolytus does not name these Apostles. Peter is mentioned immediately after, but is not specifically identified as one of these "Apostles", and in the preceding sentence the "Apostles" who reproved Simon in Samaria are Peter and John (Acts 8. 14). This text, too, falls far short of locating Peter in Rome. The imprecise wording does not permit a

definitive decision as to where Peter was when he "offered repeated opposition" to Simon. If the sequence of events, as recounted, is in strict chronological order, this opposition may be presumed to have been offered subsequent to Simon's arrival in Rome. But that is precisely the sequence of events in the Apostolic Constitutions, and there Peter is absent from the scene of Simon's magical activity in Rome and in contact and in combat with him spiritually. This account in Hippolytus might be held to confirm, if it confirms anything at all, the fragmentary tradition preserved by Hippolytus' contemporary, Clement of Alexandria, and that which is found in a more explicit, but quasi-orthodox, form in the Apostolic Constitutions.

4) Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* IV. v. 1-2: [1] In summa, si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod et ab initio, id ab initio quod ab apostolis, pariter utique constabit id esse ab apostolis traditum quod apud ecclesias apostolorum fuerit sacrosanctum. Videamus quod lac a Paulo Corinthii hauserint, ad quam regulam Galatae sint recorrecti, quid legant Philippenses, Thessalonicenses, Ephesii, quid etiam Romani de proximo sonent, quibus evangelium et Petrus et Paulus sanguine quoque suo signatum reliquerunt. [2] Habemus et Ioannis alumnas ecclesias. Nam etsi Apocalypsin eius Marcion respuit, ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem recensus in Ioannem stabit auctorem. Sic et ceterarum generositas recognoscitur. Dico itaque apud illas, nec solas iam apostolicas, sed apud universas quae illis de societate sacramenti confoederantur, id evangelium Lucae ab initio editionis suae stare quod cum maxime tuemur, Marcionis vero plerisque nec notum, nullis autem notum ut non eadem damnatum.

"On the whole, then, if that is evidently more true which is earlier, if that is earlier which is from the very beginning, if that is from the beginning which has the apostles for its authors, then it will certainly be quite as evident, that that comes down from the apostles, which has been kept as a sacred deposit in the churches of the apostles. Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule of faith the Galatians were brought for correction; what the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians read by it; what utterance also the

Romans give, so very near [to Tertullian's own church at Carthage], to whom Peter and Paul conjointly bequeathed a gospel even sealed with their own blood. We have also St. John's foster churches. For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the orders of the bishops (thereof), when traced up to their origin, will yet rest on John as their author. In the same manner is recognized the excellent source of the other churches. I say, therefore, that in them (and not simply such of them as were founded by apostles, but in all those which are united with them in the fellowship of the mystery of the gospel of Christ) that Gospel of Luke which we are defending with all our might has stood its ground from its very first publication; whereas Marcion's Gospel is not known to most people, and to none whatever is it known without being at the same time condemned."

This text similarly has nothing to say about a physical presence of Peter in Rome. It is comparing the written, canonical, Gospels with the mutilated version of Luke's Gospel used by the heretic Marcion. It appeals to the testimony of the apostolic churches which retained copies of the canonical Gospels, handed down from apostolic times. Tertullian claims that Peter and Paul conjointly bequeathed such a (written) Gospel to the Roman Church and paid for their efforts in this regard with their blood. This statement accords perfectly with the corrected translation offered here of Irenaeus III. i. 1. Irenaeus records that Matthew published in Rome a written account in Hebrew of the Gospel of Peter and Paul. Here is a Gospel bequeathed to the Romans from Peter and Paul conjointly, just as Tertullian describes. The rather loose and rhetorical language of Tertullian might also be held to include a reference to the Gospel of Mark, based on the message preached by Peter, which may likewise have been composed in Rome, but the singular, evangelium, favors the former interpretation.

5) Tertullian, *Praes. Haer.* xxxii. 2-3: [2] Hoc enim modo ecclesiae apostolicae census suos deferunt, sicut Smyrnaeorum ecclesia Polycarpum ab Iohanne conlocatum refert, sicut Romanorum Clementem a Petro ordinatum est. [3] Perinde utique et ceterae exhibent quos ab apostolis in episcopatum constitutos apostolici seminis traduces habeant.

"For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers: as the church of Smyrna, which records that Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter. In exactly the same way the other churches likewise exhibit (their several worthies), whom, as having been appointed to their episcopal places by apostles, they regard as transmitters of the apostolic seed."

The ordination of bishop Clement of Rome by Peter is an interesting item of information vouchsafed to us here by Tertullian, and coincides with other traditions, like that in the quasi-orthodox Apostolic Constitutions, which represent Peter and Clement as personal acquaintances. However, this tradition cannot be used as evidence that Peter was present in Rome. Ordination in the New Testament Church was a simple consecration by a recognized spiritual authority of a member of the Church to a position of leadership. It had nothing necessarily to do with defined, topographical, ecclesiastical, boundaries. The ordinand might minister anywhere he was led by the Spirit of God to minister, unless he was ordained to minister in a specific area. In this case, it would appear that Clement was ordained by Peter to minister in Rome, as he is said to have been ordained in like manner to Polycarp, who was placed by John in Smyrna. Of course, there was also no necessity for the ceremony, such as it was, to take place in the location where the ordinand might be meant to minister. John is usually associated with Ephesus, and he may well have ordained Polycarp in Ephesus for the position of leadership he was to take up in Smyrna. Likewise, nothing is said here of Clement's ordination in Rome. In fact, in the Apostolic Constitutions, Peter associates with Clement in Caesarea. This tradition in the Apostolic Constitutions shares a number of features in common with the account in Clement of Alexandria's *Hypotyposesis*, already mentioned, which connects Peter with Rome. It is wholly independent of the later legendary material which represents Peter as personally present in Rome, and may well have preserved a reminiscence of the historical circumstances and original location of Peter's acquaintance with and ordination of Clement.

This tradition explains how Peter comes to be at the head of some later lists of the bishops of Rome. As

Tertullian says, the apostolic churches were believed to be transmitters of the apostolic seed, because their bishops had been originally ordained by Apostles. (Note the horticultural image, and compare this passage of Tertullian with the "planting" of the Corinthian and Roman Churches in Dionysius of Corinth, [Quotation \[1\]](#).) This had nothing to do with the location of the residence or ministry of the Apostle who ordained that bishop. John might have ordained Polycarp as bishop of Smyrna in Ephesus, where John himself resided, and Peter might have ordained Clement in Caesarea for the work Clement was later to take up in Rome. Also there was no such thing as a monarchical bishop in the early church. There could be several "bishops" (Gk. *episkopoi*, "supervisors") or "presbyters" (Gk. *presbuteroi*, "elders") in one locality at any one time. Thus, when Clement was ordained bishop by Peter and he returned to Rome, there was nothing to stop another bishop ministering in Rome at the same time as Clement. In the case of the fellowship which met in Pudens' house in Rome (see [The First Church of Rome paragraph 21 etc.](#)), Linus is recorded to have been the first bishop in that house-church, ordained by unnamed "apostles", but Clement also became bishop, or pastor, in the very same house-church, after one intervening bishop, Anencletus. Clement may have been ministering himself elsewhere, or in another location in Rome, in the intervening years or have been occupied in an inferior or auxiliary leadership position in that same fellowship.

Also, Peter's ordination of Clement to do the work of a bishop in Rome (presumably when Peter was in Caesarea), seems to have occurred much earlier than the ordination of Linus. Clement's acquaintance with Peter, according to the sub-Apostolic tradition preserved in the Apostolic Constitutions, was prior to the removal of Simon Magus to Rome in the reign of Claudius, whereas Linus is mentioned by Paul at a much later date, in the reign of Nero, in his last letter to Timothy (II Timothy 4. 21), without an inkling that Linus had, at that time, any position of spiritual leadership in Rome. Linus' ordination seems to have occurred towards the very end, or just subsequent to the termination, of Paul's ministry. Hence, in one line of tradition, we find Linus, followed by Anencletus and Clement, as the first of the bishops of Rome and, in another, we find Clement as the first bishop. Both were valid ways of representing the original succession of spiritual leadership in Rome,

according to the simple, apostolic, canons of the early church.

In fact, in the time of Claudius, when Clement was ordained by Peter, presumably in Caesarea, there seems to have been only one fellowship in Rome, viz. that formed by the Jewish missionaries, Junia and Andronicus. At a later period of time, in the mid second century AD, this fellowship met in a house-church on the Vicus Lateranus called Santa Prassede. It will have been this group that Clement was originally ordained to minister amongst. However, as Clement seems to have been a Jew (the extensive knowledge he had of the Old Testament Scriptures, as displayed in his Epistle to the Corinthian Church, supports this opinion), he would have been unable to return to Rome until Claudius was dead, since Claudius' decrees had banished all Jews from the city. When the Jews and Jewish Christians, including Clement, were able to return, the fellowship of Junia and Andronicus had drifted into Gnostic heresy under the influence of Simon Magus. This would explain why Clement is not recorded as having actually ministered as bishop in Rome till much later, in the reign of Domitian. His original pastoral post had been stolen from him by the Gnostics, and another fellowship had been formed in the meantime for the Bible-believing Christians at Pudens' house (Santa Pudenziana) with Linus as its first pastor. The existence of these two rival churches is reflected, though in a fragmented form, in the divergent succession lists, one starting with Linus (Santa Pudenziana), the other starting with (Peter and) Clement (Santa Prassede).

It is understandable then, why, finally, when the Gnostic Christians at Santa Prassede accepted Sixtus, an apostate bishop from the rival church, as their leader, and other monarchical bishops succeeded him, these bishops began to claim Peter, who had never been in Rome, along with his ordinand, bishop Clement, as their apostolic authorities and original bishops, rather than the great Apostle Paul, or someone like Linus, who had undoubtedly been physically present in the city. Peter was the Apostle who ordained Clement as the first bishop of their church, which was the earliest church in Rome formed by the missionaries Junia and Andronicus. This became important to them as a mark of distinction between themselves and the rival church. They were the FIRST Church of Rome, and their authority was Peter, the chief of the

Twelve. This in spite of the fact that Peter was a vehement opponent of the Gnostic heresiarch Simon Magus, and that Clement had never actually ministered in their church. To obviate the accusation that Peter had not been present in Rome and that both he and Clement were opposed to their Gnostic doctrines, these bishops sponsored the creation of a Gnostic myth, under the pseudonym of Clement, which put into the mouth of Peter, now magically transported to Rome, the kind of doctrine the Gnostics wanted to hear. This myth survives in the expurgated form of the pseudo-Clementine romances.

An example of how the later bishops of the First Church of Rome abused the theory of a succession from Peter, and also of how eastern churchmen reacted to that abuse, is discovered in the following quotation from Firmilian, the noted bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and adherent of Origen.

6) Firmilian apud Cyprian, Ep. 74. 17: "And in this respect I am justly indignant at this so open and manifest folly of Stephen {bishop of the First Church of Rome}, that he who so boasts of the place of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, should introduce many other rocks and establish new buildings of many churches {i.e. by accepting the baptism of heretical groups as valid}; maintaining that there is baptism in them by his authority. For they who are baptized, doubtless, fill up the number of the Church. But he who approves their baptism maintains, of those baptized, that the Church is also with them. Nor does he understand that the truth of the Christian Rock is overshadowed, and in some measure abolished, by him when he thus betrays and deserts unity. The apostle acknowledges that the Jews, although blinded by ignorance, and bound by the grossest wickedness, have yet a zeal for God. Stephen, who announces that he holds by succession the throne of Peter, is stirred with no zeal against heretics, when he concedes to them, not a moderate, but the very greatest power of grace: so far as to say and assert that, by the sacrament of baptism, the filth of the old man is washed away by them, that they pardon the former mortal sins, that they make sons of God by heavenly regeneration, and renew to eternal life by the sanctification of the

divine laver. He who concedes and gives up to heretics in this way the great and heavenly gifts of the Church, what else does he do but communicate with them for whom he maintains and claims so much grace? And now he hesitates in vain to consent to them, and to be a partaker with them in other matters also, to meet together with them, and equally with them to mingle their prayers, and appoint a common altar and sacrifice."

The practice of including Peter at the head of the list of bishops of Rome can be dated back to at least the time of Gaius, c. AD 211, Gaius being a fervent advocate of the claims of the First Church of Rome (Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* V. xxviii. 3). But amongst orthodox churchmen, this indicated nothing about the historical location of Peter's residence or Peter's ministry. That was probably the case, also, in the instances where Eusebius himself adopted the scheme in his *Ecclesiastical History* (III. iv, III. xxi, IV. i). After the formation of the pseudo-Clementine myth, the same practice came to signify, in certain quarters, that Peter had not only been present in Rome and martyred there, but also that he had exercised an episcopal ministry in the city. One generation later than Gaius, the anonymous *Poem Against the Marcionites* (iii. 275-280) puts Peter at the head of the Roman bishops, but with a certain, added, emphasis on what is referred to as the "chair" of Peter: "Of whom the first / Whom PETER bade to take his place and sit / Upon this chair in mightiest Rome where he / Himself had sat, was LINUS, great, elect, / And by the mass approved. And after him / CLETUS himself the fold's flock undertook; / As his successor ANACLETUS was / By lot located (here, as occasionally elsewhere, Cletus and Anencletus, both names, apparently, designating the same person, are treated as two separate bishops): CLEMENT follows him; / Well known was he to apostolic men" Latin: *Carminis Adversus Marcionitas Lib. III.* "275 ex quibus electum magnum plebique probatum 276 hac cathedra PETRUS, qua sederat ipse, locatum 277 maxima Roma LINUM primum considerare iussit. 278 post quem CLETUS et ipse gregem suscepit ovilis. 279 huius ANACLETUS successor sorte locatus. 280 quem sequitur CLEMENS; is apostolicis bene notus." From a spiritual to a literal interpretation of the "chair" of Peter is a small transition. The word "chair" could, and probably does in this case, mean nothing more than Peter's episcopal position, but it was not long before a chair was pointed out as the

actual chair in which Peter had sat when he was bishop in Rome. It can be viewed in Rome to this day. It is undoubtedly an ancient chair, and it is also undoubtedly a pagan one. Are we really expected to believe that the Apostle Peter selected as his special episcopal throne this gaudy little item of furniture, inscribed all around with the Twelve Labours of the pagan god-man, Hercules? Yet today, the Pope claims this indeed is the "chair of Peter" and sits on it to make his *ex-cathedra*, "infallible", pronouncements from the Vatican.

Jerome's advocacy of the idea that Peter exercised an episcopal ministry in the capital had a great influence on subsequent historiography. In historical, as well as in theological matters, Jerome was capable of being judicious and critical, on one occasion, and wildly fanatical, on another, the latter, especially, when the authority of the bishop of Rome was questioned. Accordingly, in Jerome's translation and reworking of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, we find the apocryphal legend of Peter's sojourn in Rome transformed into statements of historical fact, with the addition of an episcopate of Peter in Rome itself, beginning, absurdly, in the reign of Claudius, in the second year of the two hundred and fifth Olympiad (AD 42), and lasting, impossibly, twenty-five years. (Jerome describes in his Preface to that work his method of dealing with Eusebius' *Chronicle* as follows: "The truth is that I have partly discharged the office of a translator and partly that of a writer. I have with the utmost fidelity rendered the Greek portion, and at the same time have added certain things which appeared to me to have been allowed to slip, particularly in the Roman history, which Eusebius, the author of this book, as it seems to me, only glanced at; not so much because of ignorance, for he was a learned man, as because, writing in Greek, he thought them of slight importance to his countrymen. So again from Ninus and Abraham, right up to the captivity of Troy, the translation is from the Greek only. From Troy to the twentieth year of Constantine [which includes the period under consideration here] there is much, at one time separately added, at another intermingled, which I have gleaned with great diligence from Tranquillus and other famous historians.")

7) Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, xv. 1-3: [1] ... Quae tamen passos apostolos scimus, manifesta doctrina est.

Hanc intellego solam Acta decurrens, nihil quaero. [2] Carceres illic et uincula et flagella et saxa et gladii et impetus Iudaeorum et coetus nationum et tribunorum elogia et regum auditoria et proconsulum tribunalia et Caesaris nomen interpretem non habent. Quod Petrus caeditur, quod Stephanus opprimitur, quod Iacobus immolatur, quod Paulus distrahitur, ipsorum sanguine scripta sunt. [3] Et si fidem commentarii uoluerit haereticus, instrumenta imperii loquentur, ut lapides Hierusalem. Vitas Caesarum legimus: orientem fidem Romae primus Nero cruentauit. Tunc Petrus ab altero cingitur, cum cruci adstringitur. Tunc Paulus ciuitatis Romanae consequitur natiuitatem, cum illic martyrii renascitur generositate.

"And yet, that the apostles endured such sufferings, we know: the teaching is clear. This only I perceive in running through the Acts. I am not at all on the search. The prisons there, and the bonds, and the scourges, and the big stones, and the swords, and the onsets by the Jews, and the assemblies of the heathen, and the indictments by tribunes, and the hearing of causes by kings, and the judgment-seats of proconsuls and the name of Caesar, do not need an interpreter. That Peter is struck, that Stephen is overwhelmed by stones, that James is slain as is a victim at the altar, that Paul is beheaded has been written in their own blood. And if a heretic wishes his confidence to rest upon a public record, the archives of the empire will speak, as, for instance, the stones of Jerusalem. We read the lives of the Caesars: At Rome Nero was the first who stained with blood the rising faith. Then is Peter girt by another, when he is fixed immobile to the stake. Then does Paul obtain a birth suited to Roman citizenship, when in Rome he springs to life again ennobled by martyrdom."

This is another early witness that Peter suffered under Nero. Note, however, that Tertullian does not specify, as he does in Paul's case, that Peter was martyred in Rome. He merely says, "THEN [tunc, viz. in the reign of Nero] is Peter girt by another ..." This confirms the testimony of [Dionysius](#) that Peter and Paul were martyred at the same time. The mode of Peter's death, as related by [Eusebius](#), is also confirmed, viz. crucifixion or impaling. The word caeditur used of Peter has a general and a more specific meaning. The general meaning is "he is slain", but the more specific and proper meaning is "he is *felled, cudgelled*." This is a word used

somewhat more appropriately to describe Peter's impalement by a stake than crucifixion by suspension on a stake, whilst the other word used by Tertullian, adstringitur, is ambiguous (*fixed* or *bound to*). Tertullian further claims that these facts were recorded in the "archives of the empire ... as, for instance, the stones of Jerusalem," or "the Lives of the Caesars." Such public records would seem to be the most likely source of the historical names Agrippa and Albinus which are found in the apocryphal Acts as the names of the Roman authorities under whom Peter suffered, though in the Apocrypha they have been plucked out of their proper, historical, context, viz. Judaea in AD 62. The mention of these "imperial archives" (instrumenta imperii), and "stones of Jerusalem" (lapides Hierusalem), is, in fact, immediately followed by references to the martyrdoms of Paul and Peter in the reign of Nero, it being implied that these events can be thus confirmed. There would be no reason at all for Paul's martyrdom, traditionally, credibly, and by Tertullian himself, located in Rome, to be commemorated on a stone inscription in or from Jerusalem, but there would for Peter's, if, indeed, he was martyred, as suggested here, along with James the brother of the Lord in Jerusalem in AD 62. It is possible that such a stone inscription, describing, or even depicting, Peter's martyrdom, was transferred later to the Vatican, and there provided public evidence of the mode of Peter's death and of the officials who presided over it.

8) Ascension of Isaiah iv. 2, 3, c. AD 70-80: "A lawless king, the slayer of his mother: who himself, even this king, will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the Beloved have planted. Of the Twelve one will be delivered into his hands."

This is a remarkably early, if apocryphal, witness. The lawless king, slayer of his mother, and persecutor of Christians, is clearly Nero. It is presumed - on the basis of the later traditions - that the one of the Twelve delivered into his hands is Peter. (In this work, Paul is not reckoned among the Twelve.) Even if Peter is the disciple intended, only the dating of his martyrdom to the reign of Nero is vouchsafed, not the location.

The Ascension of Isaiah, according to the online Encyclopaedia Britannica, is a pseudepigraphal

work surviving complete in a 5th–7th-century-AD Ethiopic edition. Fragments exist in Greek, Coptic, Latin, and Old Slavonic. Three separate works comprise the total book, the final version by a Christian editor, which appeared in the 2nd century AD. The first section is entitled “The Martyrdom of Isaiah,” a Midrash on the Manasseh story in II Kings 21, possibly written originally in Hebrew or Aramaic in the early 1st century AD. It includes a legendary martyr motif and extensive passages on demonology. The second is the “Testament of Hezekiah,” a Christian work, dating from the late 1st century AD, that contains a concept of Antichrist as a spirit dwelling in the Roman emperor Nero (AD 54–68), whose persecution of Christians in 64–65 was thought to be the chaos preceding the advent of the messianic age. The third work is called the “Ascension (or Vision) of Isaiah,” also written by a Christian at the beginning of the 2nd century. It contains a description of the seven tiers of heaven paralleling that found in the Second Book of Enoch and in the New Testament. Both of the Christian sections are apocalypses, although they contain certain historical details on the state of the church at the end of the 1st century that coincide with descriptions given in the Second Letter of Peter, Second Letter of Paul to Timothy, and the letters of Clement of Rome.

APPENDIX 7 - THE PRE-NICENE DATING

OF THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF JESUS

Irenaeus

Irenaeus on the date of Jesus' birth (Adv. Haer. [ed. Harvey] III. xxiv. 2 [in alternative referencing systems: III. xxv. or III. xxi. 3]):

"Our Lord was born around the forty-first year of the rule of Augustus."

Beyer reckons that what is referred to here as the 41st year of Augustus ran from August 3 BC to August 2 BC (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, p. 284 n. 30 and *ibid.* §§ 487, 489, 491). The date is therefore "around" 3/2 BC.

Irenaeus on the age of Jesus (Adv. Haer. [ed. Harvey] I. i. 1 [otherwise I. i. 3]):

"These, then, are the 30 Aeons of their erroneous system, the 'silent' Aeons, the 'unknown' Aeons. This forms what they call the invisible, spiritual Pleroma ('Fullness' [of the Godhead]), split three ways into an Ogdoad, a Decad and a Dodecad. And it is for this reason, they claim, that the Savior (they do not want to name Him 'Lord') did nothing in public for 30 years, since He was adumbrating the mystery of these Aeons."

(*Ibid.* [ed. Harvey] II. xxxii. 1 [otherwise II. xxxvi. and II. xx. 1]):

"They involve the parables and acts of the Lord quite improperly and inconsequentially in their imaginary scheme. We can prove this in the following way: that internal turmoil which they claim resulted from what happened to the twelfth Aeon, they try to prove is the Passion which the Savior suffered as a result of the twelfth Apostle and in the twelfth month. And in fact they represent Him as having preached for one year only following His baptism."

(*Ibid.* [Harvey] II. xxxii. 6, xxxiii. 1-4 [in alternative referencing systems: II. xxxviii, xxxix, or II. xxii. 1, 5-6]; Latin translation of the lost original, except where indicated):

"xxxii. 6. We can prove that by their own account the whole system based on the number 30 fails, because

sometimes fewer, sometimes more, Aeons feature in the reckoning as it stands. That means there are not actually 30 Aeons, and it was not for this reason that the Savior came for baptism at 30 years of age, to prove that the silent years were their 30 Aeons. In that case they will be excluding, nay banishing, the very first Aeon from the total Pleroma. They claim that He suffered death in the twelfth month, which means He was actively preaching for one year after baptism, and they try to prove the same from the words of the prophet (as it says in the Scriptures, 'to announce the accepted year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance'), being blind indeed, though they claim to have plummeted the depths of Bythus, and insensible of what it was that was called by Isaiah the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance. It was certainly not a day comprising 24 hours that was spoken of by the prophet, nor a year comprising 12 months. The prophets spoke many things in parables and allegories, and not according to the literal sense of the words, as they too admit

"A demonstration that Jesus did not preach for one year only after baptism, but attained every possible age-range.

"xxxiii. 1. It is certainly to be wondered at, however, that those who claim to have discovered the deep things of God, have not made a proper examination of the Gospels, to find out how many times after His baptism, when the Passover came round, the Lord went up to Jerusalem, as was the custom for all Jews from wherever they lived every year, to gather at this time in Jerusalem and there celebrate the Passover festival. The first occasion was when He turned water into wine in Cana, the village in Galilee, and then went up

for the feast of the Passover. It is written in the Scriptures concerning this occasion: 'For many believed on Him, when they saw the signs which He performed,' as John the disciple of the Lord recorded. Next He is found in Samaria, having left His well-trodden paths, that time He entered into conversation with the Samaritan woman. He also healed the child of a centurion at a distance with a word, saying, "Go, your child has recovered." Subsequently He went up the second time to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem, and healed the paralytic, who lay next to the bathing area 38 years, commanding him to get up, pick up his stretcher and go. He then left that region and went over the other side of the Sea of Tiberias. He was followed there by a huge crowd and fed the whole multitude with five loaves: twelve hampers of fragments were left over at the end. Thereafter, when He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and a plot was formed against Him by the Pharisees, He retired to the town of Ephrem. From that place, it is recorded in the Scriptures, six days before the Passover, He came to Bethany, and from Bethany went up to Jerusalem, where He ate the Passover meal, and suffered death the following day. No-one would deny, these three Passovers make more than one year. And even the month itself in which the Passover is celebrated, and in which the Lord suffered death, these people who claim to know everything could learn from Moses, is not the twelfth, but the first month, of the year. Therefore their solution for the year and the twelfth month is proved to be false, and they ought to renounce either their solution or the Gospel. Otherwise, how could it have been that the Lord preached for only a single year?

"2. Actually, He was thirty years old when He came for baptism, and, having attained the age-range of full maturity required for a teacher, He

came to Jerusalem, so that He could receive the audience a teacher might rightly expect. It is not true that He was something else from what He appeared, as these people say who introduce the idea of a 'putative' person. What He truly was, that He appeared to be. As a teacher in actuality, He had attained, in fact, the age-range a teacher had to attain, neither rejecting nor supervening His human nature, nor abrogating His own Law of human nature in His own case, but rather elevating every age-range to a higher order of being by means of that human likeness which He had taken on. He came for this purpose, to save by His own work the whole human race, all, I should say, who receive rebirth through Him into the family of God, infants, young children, older children, those in early maturity, and the elderly. And so He Himself passed through every age-range, and for the sake of infants, became an infant, elevating infants to that higher order of being; for the sake of young children, He became a young child, elevating those who had attained that age-range to the higher order of being, and becoming an example to them, as He did so, of godliness and fair-play and submission to authority; for the sake of those in early maturity, He too became a young man, leaving an example to all young people, and elevating them to the Lord's own higher order of being. So He became an older person also for the sake of the elderly, that He might be the teacher, in full maturity, for the whole human race, not only in respect of the ability to propound true doctrine, but also in respect of the physical age-range He attained, elevating older people, too, as He did so, to that higher order of being, and becoming an example to them at the same time. Then, at last, He experienced even death, that He might become 'the firstborn from the dead, He Himself holding the preeminence in every

realm,' the first in life, having supremacy over all, and preceding all.

"3. However, in order to confirm their invented interpretation of the Scripture, 'to announce the accepted year of the Lord,' they say that He preached for one year, and suffered death in the twelfth month: they are oblivious of the truth to their own confusion, since they destroy His whole work, and deprive Him of that which was, in fact, indispensable, and which entitled Him, furthermore, to the respect of His peers, namely of that age-range to which He had attained - what I would call that more advanced age-range - at which, as a teacher, He became the supreme example to all men. For how did He come to have disciples if He was not a teacher? Yet He came for baptism as one who had not quite fully reached the age of 30 years, but as one who was beginning to be about 30 years old (that is how Luke, who indicated His age, put it: 'Now Jesus was about, as He was beginning, 30 years old,' when He came for baptism); and yet, after His baptism, He only preached one year, and, completing His 30th year, suffered death, being still a young man, and one who had not yet attained the more advanced age-range! 30 years is really just the age-range of the young man in his prime, and from that point up to the 40th year, as is generally accepted, a progression is made, and then, from the 40th and 50th year, a declension, further into the age-range of the older person, and it was on attaining to this age-range that Our Lord became a teacher [Latin: *Quia autem triginta annorum aetas prima indolis est iuvenis, et extenditur usque ad quadragesimum annum, omnis quilibet confitebitur, a quadragesimo autem et quinquagesimo anno declinat iam in aetatem seniore, quam habens Dominus noster docebat.*]. This accords with the account in the

Gospel [Greek preserved here:] and all the elders, who companied with John, the Lord's disciple, in Asia, bear witness that John handed down these truths to them. For he continued present with them till the times of Trajan. [Back to the Latin from here:] But some of them not only were eyewitnesses of John, but also of other Apostles, and heard the very same truths from them; their testimony agrees with this account. Whom are we to believe? Such people as Ptolemaeus? He never saw Apostles with his own eyes, not so much as a glimpse of an Apostle in his dreams!

"4. Even those Jews who disputed at the time with the Lord Jesus Christ showed very clearly what is stated here is true. For when the Lord said to them, 'Abraham your father rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad,' they said to Him in reply, 'You are not yet 50 years old, and you have seen Abraham?' Such an assertion is properly made to one who has passed 40 years of age, but who has not reached his 50th year, yet is still not far off his 50th year. But to one who was 30 years old it would unquestionably be said, 'You are not yet 40 years old.' Doubtless those who wished to prove Him a liar would not by any means extend his years much beyond the age-range which they saw, by personal observation, He had attained. Rather, they described the age-range as accurately as they could, either because they knew it by some census entry, or because they guessed it, using as a guide the age-range He seemed to them, by personal observation, to have reached, above 40, but certainly not the age-range up to 30 years old. It is against all reason, then, that they could be wrong by 20 years, when they wanted to demonstrate that He was younger than the times of Abraham. No. What they observed, they voiced. And He

Who was before their eyes was not some putative person, but reality. Therefore, He was not far removed from 50 years old, and so they said to Him, 'You are not yet 50 years old, and you have seen Abraham?' Thus, He did not preach one year, nor did He suffer death in the twelfth month. For the interval between the 30th year and the 50th year can never be one year, unless perchance, in the realm of their Aeons, the years deputed to those who are granted a place, quite outside the normal order, in Bythus, within the Pleroma, are of this higher magnitude, such ones as Homer the Poet also spoke of, himself likewise under the inspiration of the Mother of their error: 'The gods granted seats beside Zeus took counsel together in the Chamber of Gold.'"

This passage of Irenaeus is often misrepresented, particularly by those who doubt his claim to be an authentic transmitter of the doctrine of the Apostle John. Its meaning has been wrested, to give the impression that Irenaeus believed the preposterous notion that Jesus was almost 50 towards the end of His ministry. What Irenaeus actually said was Jesus looked as though He was between 40 and 50 years old, according to His Pharisaic enemies, and was, indeed, within the older age-range of 30 to 50 years, when He exercised His ministry. A major part of the problem has been the interpretation of the Latin *aetas* as "age in years" when it actually means "period of life" or "age-range." It is clear from a perusal of the context that Irenaeus held this older age-range, the *aetas* of the *senior*, to be the proper *aetas* of the teacher (*magister*) or Rabbi. Hence Jesus must have attained that age-range when He called His disciples or students, and thereafter He ministered for at least the three Passovers referred to in the Gospel of John. He was, therefore, at least 30 + 3 years old at the time of His Crucifixion. According to His enemies, as Irenaeus pointed out, Jesus looked even older, between 40 or 50, and they certainly would not have exaggerated His age too much, when their aim was to emphasize the superior antiquity of Abraham. Irenaeus thought, perhaps, the Pharisees had access to the census records and knew Jesus was in the age-range of the *senior*. These Scriptural evidences are used here with great aplomb by Irenaeus to discredit the Valentinian

theory that Jesus ministered for a single year at the age of 30.

Irenaeus:

Date of the Nativity "around" 3/2 BC (41st year of Augustus)

Date of the Crucifixion: at earliest "around" AD 31/32 (as Jesus was at least 33 years old at His Crucifixion)

Unidentified and Gnostic (Basilidian) Calculators apud Clement of Alexandria

Dating from an era slightly later than Irenaeus are the calculations recorded c. AD 200 by Clement of Alexandria in the Stromata (I. xxi = 144,4-146,4). Clement is quoting authorities other than himself, and, from his personal remarks on these calculations, it can be gathered he reserves judgment on their accuracy. First the introductory computations:

"Some set down the dates of the Roman emperors thus: —

"Caius Julius Caesar, three years, four months, five days; after him ... [etc.] ... Commodus, twelve years, nine months, fourteen days. From Julius Caesar, therefore, to the death of Commodus, are two hundred and thirty-six years, six months. And the whole from Romulus, who founded Rome, till the death of Commodus, amounts to nine hundred and fifty-three years, six months.

"And our Lord was born in the twenty-eighth year, when first the census was ordered to be taken in the reign of Augustus.

"And to prove that this is true, it is written in the Gospel by Luke as follows: 'And in the fifteenth year, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zacharias.' And again in the same

book: 'And Jesus was coming to His baptism, being about thirty years old,' and so on.

"And that it was necessary for Him to preach only a year, this also is written: 'He hath sent Me to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' This both the prophet spake, and the Gospel. Accordingly, in fifteen years of Tiberius and fifteen years of Augustus; so were completed the thirty years till the time He suffered.

"And from the time that He suffered till the destruction of Jerusalem are forty-two years and three months; and from the destruction of Jerusalem to the death of Commodus, a hundred and twenty-eight years, ten months, and three days.

"From when the Lord was born, therefore, to the death of Commodus are, in all, a hundred and ninety-four years, one month, thirteen days.

"And there are those who have determined, with still greater attention to detail, not only the year of our Lord's birth, but also the day; and they say that it took place in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus, and in the twenty-fifth day of Pachon. And the followers of Basilides hold the day of his baptism as a festival, spending the night before in readings. And they say that it was the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, the fifteenth day of the month Tybi; and some that it was the eleventh of the same month. And treating of His passion with precise calculation, some say that it took place in the sixteenth year of Tiberius, on the twenty-fifth of Phamenoth; and others the twenty-fifth of Pharmuthi and others say that on the nineteenth of Pharmuthi the Savior suffered. Further, others say that He was born on the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of Pharmuthi."

The death of Commodus was 31st December AD 192. Clement dates back from that point in time to the year, not the day, of Christ's birth, as is shown by the statement immediately following that "there are those who have determined, with still greater attention to detail, not only (i.e. as in the preceding calculation) the year of our Lord's birth, but also the day." If Clement was using the Roman calendar, the date of Christ's birth to the nearest year would be 18th November 3 BC, which seems nonsensical, as no calendar in the ancient world began or ended a year on that date. If Clement was using his native Egyptian calendar without intercalation, however, the same interval of 194 years (each year exactly 365 days long in the Egyptian calendar), one month (30 days per month), and thirteen days results in a date for the year of Christ's birth of 6th January 2 BC. This certainly is the method to be understood, as 6th January was the Egyptian winter solstice and New Year's Day, and 2 BC was the 28th year of Augustus' reign in Egypt. According to the usual reckoning of the years of Augustus' rule in Egypt (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, Table 134) his 28th year ran from August 29th 3 BC to August 28th 2 BC. In the Orthodox East 6th January is still celebrated as the memorial day of Christ's birth. From this statement of Clement we can conclude that some calculators known to him dated Jesus' birth to 2 BC, which agrees with the year-date for that event given by Irenaeus.

Two different calendar dates are also offered for the Nativity, using Egyptian calendar names: 1) 25th Pachon 2) 24th/25th Pharmuthi. In Julian dates, and using the native Egyptian calendar, 25th Pachon is 20th May and 24th/25th Pharmuthi is 19th/20th April. Clement speaks with reserve concerning these chronological calculations, merely repeating what he had heard from others. Still, his sources were unanimous that Jesus was born in the spring.

It is remarkable that Clement offers the same date (25th Pharmuthi) both for the birth and for the death of Jesus. The belief became increasingly widespread in the early Church that the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Jesus occurred on the same day, though in the post-Nicene era the spring date of the birth of Jesus was replaced by the winter solstitial date (25th December in the West, 6th January in the East), and the spring date of the Incarnation was reinterpreted as the day of the conception, rather than of the birth, of Jesus. In fact, Epiphanius, at the

end of the 4th century, records (Panarion LI. xxix.) a traditional date for the conception of Jesus of XII. Kal. Jul. or Jun. = 20th June or 21st May. The latter is only one day different from 25th Pachon = 20th May, which Clement of Alexandria says was a date he had heard of for the Nativity, but which is a month or more later than all other pre-Nicene dates for the same event. It is possible that already in Clement of Alexandria's day, the "birth" or "incarnation" of Jesus was believed by some to be the same thing as the conception. A difference of one day can easily arise in chronological computations like these which deal with events in Jewish history (compare, for example, "24th or 25th" of Pharmuthi in Clement's list here), as the Jewish day lasted from sunset of one day to sunset of another, and therefore a single Jewish day spanned two days in other calendars, such as the Egyptian and Roman, which started their days at midnight.

Note that the shortened chronology of the life of Jesus is referred to in the introductory computations recorded by Clement of Alexandria, in a context where Basilidian Gnostics are the only individuals named as having been involved in the calendrical calculations. The arguments of the proponents of this chronology are identical to those of the Valentinians refuted by Irenaeus (ut. cit. sup.), namely the age of Jesus at His baptism, followed by a single year's ministry for which the quotation "acceptable year [singular] of the Lord" serves as a proof text. The Passion is dated to the 16th year of Tiberius, which corresponds, according to one way of reckoning his regnal years, to AD 29, or alternatively to AD 30 (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, Table 150).

Unnamed and Basilidian calculators apud Clement of Alexandria:

Date of the Nativity: 19th/20th April or 20th May 2 BC (28th year of Augustus' rule in Egypt, 194 years, 1 month, 13 days preceding death of Commodus).

Date of the Crucifixion: 21st March or 14th or 20th April AD 29/30 (16th year of Tiberius).

Statue claimed to be of Hippolytus

There is in the Vatican Library Rome a statue claimed to be of Hippolytus, which dates from the generation either contemporary with or not long after Hippolytus himself, and which bears dates of Passover for the years AD 222 to 333. In the Paschal Tables on the statue the “Birth (Greek *genesis*) of Christ” is placed on IV. Non. Apr. = April 2nd in the 2nd year of the First Cycle. (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I, vol. 2, p. 392.)

The statue has been restored from its original, damaged, condition, and the name Hippolytus was nowhere on it when it was discovered in the 16th century. It seems originally to have been a statue of a seated woman. The 16-year Paschal Cycle inscribed on it is said by Eusebius to have been the invention of Hippolytus, and writings listed on the back of the statue are similar, in some instances identical, to those ascribed by tradition to Hippolytus. Its discoverers in the 16th century confidently labeled the statue that of the famous pre-Nicene divine. Even if the statue is actually Hippolytus, there is nothing to prove that the Paschal dates and the entries next to them, including the Nativity date, were the work of Hippolytus himself, as opposed to the notion of the 16-year cycle. In that case, the statue was commissioned as a mark of respect to the memory of Hippolytus by his admirers in a not far subsequent, if not contemporary, generation, perhaps by the same people who built the magnificent memorials to early Roman martyrs in this area of the Porta Tiburtina. They could have used it to advertise, or lend the weight of Hippolytus' name to, their own Paschal system or some, at least, of the Paschal entries. In fact, the birth date of Jesus on the statue, in the 2nd year of the First Cycle, is separated by not quite 31 years from the entry dating the Passion to VIII. Kal. Apr. (25th March), in the last year of the Second Cycle, and this is at variance with Hippolytus' chronology of the life of Jesus in the Commentary on Daniel, where Jesus is said, in the unamended text, to have suffered in the 33rd year subsequent to His birth. The shorter chronology of the Paschal Tables reflects a known heretical tradition, condemned by Hippolytus' own master, Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* I. i. 3 [ed. Harvey I. i. 1], II. xx. 1 [ed. Harvey II. xxxii. 1], and above, xxii. 1-6 = [ed. Harvey II. xxxii. 6 to xxxiii. 1-4]), that Jesus

ministered for only a single year following His Baptism.

As regards the year of the Nativity, Hippolytus' Commentary on Daniel (see *infra*) says 2nd April in the year of the Nativity was a Wednesday. That was the case in 2 BC and 8 BC. There is a broad consensus in the pre-Nicene Church Fathers, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Africanus, as well as the sectarian Tertullian, that the year of the Nativity was 3/2 BC (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, Table 139), identified variously as the 41st (variant 42nd) year of Augustus, the 28th year of Augustus' rule in Egypt, the year of Adam 5,500 (variant 5,502), and the 2nd year of the 194th Olympiad. Wednesday 2nd April 2 BC would be the preferred date of the Nativity according to this computation. It necessitates the acceptance of the more recent dating of the death of Herod to 1 BC, rather than the commonly accepted, but increasingly disputed, 4 BC.

This date for the Nativity, in combination with the date Friday 25th March AD 29, marking a day in the life of Jesus, if not the day of His Crucifixion, accurately reflects historical chronology in the first century AD. There is, in fact, only one chronological scheme possible within the widest range of dates which could be proposed for the life of Jesus, say from 15 BC at the earliest to AD 40 at the latest, when April 2nd fell on a Wednesday and March 25th on Friday, with an interval between of not quite 31 years, and that is precisely the scheme which commences on Wednesday 2nd April 2 BC and ends on Friday 25th March AD 29. (In AD 223, the 2nd year of the First Cycle of the Tables, and in AD 253, the last year of the Second Cycle, the dates April 2nd and March 25th likewise fell on a Wednesday and Friday respectively, which seems to provide the rationale for the memorial dates relating to the life of Jesus placed at those points in the Paschal Tables.) This means that the dates of the termini for this period in the life of Jesus are internally consistent, and the consensus of the early Church Fathers as regards the year of the Nativity at the same time strengthens confidence in the year, if not the calendar date, for the Nativity here given, and its more specific determination as 2 BC rather than 3 BC.

The other terminus, Friday 25th March AD 29, is

not viable as the historical date for the Crucifixion of Jesus. The objection that 25th March did not coincide with 14th Nisan, in AD 29, as calculated according to current or more recent, Rabbinic, calendrical principles, is well nigh insurmountable. It is true that we do not know precisely how the Jews calculated Passover in the era of the Second Temple. But, allowing for generous post-dating of Passover 14th Nisan several days beyond the true full moon, as a result of late observation of the first visible crescent, or as a result of some other astronomical consideration, 25th March is still a long way from when the Passover should have fallen that year, at the full moon on 18th March (Julian), or, if Passover was postponed one month, on or some time shortly following the full moon in April. Equally serious is the shortened chronology of the life of Jesus which it implies and which, as we have seen, has heretical associations.

Paschal Tables on the Statue claimed to be of Hippolytus:

Date of the Nativity: 2nd April (2 BC)
Date of the Crucifixion: 25th March (AD 29)

Hippolytus

A spring date for the Nativity is found in the earliest (10th century) MS of Hippolytus' Commentary on Daniel, IV. xxiii. 3, in the defective form *pro tessarôn Apriliôn*, which is, as reconstructed, IV. Non. Apr., 2nd April (Julian). (For the Greek click [here](#).) The passage reads in translation:

"The first coming of Our Lord, that in the flesh, in which he was born in Bethlehem, took place on the IVth <of the Nones> of April {the earliest extant MS adds here anomalously: "on the VIIIth of the Kalends of January"} on the 4th weekday [Wednesday], in the 42nd year of the reign of Augustus, in the 5,500th year from Adam."

In the earliest MS. of Hippolytus this spring date for the Nativity, *pro tessarôn Apriliôn*, is found

incongruously juxtaposed to the date for the Nativity commonly accepted in the post-Nicene era, December 25th (VIII. Kal. Jan., see the Greek and its translation above), and in the other MSS. of Hippolytus' Commentary on Daniel, the latter date has completely ousted the former. Hypothetically, the text could be read IV. <Kal.> Apr. (= 4 days counted inclusively before the Kalends [1st] of April), viz. 29th March, or IV. <Id.> Apr. (= 4 days counted inclusively before the Ides [13th] of April), viz. 10th April, rather than IV. <Non.> Apr. (= 4 days counted inclusively before the Nones [5th] of April), viz. 2nd April, but the date IV. Non. Apr. on the statue claimed to be of Hippolytus, which employs Hippolytus' 16-year Paschal cycle, favors the restoration suggested here.

On the year-date of Augustus, 42, rather than 41 as in Irenaeus, but its equation likewise with 3/2 BC, see *infra* on Eusebius. The 42nd year of Augustus counting in Julian calendar years on the accession-year system was 2 BC (Finegan, *op. cit.*, Table 132), and this may have been the particular chronological system employed here by the Roman Hippolytus.

Hippolytus goes on to date the Crucifixion, not to the consulship of the Two Gemini (AD 29), but, in the unamended text, to the year 33 years subsequent to the 42nd year of Augustus and equivalent to the consular year AD 32. Using an improbable grammatical construction, the text of Hippolytus dates the Crucifixion to the consulship following that of Tiberius Caesar (the Vth occasion, AD 31), in the 10th year distant from - which can, in the circumstances, only mean preceding - the consulship of Gaius Caesar IV and Gaius Cestius Saturninus (= AD 41). However, as we have seen, this section of the Commentary on Daniel, which includes the passage relating to the Nativity already cited, has been interpolated. If, as seems probable, the date VIII. Kal. Jan. for the Nativity is not authentic, then the calendrically related VIII. Kal. Apr. for the date of the Crucifixion in the succeeding passage, as well as the reference to the consulship of the Two Gemini, must be excised along with it. Even the spring date IV. Non. Apr. for the Nativity, though older than the winter date, is defective on the face of it, and may be an addition to the text, since it features as the Nativity terminus on the statue claimed to be of Hippolytus in tandem with the spurious VIII. Kal. Apr. = 25th March for

the Crucifixion. The relevant lines, which immediately follow the passage relating to the Nativity, read in translation:

"He [Christ] suffered (crucifixion) in the 33rd year {the text reads here: "on VIII. Kal. Apr. [= 25th March]"} on the Preparation day [Friday], and in the 10th year (in the interval) following [lit. from] the consulship of Tiberius Caesar [= AD 31] {the text adds anomalously here: "of Rufus and Rubellio [the Two Gemini = AD 29]"} preceding [lit. and from] that of Gaius Caesar for the IVth time (with) Gaius Cestius Saturninus [= AD 41]."

If the calendar date 2nd April is genuine, then Jesus was born, according to Hippolytus, several days (15 according to the later Rabbinic method of calculation) after the Passover full moon in 2 BC, around 28th Nisan. In fact, every one of the pre-Nicene dates suggested for the Nativity falls after the Passover full moon in 2 BC. Hippolytus states Jesus died in the 33rd year subsequent to that date. The reference to Jesus' age is likely based on an earlier reckoning by the Jewish calendar, probably on the 30th year of Luke, equated with the 15th year of Tiberius, followed by at least three Passovers, leading up to the 18th year of Tiberius = AD 32. This means Jesus would have turned 33 years old, in terms of the Jewish calendar, around 28th Nisan, i.e. after the Passover, in AD 32, and in that case, the only Passover possible for the Crucifixion of Jesus at age 33 would be the Passover in AD 33, not that in AD 32. The same holds true if the interpolated dates 25th December (VIII. Kal. Jan.) for the Nativity and/or 25th March (VIII. Kal. Apr.) for the Crucifixion are retained. The discrepancy is explicable if Hippolytus, like Africanus (see *infra*), was basing his calculation on a source which employed Olympiads rather than consular years. Dionysius of Halicarnassus dated Olympiads by the Roman consular year in which they began, rather than the consular year in which they ended. This practice was followed by Eusebius (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, §§320, 191). Hippolytus' consular date for the Crucifixion, AD 32, would correspond, under that arrangement, to the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad, which began in summer AD 32 and ended in summer 33. This Olympiad year was accepted as the year of the

Crucifixion by Hippolytus' pupil, Origen, and by the latter's friend, the famed Christian chronographer, Africanus (see *infra*). There was only one Passover in that Olympiad year and that was the Passover at the full moon on 3rd April AD 33, when Jesus was 33 years old, according to the texts of the Commentary on Daniel, as extant.

Given these conclusions, the original text may be reconstructed as follows (for the Greek, click [here](#)):

"He [Christ] suffered (crucifixion) in the 33rd year on the Preparation day [Friday], in the 18th year of Tiberius Caesar [= AD 32]."

The *êta* and *iôta* at the end of the word *paraskeuêi* (Preparation day) seem to have been confused at some point in the manuscript tradition with the *êta* and *iôta* immediately following that word and representing the numerals in the phrase *oktôi [êta] kai dekatôi [iôta] etei Tiberiou Kaisaros* ("in the eighteenth [lit. eighth and tenth] year of Tiberius Caesar"). This led to the disappearance of the numeric *êta* ("eighth"), so the phrase now read: *paraskeuêi kai dekatôi [iôta] etei Tiberiou Kaisaros* ("on the Preparation day and in the tenth year of Tiberius Caesar"). This was nonsense as it stood, since Jesus was baptized in the 15th year of Tiberius and could not have suffered in Tiberius' 10th year. It could only make sense if it meant "... and in the tenth year *from* Tiberius Caesar," understood as a reference to the 10th year following the consulship of Tiberius Caesar (in AD 31), viz. AD 41, the consulship of Gaius Caesar for the IVth time with Gaius Cestius Saturninus. Hence the appearance in the current text of the word *'upateuontos* ("when he was consul") following the name *Tiberiou Kaisaros*, and of the names of the consuls in AD 41. At some point the heretical dating to the VIII. Kal. Apr. and the consulship of the Two Gemini was also inserted.

[Hippolytus' Commentary on Daniel \(omitting what seem to be interpolations\):](#)

Date of the Nativity: (April 2nd?) 2 BC
Date of the Crucifixion: at the earliest AD 32 and more probably Passover (March/April, and in this particular year 3rd April) AD 33.

Africanus

Hippolytus' contemporary, the learned and accurate Sextus Julius Africanus, similarly dated the Crucifixion to AD 32/33. Africanus' Chronography only survives in fragments, but, according to the extant sources, he dated the *parousia* (public advent) of Jesus to the 5,531st year from Adam or Adam's "restoration" (Gk. *anastasis*, cf. Luke 2:34, the antonym of *ptōsis*, "fall"), and to the 16th year of Tiberius (in Africanus = AD 30, as proved by the following Olympiad date) and to the 2nd year of the 202nd Olympiad (which ran from summer AD 30 to summer AD 31). (Frag. 50 apud Georgius Syncellus, = ed. Mosshammer, 392. 5-6, 27-28, 393. 28-30 = ed. Dindorf, 611-612, 614.) He also accepted Phlegon's entry in his 13th book to be a reference to the darkness at the Crucifixion (see *infra*). Phlegon's date for the event was the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad (see *infra* under Eusebius), which ran from summer AD 32 to summer AD 33. Since there was only one Passover in the latter Olympiad, and that was in the spring of AD 33, it is clear Africanus dated the Crucifixion to Passover AD 33. If, as we have surmised, Hippolytus in the Commentary on Daniel was following the practice of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in dating Olympiads by the Roman consular year in which they began, rather than the consular year in which they ended, then his consular date for the Crucifixion, AD 32, is identical to the Olympiad date for the Crucifixion accepted by Africanus, Ol. 202, 4 (beginning summer AD 32 and ending summer 33). These Church Fathers, the highest authorities in the pre-Nicene period, implicitly rejected the short, Gnosticizing, chronology, which dated the Crucifixion to the consulship of the Two Gemini AD 29. Since Eusebius was careful to preserve all relevant data relating to New Testament chronology from his predecessors in the intellectual ambit of Origen, which included Africanus and Hippolytus, yet himself was unable to offer calendar dates for the Nativity and the Passion, but only regnal and Olympiad years (see *infra*), it is highly unlikely that either Hippolytus or Africanus, in the earliest texts or derivative texts of those authors available to Eusebius in the early part of the 4th century AD, gave such calendar dates.

From the Chronography of Julius
Africanus (fl. first half of the third

century AD), a fragment preserved in the original Greek apud Georgius Syncellus (ed. Mosshammer, 391. 1-23 = ed. Dindorf, 609-610): "FROM AFRICANUS ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH OUR SAVIOR'S PASSION AND HIS LIFE-GIVING RESURRECTION. As to His works severally, and His cures effected upon body and soul, and the mysteries of His doctrine, and the resurrection from the dead, these have been most authoritatively set forth by His disciples and apostles before us. On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Savior falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Let that opinion pass however; let it carry the majority with it; and let this portent of the world be deemed an eclipse of the sun, like others a portent only to the eye. Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period. But it

was a darkness induced by God,
because the Lord happened then to
suffer."

On the Nativity: Africanus dates the birth
("appearance," *epiphaneia*) of the Saving Word to
the year 5,500 from Adam (Frag. 10 apud Georgius
Syncellus, ed. Mosshammer, 18. 7-10 = ed.
Dindorf, 31). Reckoning back from the 5,531st year
from Adam which is equated with 16th year of
Tiberius = AD 30, the year 5,500 from Adam is 2
BC.

Africanus:

Date of the Nativity: 2 BC (5,500th year from
Adam, with year 5,531 from Adam falling in 16th
year of Tiberius, AD 30 = Ol. 202, 2 = AD 30/31).
Date of the Crucifixion: Passover (March/April, and
in this particular year 3rd April) AD 33 (Ol. 202,
4).

Origen

In a Greek fragment of the Homilies on Luke (Frag.
82 on Luke 3:1, Origenes Werke, vol. 9, Die
Homilien zu Lukas, ed. Max Rauer [GCS, 2nd ed.,
Berlin, Akademie, 1959] 260) Origen says Christ
was born in the 41st year of Augustus, that
Augustus reigned 56 years, and that after the birth
of Christ there remained 15 years. In Rome, after
the part year in which Julius Caesar died and before
the part-year in which he himself died, Augustus
reigned 56 full calendar years. From and including
2 BC Augustus reigned another 15 full years 2 BC
to AD 13. Beyer reckons what is here called the
41st year of Augustus ran from August 3 BC to
August 2 BC (Finegan, op. cit. p. 284 n. 30 and
ibid. §§ 487, 489, 491). The date is therefore 3/2
BC.

The account of Phlegon is summarized as follows
by Origen, a friend of Africanus:

"And with regard to the eclipse in the
time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose
reign Jesus appears to have been
crucified, and the great earthquakes
which then took place, Phlegon too, I
think, has written in the thirteenth or

fourteenth book of his Chronicles."
(Origen, Against Celsus 2. 33)

"Regarding these we have in the
preceding pages made our defense,
according to our ability, adducing the
testimony of Phlegon, who relates
that these events took place at the
time when our Savior suffered."
(Origen, Against Celsus 2. 59)

Origen:

Date of the Nativity: 3/2 BC (41st year of
Augustus)
Date of the Crucifixion: Passover (March/April, and
in this particular year 3rd April) AD 33 (Ol. 202,
4).

Tertullian

The Gnosticizing, short, chronology was adopted by
Tertullian, a Cataprocian Montanist. He dated the
birth of Jesus to the 41st year of Augustus, with 15
years remaining of his rule thereafter (= 3/2 BC),
and the Crucifixion to AD 29, the consulship of the
Two Gemini, and to the calendar date VIII. Kal.
Apr. = 25th March (Adv. Judaeos VIII. 11, 18):

Adv. Judaeos VIII. [11] "videmus
autem, quoniam in quadragesimo et
primo anno imperii Augusti, quo post
mortem Cleopatrae vicesimo et
octavo anno imperavit, nascitur
Christus. Et supervixit idem Augustus
ex quo natus est Christus annis
XV"

"Now we see that Christ was born in
the 41st year of the reign of
Augustus, in the 28th year he ruled as
emperor after the death of Cleopatra
[3/2 BC]. Also the same Augustus
lived on 15 years from the year Christ
was born"

VIII [18] "Quae passio Christi ...
perfecta est sub Tiberio Caesare,
consulibus Rubellio Gemino et Rufio

Gemino mense Martio temporibus paschae, die octavo Kalendarum Aprilium, die primo azymorum quo agnum occiderunt ad vesperam, sicut a Moyse fuerat praeceptum."

"The Passion of Christ ... was fulfilled under Tiberius Caesar, in the consulship of Rubellius Geminus and Rufius Geminus [AD 29], in the month of March, on the VIIIth of the Kalends of April [25th March], on the first day of unleavened bread when they slew the lamb towards evening, just as was commanded by Moses."

Montanists had a particular interest in observing days and years, which they held to be enjoined by the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit). The orthodox shunned the celebration of religious feast-days, and held such celebration, in fact, to be a mark of paganism and heresy (cf. e.g. Origen, Hom. in Lev. PG XII. 495, Comm. in Matt. PG XIII. 893f.). When we find a Montanist confidently announcing the precise day of the Crucifixion of Jesus, in a shortened chronology which was espoused by paganizing Gnostic heretics, and that day is known to have been one of the most important feast-days in pagan Rome, in the very cult, of the dying-god Attis, which the orthodox accused the Montanists of emulating (Tertullian, *De Jejun.* 16), we feel justified in doubting the veracity of that assertion.

The context of the chronological notices relating to the Nativity and Crucifixion of Jesus is an interpretation of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks. Tertullian explains the prophecy in such a way as to avoid a fulfillment with the arrival of the Messiah at a point in time subsequent to AD 29, i.e. Tertullian's date for the Crucifixion. An example of the rival, orthodox, interpretation is that offered by Africanus, in which Daniel's 70 weeks are fulfilled in the 16th year of Tiberius, AD 30, with the Messiah present on earth at that time.

The dating of the Crucifixion to the 25th of the month in the instances listed by Clement of Alexandria reinforces the conviction that these were schemes similar to Tertullian's, and perhaps the ultimate source of it. The pseudo-asceticism of Syrian Gnosis, which gave birth to Basilides,

certainly preceded the pseudo-asceticism of Montanism chronologically, and, according to one interpretation of a statement in the Muratorian Canon, Basilides was the actual founding father of Montanism. In that case there would be a direct historical connection between the chronological speculations of the Basilidian Gnostics referred to by Clement and the chronological scheme of Tertullian.

The Montanists replaced the Jewish lunar (or rather luni-solar) calendar with a solar one, like that used in the pagan cultures around them, in which sun-worship was the prevalent form of religious expression. In the Montanist system, therefore, the notional date of the spring equinox, 24th/25th March in the West, 9 months prior to the notional winter solstice date 25th December, and 6th April in the East, 9 months prior to the Egyptian winter solstice date 6th January, became the fixed solar dates corresponding to the Jewish 14th Nisan (Sozomen, *Ecc. Hist.* VII. 18). Hence the appearance of 25th March as the date of the Crucifixion in Tertullian, in place of the historical 14th Nisan.

Tertullian:

Date of the Nativity: 3/2 BC (41st year of Augustus).

Date of the Crucifixion: 25th March AD 29.

Montanist Tract AD 243 (De Pascha Computus)

That Montanists were interested in building on the chronology of Hippolytus to further their own liturgical ends is demonstrated by a North African tract of a Montanist cast, datable to AD 243, and known from the title of one of the two surviving forms of the text as *De Pascha Computus*. The calculations contained in it run up to, and no farther than, the consulship of Arrianus and Papus (= AD 243). One of the two surviving texts of this tract (codex Remensis) claims to be the work of Tertullian's devotee, Cyprian. However, the date AD 243 precedes Cyprian's acceptance of Christianity. This codex may, therefore, preserve a reworking, perhaps, in fact, by Cyprian, of an earlier tract, represented, imperfectly or in part, by the other codex (codex Cottonianus in the British

Museum, Cal., A 15, fols. 97v-105v). This lacks the ascription to Cyprian and the title *De Pascha Computus*, and preserves a chronology of the Passion at variance with that of the former and similar to that of Tertullian. Both forms of the tract attempt to apply the Paschal Cycle credited to Hippolytus to the problem of computing the dates of Passover, in terms of the Julian calendar, from the Exodus to AD 243. The author of the original tract claims to have arrived at his solution, as a Montanist might be expected to do, by divine inspiration. His results were embodied in a Table (*pinax*) like that found on the statue claimed to be of Hippolytus.

Working on the understanding that the spring equinox on the 25th March was the first day of creation, the author of the Cyprianic form of the text (codex Remensis) points out the parallel that Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, was born on the same weekday, Wednesday, and on the same calendar date, 28th March, that the literal sun was formed (the 4th day of creation):

De Pascha Computus 19: "O quam praeclara et divina Domini providentia, ut in illo die quo factus est sol in ipso die nasceretur Christus V. Kl. Apr. feria IIII. et ideo de ipso merito ad plebem, dicebat Malachias propheta: oriatur vobis sol iustitiae, et curatio est in pennis eius."

"O how admirable and divine is the providence of the Lord, that on that day on which the sun was made on the same day was Christ born, the Vth of the Kalends of April, the 4th day of the week, and so rightly did the prophet Malachi say to the people: 'the sun of righteousness shall rise upon you, with healing in his wings.'"

Equal emphasis is put on the day of the week, Wednesday, and the calendar date, 28th March, to draw out the typological comparison with the days of creation. These days are numbered according to the Jewish method: the first day of the week (the first day of creation) is Sunday, and the 4th day of the week (the day of the formation of the sun, moon and stars) is Wednesday. The Nativity date 28th March in the Cyprianic text (codex Remensis) is

also Passover (defined as the XVth day of the moon), as 2nd April is in the Paschal Tables on the statue claimed to be of Hippolytus. The slight difference in calendar dates for the Nativity is matched by a difference in calendar dates for the Passion. That is dated, not to Passover 25th March in the 16th year of Tiberius, as on the statue, but to Passover, Friday, 9th April, in the same imperial year (*De Pascha Computus* 9). 9th April in AD 29, however, is astronomically even more remote from the true Passover full moon that year than 25th March. The preceding full moon was 18th March Julian and 9th April falls a third of a lunar month before the next full moon. Historically, therefore, 9th April AD 29 is not a viable date for the Crucifixion. The year is dated (*ibid.* 22) 215 years before the consulship of Arrianus and Papus (AD 243), which is correctly, if counted inclusively, AD 29. Like the Table on the statue, the author adheres to the Gnosticizing scheme in which Jesus ministered for a single year only, terminating in the 16th year of Tiberius. He is said to have been born and to have died on the Passover, and therefore to have been precisely 31 years of age at His death.

In the Cottonian codex, contrariwise, the birth day 28th March is omitted (the creation equinox being dated in the Alexandrian style to 22nd March) and the Passion is dated to 25th March. The Passion date represents more perfectly the widespread Gnosticizing scheme already referred to. Like Tertullian, the Cottonian codex dates the Passion, following a single year's ministry, to 25th March in the 16th year of Tiberius, and the Nativity 31 years earlier, i.e. to 2 BC, passing by the calendar date of the latter event.

A consideration - of relevance because of the tract's Montanist milieu - is that, as the notional date of the spring equinox, March 25th had a special place in the fertility cult of Attis. It was not only the dawn of the season of light, but also, more specifically, the festal day Hilaria, on which the god's revival of life was celebrated. Here, then, in the Cyprianic chronology of the birth of Jesus we may detect an attempt to incorporate the Nativity into the annual cycle of the paganizing Montanist liturgy, as the date of the Passion had already been, by identifying the new-born Christ with the Sun, which, in turn, was identified with Attis and was the chief deity in the pagan pantheon.

Solar imagery of the kind employed in the Cyprianic De Pascha Computus became more extreme as time went on. It was adopted by the later tradition, at first in the Western, and subsequently in the Eastern, branches of the Church, and molded to new purposes. The birth of the Son of God was now identified with the birth, not the formation, of the sun, or, rather, of the Sun-god, Sol Invictus, on the winter solstice date, December 25th (VIII. Kal. Jan.). The post-Nicene Church thus baptized the mixed pagan-Christian festival which had been invented long before by the first-century heretic Cerinthus and the lections for which were the work of the second-century heretic Artemon: this according to the medieval Armenians, who opposed that particular date for the Nativity and adhered to the Oriental 6th January. Ananias of Shirak (fl. c. AD 600-650) reports the tradition that the followers of Cerinthus first separated the Savior's birth (on December 25) from His baptism (on January 6). This is further explained by Paul of Taron (ob. AD 1123) Adv. Theopistum 222, who says Artemon calculated the dates of the Annunciation as March 25 and the birth as December 25 ("the birth not, however, of the Divine Being but only of the mere man" according to Artemon's Adoptianist theology), calculating the dates from those of the conception and nativity of John the Baptist (implying the latter was at the summer solstice by his reckoning, with a 6 month interval between, Lk. 1. 26). Earlier traces of a similar tradition are the entry in the 6th century Liber Pontificalis (Book of Popes) which ascribes the introduction of the Midnight Mass, and the singing of the Gloria in Excelsis on the birthday of the Lord, as well as the 40-day Lenten fast before Easter, to the early second century Bishop of the First Church of Rome, Telesphorus (sub nom.: "hic fecit, ut natalem domini nostri Iesu Christi noctu missas celebrarentur: nam omni tempore ante horae tertiae cursum nullus praesumeret missas celebrare, qua hora dominus noster ascendit crucem; et in ingressu sacrificii hymnus diceretur angelicus, hoc est: Gloria in excelsis deo et cetera, tantum noctu natale domini:" "he [Telesphorus] made services [Latin: missas] to be celebrated by night on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ [another reading: of the Lord Christ]: the reason being that none should presume to go ahead and celebrate services before the third hour [9 AM], since it is on that hour that our Lord goes up upon the cross; also at the entrance of the sacrifice [another reading: before the sacrifice] the angelic hymn should be recited, that is 'Glory to

God in the highest,' etc. only on the night of the birthday of the Lord:" and "hic constituit, ut septem ebdomadas ante pascha ieiunium celebraretur:" "he ordained, that for seven weeks before Pascha a fast should be celebrated."), and the allegation in an early, pre-Nicene source that Artemon's theology was that of all the bishops of the First Church of Rome in the 2nd century BC preceding Victor, which would include Telesphorus (Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. xxviii. 1-3). A key concept of the same theology of Artemon, in its latter-day reincarnation, the Monarchianism of Paul of Samosata, viz. the *homoousion*, became the watchword of the victorious partisans of Rome in the Council of Nicea. It was, in that case, Artemon's solar date which now supplanted the historical spring Nativity date in the post-Nicene period.

Montanist tract AD 243 (C = Codex Cottonianus), De Pascha Computus (R = Codex Remensis):

Date of the Nativity: Passover Wednesday 28th March (R), 2 BC (31 years before the 16th year of Tiberius).

Date of the Crucifixion: Passover Friday 25th March (C), or Passover Friday 9th April (R) AD 29 (16th year of Tiberius).

Eusebius

Though he wrote on the boundary of the Nicene age, Eusebius preserved numerous excerpts and traditions from pre-Nicene writers, particularly those, like the chronographer Africanus, in the circle of Origen. In his Ecclesiastical History c. AD 325 (I. v. 2) Eusebius dates the birth of Jesus to the 42nd year of Augustus and the 28th year of his reign in Egypt. Likewise in Jerome's edited translation of Eusebius' Chronicle the Nativity is dated to the 42nd year of Augustus. The year is 3/2 BC, using a different method of reckoning Augustus' Roman regnal years than that employed by some earlier Christian chronographers examined here, but the same Egyptian regnal year (Finegan, op. cit., Tables 128, 129, 92, §§ 337, 492).

The following excerpts are from Jerome's edited Latin translation of the original Greek of Eusebius' Chronicle (with variations in the Armenian translation of the Chronicle introduced by "Ar.").

The numbers in square brackets [] are years from Abraham.

Ol. 194.2 {= summer 3 BC to summer 2 BC} [2014] [2008 in Ar.]
In addition to the cruelties mentioned above, Herodes killed the husband of his sister Salome, and after he gave her in marriage to another man, he killed him as well. He also murdered the scribes and the interpreters of the holy law.

[not in Ar.] Tertullianus, in his book "Against the Jews", states that Christ was born in the 41st year of Augustus, and suffered in the 15th year of Tiberius.

Ol. 194.3 {= summer 2 BC to summer 1 BC} [2015] Jesus ["Christ" – Ar.], the son of God, was born at Bethlehem in Judaea.

Ol. 194.4 {= summer 1 BC to summer 1 AD} [2016] [2015 in Ar.]
Quirinius was sent to Judaea by decree of the senate, to hold a census of the people and their possessions.

[2015 in Ar.] From Abraham up until the birth of Christ, there is a total of 2,015 years.

Immediately following the passage cited earlier from Africanus, Syncellus quotes Eusebius' Chronicle verbatim in the original Greek as follows (ed. Mosshammer, 394. 1-11 = ed. Dindorf, 614):

"Jesus Christ ... underwent his passion in the 18th [in the Armenian translation of the Chronicle 19th] year of Tiberius [AD 32-33]. Also at that time in another Greek compendium we find an event recorded in these words: "the sun was eclipsed, Bithynia was struck by an earthquake, and in the city of Nicaea many buildings fell." All these things happened to occur during the Lord's passion. In fact, Phlegon, too, a

distinguished reckoner of Olympiads, wrote more on these events in his 13th book, saying this: "Now, in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad [summer AD 32 to summer AD 33], a great eclipse [*ekleipsis* = failure] of the sun occurred at the sixth hour [noon] that excelled every other before it, turning the day into such darkness of night that the stars could be seen in heaven, and the earth moved in Bithynia, toppling many buildings in the city of Nicaea."

Eusebius:

Date of the Nativity: 3/2 BC (42nd year of Augustus by his reckoning).

Date of the Crucifixion: Passover (March/April, and in this particular year 3rd April) AD 33.

CONCLUSION

Date of the Nativity:

All agree on a calendar date in April, either 2nd, 19th or 20th, except for one 28th March, which is omitted in the other form of the relevant text, and a second 20th May, which was possibly originally a date for Jesus' conception: all further agree on the year-date 2 BC. The year-date is agreed on by all, heretical and orthodox, but the calendar-date is not attested amongst the orthodox, unless the 2nd April entry in Hippolytus' Commentary on Daniel is original (which is unlikely).

Date of the Crucifixion:

Orthodox: All agree on a year-date of AD 32/33, with the most reliable

accepting the precise date that can be deduced from Phlegon's Olympiadic entry, April 3rd AD 33.

Heretical or Unidentified (including Gnostic and Montanist): All agree on the year-date AD 29 and most on the calendar-date 25th March (with unique variations: 9th, 14th, 20th April or 21st March).

Therefore, the pre-Nicene year-date of the Nativity may be declared, unanimously, to have been 2 BC, with a tradition preserved in unidentified or heretical circles that the month was April. Considering that the same or similar heretical traditions preserved a near-accurate calendar date for the Crucifixion (March or April in all cases), it is probable that the 2nd April date is not too far off the mark.

The orthodox pre-Nicene date of the Crucifixion may fairly be declared to have been Passover AD 33 (which can be calculated to have fallen at the full moon on 3rd April that year), and its heretical rival was 25th March AD 29, which did not coincide with, or even fall near to, the Passover full moon that year. The more historically viable date is undoubtedly the first.

Biblical and Other Evidence of the Correctness of the Pre-Nicene Dating

Evidence relating to the date of the Crucifixion is examined in detail in [The First Church of Rome Appendix 1](#).

As regards the dating of the Nativity, only one of the calendar dates in April, 2nd April, allows for a normal gestation (of 41 weeks) beginning with a known, traditional, date for the conception which has roots in the pre-Nicene era. The calendar date for the conception is the Jewish day sunset 19th to sunset 20th June 3 BC. This is one of two traditional dates for the conception preserved by Epiphanius of Salamis (Panarion LI. xxix), and already referred to, viz., in terms of the Roman calendar, XII Kal. Jun. (21st May) or XII Kal. Jul. (20th June).

A gestation of 38 weeks (266 days = 9 lunar months of 29.5 days each) is standard. In modern times, mortality rates for more prolonged pregnancies are as follows (figures from a study published in AD 1958): 10 out of 1000 newborn infants die at 40 weeks' gestation, 17 out of 1000 at 42 weeks and 50 out of 1000 at 45 weeks. A conception on 20th/21st May 3 BC, with a birth on 19th or 20th April 2 BC, falls outside the range of possible dates, if the gestation was anything near normal. A birth on 2nd April is also a very improbable 46 weeks after the same May date for the conception. However, a gestation of the standard 38 weeks beginning with a conception on 19th/20th June 3 BC would terminate with a birth on 13th March 2 BC and a more prolonged pregnancy would be in its 41st week on 2nd April (but at the outer range of possibility on 19th or 20th April). A slightly prolonged, but still normal, pregnancy of 41 weeks might be expected in the case of a first child born by natural processes to a young mother like Mary. This evidence tends to confirm the birth date of 2nd April.

In fact, Epiphanius preserves two traditions about the length of the gestation. One is quite improbable, that it lasted a mere seven months. This conveniently allows for a birth on Jan. 6th, which accords with the tradition of the Eastern Church: Jan. 6th is 4 days short of seven lunar months (of 29.5 days each), i.e. 202 complete days inclusive, from 19th June in the preceding year. Epiphanius defines the interval in these words – "7 months according to the course of the moon bar 4 days" – which is 202, not 201, complete days, so it is clear he believed the day of conception included 19th June and therefore the traditional date of the conception was really the Jewish day sunset to sunset 19th/20th June, rather than 20th June *per se*.

This improbable tradition is paired in Epiphanius with a much more probable one, and that defines the duration of the pregnancy as "10 months bar 14 days and 8 hours," i.e. 41 weeks, the exact period identified by other evidence as the one which fits the traditional dates of the conception and birth. The unnamed adherents of this tradition looked to a verse in the book called the "Wisdom of Solomon" as scriptural proof of their calculation, in which Solomon (the lesser son of David) speaks of himself in his mother's womb as "congealed in blood in a ten-month period" (Wisdom 7. 2). Epiphanius makes no mention of the "course of the moon"

when he cites this other tradition and the "Wisdom of Solomon" is of Alexandrian derivation, therefore it is likely the months here are the standard Egyptian solar months of 30 days each. The starting-point is, presumably, the same as in the preceding calculation, 19th/20th June, and the period of gestation comprises, at 30 days per month, 286 complete days. 286 days from 20th June 3 BC terminate on April 2nd 2 BC, and this, therefore, may be presumed to have been the preferred birth-date in this tradition also.

It has been held contrariwise that the months here are lunar months of 29.5 days each because Epiphanius defines the period in two ways: first as "10 months bar 14 days and 8 hours" – which seems to be the tradition as Epiphanius received it, expressed in full months minus so many days, like the other gestation tradition - then "so as to comprise 9 months 15 days 4 hours" – which may be Epiphanius' restatement of the period. The latter phrase has been taken (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, §559) to indicate that the last month was 29 days 12 hours long, and therefore that lunar months were the basis of the calculation. The period of gestation would then have comprised 281 complete days from June 20th 3 BC terminating on 28th March 2 BC – which seems to provide an explanation for that birth date in the Cyprianic *De Pascha Computus*. The birth still fell within the 41st week. This may have been Epiphanius' understanding of the tradition. However, for the reasons stated concerning the phraseology of the passage and the better accreditation otherwise of 2nd April, the reckoning of the months as standard Egyptian solar months is preferable.

In the Gospel of Luke the Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus is dated to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist (Lk. 1. 26, 36). The Annunciation was on or near the day of the conception of Jesus, as it was around three months thereafter that John was born (Lk. 1. 56), and if the conception of Jesus was indeed on the Jewish day sunset 19th to sunset 20th June 3 BC, then the conception of John the Baptist was some time in December 4 BC.

It is possible to check this date for the conception of John against other data provided by the Gospel of Luke. The conception of John followed promptly

upon an angelic visitation which occurred when his father's priestly course, the course of the family Abijah, was on duty in the Temple at Jerusalem. Every priestly family served on rota for one week in the Temple. The angel is said to have appeared to John's father, Zechariah, at some point during the (7) "days" of his course, and then Zechariah returned home and John is said to have been conceived "after these days." John's mother then retired in seclusion for "five months." The contrast in the wording of the relevant passage between "days" and "months" suggests that the conception of John followed less than a single month after the angelic visitation. Of the two most likely schemes dating the periods of the priestly rota, the one favored by Finegan (*Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 1998, §472) places the week of ministry of the course of Abijah in November, the 10th to the 17th (Heshvan 17-24) 4 BC. That would place the conception of John no later than around the second week of December 4 BC. In the sixth month from then and not later, therefore, than around the second week of June occurred the Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary of the birth of Jesus. The conception of Jesus, as already pointed out, followed immediately upon or within a short interval subsequent to the Annunciation, since Mary thereafter visited John's mother in Judaea and John was born three months after that episode. Allowing for the possibility of a late delivery of the infant John, up to, say, 42 weeks or 4 weeks beyond term, the most probable time for the conception of Jesus was within 4 weeks of the second week of June. The date 19th/20th June falls precisely within that time frame.

Summary of Dates:

Course of Abijah and Angelic Visitation to Zechariah: between November 10th and 17th 4 BC.

Conception of John, the Baptist early December 4 BC.

Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary, early June 3 BC.

Conception of Jesus sunset 19th to sunset 20th June 3 BC.

Birth of John the Baptist around September 3 BC.

Birth of Jesus 2nd April 2 BC.

Death of Jesus April 3rd AD 33.

APPENDIX 8 - THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS AND THE PASCHAL CONTROVERSY

A curious tradition is preserved in the Book of Popes concerning the Shepherd of Hermas and the Paschal controversy. The citation below is from G. Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century*, p. 211f., n. 2: "Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.* p. 58. The passage stands thus in the Felician Abridgement: 'Pius, natione Italus, ex patre Rufino, frater Pastoris, de [continued p. 212 n.] civitate Aquileia, sedit ann. xviii, mens. iiii, dies iii. Fuit temporibus Antonii Pii a consulatu Clari et Severi. Sub huius episcopatu frater ipsius Hermis librum scripsit, in quo mandatum continetur quod praecepit angelus Domini cum venit ad eum in habitu pastoris, et praecepit ei ut sanctum Paschae die dominica celebraretur.' The Cononian Abridgement omits frater ipsius There is no reference to the Easter controversy in *The Shepherd*." The entry reads as follows in translation: "Pius, an Italian by nationality, whose father was Rufinus, and who was the brother of Pastor, from the city of Aquileia, presided [over the Church of Rome] 18 years, 4 months, 3 days. This was in the era of [the Emperor] Antoninus Pius, from the consulate of Clarus and Severus. In the time when he was Bishop, his brother [Pastor] wrote the Book of Hermas, in which is contained a Mandate which an Angel of the Lord instructed him [to observe] when he came to him in the dress of a Shepherd [Latin: pastor]; he also instructed him as to how the divinely sanctioned ordinance of Pascha [Passover] might be celebrated on the Lord's Day." Begging to differ with Mr. Edmundson, the following investigation will show where *The Shepherd of Hermas* touches on the Paschal controversy.

Hermas, Sim. V. 1-7: In the Shepherd's parable of the servant and the vineyard (reproduced below), the master (God) returns (the Second Coming) to

his vineyard (the Church) and rewards his servant (the incarnate Son of God) with joint inheritance alongside his own son (the Son of God qua Spirit) for tending the master's vineyard with diligence, and the servant receives, a little while thereafter, extra congratulations for sharing out food sent to him from the master's table amongst his fellow-servants. By the symbolism of the servant's distribution of the master's food, the Shepherd instructs Hermas as to the kind of fast he himself is required to perform. He tells Hermas that the real fast is SPIRITUAL, and that righteous and charitable behavior constitutes a true fast, whilst literal fasting is an additional and subsidiary free-will service to God. Accordingly he instructs Hermas to fast literally on the "day" of his "station", and to fast spiritually at the same time, by distributing the food he otherwise would have eaten on that day to the needy. Hermas' literal fast is the additional free-will service to God (like the servant's distribution of food in the parable), complementing the spiritual fast (typed by the exemplary diligence of the servant), which is care for the poor.

What is the bearing of all this on the Paschal debate, which hinged on whether or not the Paschal fast should terminate on the "Lord's Day", or Easter Sunday? The eastern churchmen, by custom, but without obligation, broke their fast at the beginning of the Jewish Day of the Passover in the evening (the Jewish day beginning around 6 pm in the evening), whatever day of the week that happened to be in any given year, and celebrated a communion meal in remembrance of Jesus' original Last Supper, which occurred precisely at that time. The bishops of the First Church of Rome held, on the other hand, that one must fast throughout the days leading up to Easter Sunday, including, if calendrically necessary, the day of the Jewish Passover itself, and on Easter Sunday, and on that day only, break the Paschal fast, as a festal celebration of the Resurrection. The rigid practice of the First Church of Rome was admitted, even by its advocate, the sectarian lawyer Tertullian, to be reminiscent of the obligatory fasting and mortification imposed on devotees of the pagans' Great Mother Goddess, whose Spring festival was celebrated in Rome and elsewhere at that same time of year.

To discover how Hermas' Similitude affected the Paschal controversy, it is necessary first to explain

the symbolic meaning of Sunday, particularly Easter Sunday, in the Early Church. Originally, the "Lord's Day", "he hemera kuriake" in Greek, dies dominica in Latin, meant the Day of the Lord, so called by the Old Testament prophets, i.e., in New Testament terms, the Day of the Resurrection and the Second Coming of Jesus (already in the Book of Revelation 1. 10, in a passage where the representation of Jesus as Judge, and of His coming as with clouds, necessitate an eschatological interpretation). Now, in the Early Church, Sunday was a weekly, and Easter Sunday an annual, festal, re-enactment, or symbolic representation, of that great Day of the Resurrection, because it was on a Sunday, the first Sunday of the Passover (Easter) period, that Jesus rose from the dead. Hence Sunday, particularly Easter Sunday, also came to be referred to in the Early Church as "dies dominica", the "Lord's Day".

Now, the Shepherd draws a comparison, in his parable, between that great, eschatological, Day of the Lord, on the one hand (i.e. the Day of the Second Coming and the Resurrection, when, according to the parable, the servant is rewarded and distributes his food as an act of compassion), and the "day" of Hermas' fast, on the other, when Hermas must distribute, like the good servant, his food to the needy. On the basis of this comparison, around which the whole Similitude revolves, it can be concluded that the "day" of Hermas' fast is actually, or, at least, could be held to be, the "dies dominica", the Lord's Day, or Easter Sunday, the annual type par excellence of the eschatological Day of the Lord. In other words, the Shepherd's instruction permitted and regulated, or, could be held to have permitted and regulated, as a good and holy thing, fasting on Easter Sunday. This, of course, was anathema to the bishops of the First Church of Rome. It is noteworthy that the sectarian lawyer, Tertullian, who advocated the First Church of Rome's Paschal practice, also vehemently denied the inspiration of the Shepherd of Hermas.

In view of the mention in the Book of Popes of both Hermas and his brother Pius in this connection, it is possible that the entry was originally intended to background a point of difference between the prophet and the bishop. The document, "The First Church of Rome", explains how Pius separated from the fellowship of his brother Hermas which gathered at the Baths of Novatus at Santa Pudenziana and became bishop of the rival church

at Santa Prassede. The church Pius joined welcomed in its ranks Gnostic teachers who combined pagan rituals and beliefs with a very diluted form of Christianity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that one of the strongly-held dogmas of the church at Santa Prassede was the Easter fast, reminiscent, as it was, of the pagan mortifications practiced in the cult of the Great Mother. Significantly, the same Similitude of Hermas which contains the parable on fasting contains also a denial of the typical, dualistic, Gnostic, belief that the physical body is of no account (hence the Gnostics' propensity for extreme asceticism and for ritual mortification of the flesh) and a rejection of the view that spirit is divorced from matter (Sim. V. 7).

To the first Christian converts at Rome, who will have been, in the main, Jews by nationality, and to their successors under the prophet Hermas at Santa Pudenziana, there was nothing unusual in fasting on Sunday. Sunday had no particular significance in the Old Testament, and to the original Jewish Christians it was simply the "first day of the week". To certain Gnostic groups, however, who borrowed and adapted rituals from pagan cults, Sunday, particularly Sunday at the festival of the Spring Equinox (coinciding roughly with the time of the Jewish Passover) was sacred as the "day of the Sun-god". That day had to be observed in a ritually specific manner. The sectarians at Santa Prassede justified their observance of Easter Sunday, which involved breaking an obligatory fast and eating a sacred meal, by citing the practice of the Apostle Peter. They claimed that he celebrated Easter Sunday by breaking his fast on that day. No evidence was forthcoming to substantiate this claim. Perhaps the only evidence in the canonical Scriptures was the reference in the Gospels to how Jesus on the Sunday of the resurrection requested some fish and honeycomb from Peter and the disciples and ate it in front of them as proof that He had a glorified, resurrected, but truly physical body. The mention of fish and honey could be held to be evidence that the Apostles broke their fast on that day. Even if that is true, it would not justify the obligatory, ritualistic, manner in which the church at Santa Prassede celebrated their eucharist on Easter Sunday. The Christians at Santa Pudenziana recognized the whole thing for what it was - a borrowing from the pagan cult of the Great Mother.

It seems to have been just before Hermas became pastor at Santa Pudenziana that the split occurred in the church there, and one of the ordained elders of that fellowship, a man called Sixtus, crossed over to the Gnostic group at Santa Prassede, becoming the first of a line of bishops at that church.

(Immediately prior to this, the group at Santa Prassede had been a Gnostic school with Gnostic teachers, not bishops, at their head.) Sixtus is called the son of "Pastor" in the *Liber Pontificalis* and was probably, therefore, the son of Hermas. The angel in Hermas' vision had warned Hermas of the sorry spiritual state of his children and Sixtus confirmed the same by his defection to the Gnostics. Sixtus and the succeeding bishops at Santa Prassede adopted that group's pagan Easter Sunday ritual, for which they claimed the authority of the Apostle Peter. The evidence for this is outlined in the document "The First Church of Rome". Pius, a natural brother of Hermas, crossed over to the Gnostic church either at the same time as Sixtus or somewhat later, and eventually also became a bishop there, following Sixtus' apostatizing example. Hermas, at the time of Sixtus' apostasy a very elderly man, seems to have replaced him as pastor at Santa Pudenziana. Since Irenaeus specifically refers to Sixtus as the first of the bishops at Santa Prassede and the first who practiced the Easter Sunday ritual, it can hardly be accidental that the Book of Popes mentions the Easter controversy in connection with Sixtus' contemporary, Hermas.

This note in the Book of Popes may well hark back to the original incident which sparked off the schism between Sixtus and the other members of the church at Santa Pudenziana, namely, a dispute centered around prophecies contained in the Shepherd of Hermas. It can be imagined that there might be friction between the high-brow Sixtus, author of the pseudo-philosophical Sentences, and the poor ex-slave, Hermas, author of the unintellectual Shepherd. Hermas' earnest call for repentance and humility within his own family and the church and his rebuke of the elders at Santa Pudenziana might well have aggravated the situation. When Sixtus and Pius crossed over to the Gnostics, they had to face the allegation from the Christians at Santa Pudenziana that the Gnostic Easter Sunday ritual was of pagan origin. They countered this by pointing to the example and practice of the Apostle Peter, as they elaborated it from the simple Scriptural account of what

happened on the Sunday of the resurrection. They argued, on the contrary, that Pastor Hermas at Santa Pudenziana was a heretic. The fasting issue in Hermas' Similitude was seized on as proof that Hermas' visions, accepted without question by the Christians at Santa Pudenziana, were spurious, the example of the Apostle Peter being held to demonstrate that the proper, and, indeed, only permissible, practice was to break the Paschal Fast on Easter Sunday.

SIMILITUDE FIFTH

OF TRUE FASTING AND ITS REWARD: ALSO OF PURITY OF BODY

CHAPTER 1 While fasting and sitting on a certain mountain, and giving thanks to the Lord for all His dealings with me, I see the Shepherd sitting down beside me, and saying, "Why have you come hither [so] early in the morning?" "Because, sir," I answered, "I have a station." "What is a station?" he asked. "I am fasting, sir," I replied. "What is this fasting," he continued, "which you are observing?" "As I have been accustomed, sir," I reply, "so I fast." "You do not know," he says, "how to fast unto the Lord: this useless fasting which you observe to Him is of no value." "Why, sir," I answered, "do you say this?" "I say to you," he continued, "that the fasting which you think you observe is not a fasting. But I will teach you what is a full and acceptable fasting to the Lord. Listen," he continued: "God does not desire such an empty fasting. For fasting to God in this way you will do nothing for a righteous life; but offer to God a fasting of the following kind: Do no evil in your life, and serve the Lord with a pure heart: keep His commandments, walking in His precepts, and let no evil desire arise in your heart; and believe in God. If you do these things, and fear Him, and abstain from every evil thing, you will live unto God; and if you do these things, you will keep a great fast, and one acceptable before God.

CHAPTER 2 "Hear the Similitude which I am about to narrate to you relative to fasting. A certain man had a field and many slaves, and he planted a certain part of the field with a vineyard, and selecting a faithful and beloved and much valued slave, he called him to him, and said, 'Take this vineyard which I have planted, and stake it until I come, and do nothing else to the vineyard; and

attend to this order of mine, and you shall receive your freedom from me.’ And the master of the slave departed to a foreign country. And when he was gone, the slave took and staked the vineyard; and when he had finished the staking of the vines, he saw that the vineyard was full of weeds. He then reflected, saying, ‘I have kept this order of my master: I will dig up the rest of this vineyard, and it will be more beautiful when dug up; and being free of weeds, it will yield more fruit, not being choked by them.’ He took, therefore, and dug up the vineyard, and rooted out all the weeds that were in it. And that vineyard became very beautiful and fruitful, Having no weeds to choke it. And after a certain time the master of the slave and of the field returned, and entered into the vineyard. And seeing that the vines were suitably supported on stakes, and the ground, moreover, dug up, and all the weeds rooted out, and the vines fruitful, he was greatly pleased with the work of his slave. And calling his beloved son who was his heir, and his friends who were his councilors, he told them what orders he had given his slave, and what he had found performed. And they rejoiced along with the slave at the testimony which his master bore to him. And he said to them, ‘I promised this slave freedom if he obeyed the command which I gave him; and he has kept my command, and done besides a good work to the vineyard, and has pleased me exceedingly. In return, therefore, for the work which he has done, I wish to make him coheir with my son, because, having good thoughts, he did not neglect them, but carried them out.’ With this resolution of the master his son and friends were well pleased, viz., that the slave should be coheir with the son. After a few days the master made a feast, and sent to his slave many dishes from his table. And the slave receiving the dishes that were sent him from his master, took of them what was sufficient for himself, and distributed the rest among his fellow-slaves. And his fellow-slaves rejoiced to receive the dishes, and began to pray for him, that he might find still greater favor with his master for having so treated them. His master heard all these things that were done, and was again greatly pleased with his conduct. And the master again calling together his friends and his son, reported to them the slave’s proceeding with regard to the dishes which he had sent him. And they were still more satisfied that the slave should become coheir with his son.”

CHAPTER 3 I said to him, “Sir, I do not see the

meaning of these Similitudes, nor am I able to comprehend them, unless you explain them to me.” “I will explain them all to you,” he said, “and whatever I shall mention in the course of our conversations I will show you. [Keep the commandments of the Lord, and you will be approved, and inscribed amongst the number of those who observe His commands.] And if you do any good beyond what is commanded by God, you will gain for yourself more abundant glory, and will be more honored by God than you would otherwise be. If, therefore, in keeping the commandments of God, you do, in addition, these services, you will have joy if you observe them according to my command.” I said to him, “Sir, whatsoever you enjoin upon me I will observe, for I know that you are with me.” “I will be with you,” he replied, “because you have such a desire for doing good; and I will be with all those,” he added, “who have such a desire. This fasting,” he continued, “is very good, provided the commandments of the Lord be observed. Thus, then, shall you observe the fasting which you intend to keep. First of all, be on your guard against every evil word, and every evil desire, and purify your heart from all the vanities of this world. If you guard against these things, your fasting will be perfect. And you will do also as follows. Having fulfilled what is written, in the day on which you fast you will taste nothing but bread and water; and having reckoned up the price of the dishes of that day which you intended to have eaten, you will give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to some person in want, and thus you will exhibit humility of mind, so that he who has received benefit from your humility may fill his own soul, and pray for you to the Lord. If you observe fasting, as I have commanded you, your sacrifice will be acceptable to God, and this fasting will be written down; and the service thus performed is noble, and sacred, and acceptable to the Lord. These things, therefore, shall you thus observe with your children, and all your house, and in observing them you will be blessed; and as many as hear these words and observe them shall be blessed; and whatsoever they ask of the Lord they shall receive.”

CHAPTER 4 I prayed him much that he would explain to me the Similitude of the field, and of the master of the vineyard, and of the slave who staked the vineyard, and of the stakes, and of the weeds that were plucked out of the vineyard, and of the son, and of the friends who were fellow-councilors, for I knew that all these things were a kind of

parable. And he answered me, and said, "You are exceedingly persistent with your questions. You ought not," he continued, "to ask any questions at all; for if it is needful to explain anything, it will be made known to you." I said to him "Sir whatsoever you show me, and do not explain, I shall have seen to no purpose, not understanding its meaning. In like manner, also, if you speak parables to me, and do not unfold them, I shall have heard your words in vain." And he answered me again, saying, "Every one who is the servant of God, and has his Lord in his heart, asks of Him understanding, and receives it, and opens up every parable; and the words of the Lord become known to him which are spoken in parables. But those who are weak and slothful in prayer, hesitate to ask anything from the Lord; but the Lord is full of compassion, and gives without fail to all who ask Him. But you, having been strengthened by the holy Angel, and having obtained from Him such intercession, and not being slothful, why do not you ask of the Lord understanding, and receive it from Him?" I said to him, "Sir, having you with me, I am necessitated to ask questions of you, for you show me all things, and converse with me; but if I were to see or hear these things without you, I would then ask the Lord to explain them."

CHAPTER 5 "I said to you a little ago," he answered, "that you were cunning and obstinate in asking explanations of the parables; but since you are so persistent, I shall unfold to you the meaning of the Similitudes of the field, and of all the others that follow, that you may make them known to every one. Hear now," he said, "and understand them. The field is this world; and the Lord of the field is He who created, and perfected, and strengthened all things; [and the son is the Holy Spirit;] and the slave is the Son of God; and the vines are this people, whom He Himself planted; and the stakes are the holy angels of the Lord, who keep His people together; and the weeds that were plucked out of the vineyard are the iniquities of God's servants; and the dishes which He sent Him from His table are the commandments which He gave His people through His Son; and the friends and fellow-councilors are the holy angels who were first created; and the Master's absence from home is the time that remains until His appearing." I said to him, "Sir, all these are great, and marvelous, and glorious things. Could I, therefore," I continued, "understand them? No, nor could any other man, even if exceedingly wise. Moreover," I added,

"explain to me what I am about to ask you." "Say what you wish," he replied. "Why, sir," I asked, "is the Son of God in the parable in the form of a slave?"

CHAPTER 6 "Hear," he answered: "the Son of God is not in the form of a slave, but in great power and might." "How so, sir?" I said; "I do not understand." "Because," he answered, "God planted the vineyard, that is to say, He created the people, and gave them to His Son; and the Son appointed His angels over them to keep them; and He Himself purged away their sins, having suffered many trials and undergone many labors, for no one is able to dig without labor and toil. He Himself, then, having purged away the sins of the people, showed them the paths of life by giving them the law which He received from His Father. [You see," he said, "that He is the Lord of the people, having received all authority from His Father.] And why the Lord took His Son as councilor, and the glorious angels, regarding the heirship of the slave, listen. The holy, pre-existent Spirit, that created every creature, God made to dwell in flesh, which He chose. This flesh, accordingly, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, was nobly subject to that Spirit, walking religiously and chastely, in no respect defiling the Spirit; and accordingly, after living excellently and purely, and after laboring and co-operating with the Spirit, and having in everything acted vigorously and courageously along with the Holy Spirit, He assumed it as a partner with it. For this conduct of the flesh pleased Him, because it was not defiled on the earth while having the Holy Spirit. He took, therefore, as fellowcouncilors His Son and the glorious angels, in order that this flesh, which had been subject to the body without a fault, might have some place of tabernacle, and that it might not appear that the reward [of its servitude had been lost], for the flesh that has been found without spot or defilement, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, [will receive a reward]. You have now the explanation of this parable also."

CHAPTER 7 "I rejoice, sir," I said, "to hear this explanation." "Hear," again he replied: "Keep this flesh pure and stainless, that the Spirit which inhabits it may bear witness to it, and your flesh may be justified. See that the thought never arise in your mind that this flesh of yours is corruptible, and you misuse it by any act of defilement. If you defile your flesh, you will also defile the Holy Spirit; and

if you defile your flesh [and spirit], you will not live.” “And if any one, sir,” I said, “has been hitherto ignorant, before he heard these words, how can such man be saved who has defiled his flesh?” “Respecting former sins of ignorance,” he said, “God alone is able to heal them, for to Him belongs all power. [But be on your guard now, and the all-powerful and compassionate God will heal former transgressions], if for the time to come you defile not your body nor your spirit; for both are common, and cannot be defiled, the one without the other: keep both therefore pure, and you will live unto God.”

APPENDIX 9 - THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi: Mercy to you, and peace from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, be multiplied.

CHAPTER 1

PRAISE OF THE PHILIPPIANS

I have greatly rejoiced with you in our Lord Jesus Christ, because ye have followed the example of true love [as displayed by God], and have accompanied, as became you, those who were bound in chains, the fitting ornaments of saints, and which are indeed the diadems of the true elect of God and our Lord; and because the strong root of your faith, spoken of in days long gone by, endureth even until now, and bringeth forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] “whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave.” “In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; “ into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that “by grace ye are saved, not of works,” but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

AN EXHORTATION TO VIRTUE

“Wherefore, girding up your loins,” “serve the Lord in fear” and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and “believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory,” and a throne at His right hand. To Him all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every spirit serves. He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, falsehood; “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,” or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: “Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;” and once more, “Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

CHAPTER 3

EXPRESSIONS OF PERSONAL UNWORTHINESS

These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because ye have invited me to do so. For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. And when absent from you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you, and which, being followed by hope, and preceded by love towards God, and Christ, and our neighbor, “is the mother of us all.” For if any one be inwardly possessed of these graces, he hath fulfilled the command of righteousness, since he that hath love is far from all sin.

CHAPTER 4

VARIOUS EXHORTATIONS

“But the love of money is the root of all evils.”

Knowing, therefore, that “as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out,” let us arm ourselves with the armor of righteousness; and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord. Next, [teach] your wives [to walk] in the faith given to them, and in love and purity tenderly loving their own husbands in all truth, and loving all [others] equally in all chastity; and to train up their children in the knowledge and fear of God. Teach the widows to be discreet as respects the faith of the Lord, praying continually for all, being far from all slandering, evil-speaking, false-witnessing, love of money, and every kind of evil; knowing that they are the altar of God, that He clearly perceives all things, and that nothing is hid from Him, neither reasonings, nor reflections, nor any one of the secret things of the heart.

CHAPTER 5

THE DUTIES OF DEACONS, YOUTHS, AND VIRGINS

Knowing, then, that “God is not mocked,” we ought to walk worthy of His commandment and glory. In like manner should the deacons be blameless before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of God and Christ, and not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, or lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant of all. If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of Him, “we shall also reign together with Him,” provided only we believe. In like manner, let the young men also be blameless in all things, being especially careful to preserve purity, and keeping themselves in, as with a bridle, from every kind of evil. For it is well that they should be cut off from the lusts that are in the world, since “every lust warreth against the spirit;” and “neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God,” nor those who do things inconsistent and unbecoming. Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ. The virgins also must walk in a

blameless and pure conscience.

CHAPTER 6

THE DUTIES OF PRESBYTERS AND OTHERS

And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always “providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man;” “abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from all covetousness, not quickly crediting [an evil report] against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin. If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and “we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself.” Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord [have alike taught us]. Let us be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good, keeping ourselves from causes of offense, from false brethren, and from those who in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into error.

CHAPTER 7

AVOID THE DOCETAE, AND PERSEVERE IN FASTING AND PRAYER

“For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist;” and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; “watching unto prayer,” and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God “not to lead us into temptation,” as the Lord has said: “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

CHAPTER 8

PERSEVERE IN HOPE AND PATIENCE

Let us then continually persevere in our hope, and the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, “who bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” “who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,” but endured all things for us, that we might live in Him. Let us then be imitators of His patience; and if we suffer for His name’s sake, let us glorify Him. For He has set us this example in Himself, and we have believed that such is the case.

CHAPTER 9

PATIENCE INCULCATED

I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, such as ye have seen [set] before your eyes, not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. [This do] in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are [now] in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead.

CHAPTER 10

EXHORTATION TO THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

Stand fast, therefore, in these things, and follow the example of the Lord, being firm and unchangeable in the faith, loving the brotherhood, and being attached to one another, joined together in the truth, exhibiting the meekness of the Lord in your intercourse with one another, and despising no one. When you can do good, defer it not, because “alms delivers from death.” Be all of you subject one to another, having your conduct blameless among the Gentiles,” that ye may both receive praise for your good works, and the Lord may not be blasphemed through you. But woe to him by whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed! Teach, therefore, sobriety to all, and manifest it also in your own conduct.

CHAPTER 11

EXPRESSION OF GRIEF ON ACCOUNT OF VALENS

I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a presbyter among you, because he so little understands the place that was given him [in the Church]. I exhort you, therefore, that ye abstain from covetousness, and that ye be chaste and truthful. “Abstain from every form of evil.” For if a man cannot govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen. But who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? “Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world?” as Paul teaches. But I have neither seen nor heard of any such thing among you, in the midst of whom the blessed Paul labored, and who are commended in the beginning of his Epistle. For he boasts of you in all those Churches which alone then knew the Lord; but we [of Smyrna] had not yet known Him. I am deeply grieved, therefore, brethren, for him (Valens) and his wife; to whom may the Lord grant true repentance! And be ye then moderate in regard to this matter, and “do not count such as enemies,” but call them back as suffering and straying members, that ye may save your whole body. For by so acting ye shall edify yourselves.

CHAPTER 12

EXHORTATION TO VARIOUS GRACES

For I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you; but to me this privilege is not yet granted. It is declared then in these Scriptures, “Be ye angry, and sin not,” and, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Happy is he who remembers this, which I believe to be the case with you. But may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, forbearance, and purity; and may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who “raised Him from the dead.” Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, and potentates, and

princes, and for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and that ye may be perfect in Him.

CHAPTER 13

CONCERNING THE TRANSMISSION OF EPISTLES

Both you and Ignatius wrote to me, that if any one went [from this] into Syria, he should carry your letter with him; which request I will attend to if I find a fitting opportunity, either personally, or through some other acting for me, that your desire may be fulfilled. The Epistles of Ignatius written by him to us, and all the rest [of his Epistles] which we have by us, we have sent to you, as you requested. They are subjoined to this Epistle, and by them ye may be greatly profited; for they treat of faith and patience, and all things that tend to edification in our Lord. Any more certain information you may have obtained respecting both Ignatius himself, and those that were with him, have the goodness to make known to us.

CHAPTER 14

CONCLUSION

These things I have written to you by Crescens, whom up to the present time I have recommended unto you, and do now recommend. For he has acted blamelessly among us, and I believe also among you. Moreover, ye will hold his sister in esteem when she comes to you. Be ye safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you all. Amen."

APPENDIX 10- THE ENCYCLICAL EPISTLE OF THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA CONCERNING THE MARTYRDOM OF THE HOLY POLYCARP

The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic

Church in every place: Mercy, peace, and love from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

CHAPTER 1

SUBJECT OF WHICH WE WRITE

We have written to you, brethren, as to what relates to the martyrs, and especially to the blessed Polycarp, who put an end to the persecution, having, as it were, set a seal upon it by his martyrdom. For almost all the events that happened previously [to this one], took place that the Lord might show us from above a martyrdom becoming the Gospel. For he waited to be delivered up, even as the Lord had done, that we also might become his followers, while we look not merely at what concerns ourselves but have regard also to our neighbors. For it is the part of a true and well-founded love, not only to wish one's self to be saved, but also all the brethren.

CHAPTER 2

THE WONDERFUL CONSTANCY OF THE MARTYRS

All the martyrdoms, then, were blessed and noble which took place according to the will of God. For it becomes us who profess greater piety than others, to ascribe the authority over all things to God. And truly, who can fail to admire their nobleness of mind, and their patience, with that love towards their Lord which they displayed? — who, when they were so torn with scourges, that the frame of their bodies, even to the very inward veins and arteries, was laid open, still patiently endured, while even those that stood by pitied and bewailed them. But they reached such a pitch of magnanimity, that not one of them let a sigh or a groan escape them; thus proving to us all that those holy martyrs of Christ, at the very time when they suffered such torments, were absent from the body, or rather, that the Lord then stood by them, and communed with them. And, looking to the grace of Christ, they despised all the torments of this world, redeeming themselves from eternal punishment by [the suffering of] a single hour. For this reason the fire of their savage executioners appeared cool to them. For they kept before their view escape from that fire

which is eternal and never shall be quenched, and looked forward with the eyes of their heart to those good things which are laid up for such as endure; things “which ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, neither have entered into the heart of man,” but were revealed by the Lord to them, inasmuch as they were no longer men, but had already become angels. And, in like manner, those who were condemned to the wild beasts endured dreadful tortures, being stretched out upon beds full of spikes, and subjected to various other kinds of torments, in order that, if it were possible, the tyrant might, by their lingering tortures, lead them to a denial [of Christ].

CHAPTER 3

THE CONSTANCY OF GERMANICUS. THE DEATH OF POLYCARP IS DEMANDED

For the devil did indeed invent many things against them; but thanks be to God, he could not prevail over all. For the most noble Germanicus strengthened the timidity of others by his own patience, and fought heroically with the wild beasts. For, when the proconsul sought to persuade him, and urged him to take pity upon his age, he attracted the wild beast towards himself, and provoked it, being desirous to escape all the more quickly from an unrighteous and impious world. But upon this the whole multitude, marveling at the nobility of mind displayed by the devout and godly race of Christians, cried out, “Away with the Atheists; let Polycarp be sought out!”

CHAPTER 4

QUINTUS THE APOSTATE

Now one named Quintus, a Phrygian, who was but lately come from Phrygia, when he saw the wild beasts, became afraid. This was the man who forced himself and some others to come forward voluntarily [for trial]. Him the proconsul, after many entreaties, persuaded to swear and to offer sacrifice. Wherefore, brethren, we do not commend those who give themselves up [to suffering], seeing the Gospel does not teach so to do.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEPARTURE AND VISION OF POLYCARP

But the most admirable Polycarp, when he first heard [that he was sought for], was in no measure disturbed, but resolved to continue in the city. However, in deference to the wish of many, he was persuaded to leave it. He departed, therefore, to a country house not far distant from the city. There he stayed with a few [friends], engaged in nothing else night and day than praying for all men, and for the Churches throughout the world, according to his usual custom. And while he was praying, a vision presented itself to him three days before he was taken; and, behold, the pillow under his head seemed to him on fire. Upon this, turning to those that were with him, he said to them prophetically, “I must be burnt alive.”

CHAPTER 6

POLYCARP IS BETRAYED BY A SERVANT

And when those who sought for him were at hand, he departed to another dwelling, whither his pursuers immediately came after him. And when they found him not, they seized upon two youths [that were there], one of whom, being subjected to torture, confessed. It was thus impossible that he should continue hid, since those that betrayed him were of his own household. The Irenarch then (whose office is the same as that of the Cleronomus), by name Herod, hastened to bring him into the stadium. [This all happened] that he might fulfill his special lot, being made a partaker of Christ, and that they who betrayed him might undergo the punishment of Judas himself.

CHAPTER 7

POLYCARP IS FOUND BY HIS PURSUERS

His pursuers then, along with horsemen, and taking the youth with them, went forth at supper-time on the day of the preparation, with their usual weapons, as if going out against a robber. And being come about evening [to the place where he was], they found him lying down in the upper room of a certain little house, from which he might have escaped into another place; but he refused, saying, “The will of God be done.” So when he heard that

they were come, he went down and spake with them. And as those that were present marveled at his age and constancy, some of them said. "Was so much effort made to capture such a venerable man? Immediately then, in that very hour, he ordered that something to eat and drink should be set before them, as much indeed as they cared for, while he besought them to allow him an hour to pray without disturbance. And on their giving him leave, he stood and prayed, being full of the grace of God, so that he could not cease for two full hours, to the astonishment of them that heard him, insomuch that many began to repent that they had come forth against so godly and venerable an old man.

CHAPTER 8

POLYCARP IS BROUGHT INTO THE CITY

Now, as soon as he had ceased praying, having made mention of all that had at any time come in contact with him, both small and great, illustrious and obscure, as well as the whole Catholic Church throughout the world, the time of his departure having arrived, they set him upon an ass, and conducted him into the city, the day being that of the great Sabbath. And the Irenarch Herod, accompanied by his father Nicetes (both riding in a chariot), met him, and taking him up into the chariot, they seated themselves beside him, and endeavored to persuade him, saying, "What harm is there in saying, Lord Caesar, and in sacrificing, with the other ceremonies observed on such occasions, and so make sure of safety?" But he at first gave them no answer; and when they continued to urge him, he said, "I shall not do as you advise me." So they, having no hope of persuading him, began to speak bitter words unto him, and cast him with violence out of the chariot, insomuch that, in getting down from the carriage, he dislocated his leg [by the fall]. But without being disturbed, and as if suffering nothing, he went eagerly forward with all haste, and was conducted to the stadium, where the tumult was so great, that there was no possibility of being heard.

CHAPTER 9

POLYCARP REFUSES TO REVILE CHRIST

Now, as Polycarp was entering into the stadium,

there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong, and show thyself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, "Have respect to thy old age," and other similar things, according to their custom, [such as,]" Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, Away with the Atheists." But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand towards them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, "Away with the Atheists." Then, the proconsul urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty, reproach Christ;" Polycarp declared, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

CHAPTER 10

POLYCARP CONFESSES HIMSELF A CHRISTIAN

And when the proconsul yet again pressed him, and said, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar," he answered, "Since thou art vainly urgent that, as thou sayest, I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian. And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and thou shalt hear them." The proconsul replied, "Persuade the people." But Polycarp said, "To thee I have thought it right to offer an account [of my faith]; for we are taught to give all due honor (which entails no injury upon ourselves) to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God. But as for these, I do not deem them worthy of receiving any account from me."

CHAPTER 11

NO THREATS HAVE ANY EFFECT ON POLYCARP

The proconsul then said to him, "I have wild beasts at hand; to these will I cast thee, except thou

repent.” But he answered, “Call them then, for we are not accustomed to repent of what is good in order to adopt that which is evil; and it is well for me to be changed from what is evil to what is righteous.” But again the proconsul said to him, “I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent.” But Polycarp said, “Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.”

CHAPTER 12

POLYCARP IS SENTENCED TO BE BURNED

While he spoke these and many other like things, he was filled with confidence and joy, and his countenance was full of grace, so that not merely did it not fall as if troubled by the things said to him, but, on the contrary, the proconsul was astonished, and sent his herald to proclaim in the midst of the stadium thrice, “Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian.” This proclamation having been made by the herald, the whole multitude both of the heathen and Jews, who dwelt at Smyrna, cried out with uncontrollable fury, and in a loud voice, “This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods, he who has been teaching many not to sacrifice, or to worship the gods.” Speaking thus, they cried out, and besought Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. But Philip answered that it was not lawful for him to do so, seeing the shows of wild beasts were already finished. Then it seemed good to them to cry out with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive. For thus it behoved the vision which was revealed to him in regard to his pillow to be fulfilled, when, seeing it on fire as he was praying, he turned about and said prophetically to the faithful that were with him, “I must be burnt alive.”

CHAPTER 13

THE FUNERAL PILE IS ERECTED

This, then, was carried into effect with greater speed than it was spoken, the multitudes

immediately gathering together wood and fagots out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to custom, eagerly assisting them in it. And when the funeral pile was ready, Polycarp, laying aside all his garments, and loosing his girdle, sought also to take off his sandals, — a thing he was not accustomed to do, inasmuch as every one of the faithful was always eager who should first touch his skin. For, on account of his holy life, he was, even before his martyrdom, adorned with every kind of good. Immediately then they surrounded him with those substances which had been prepared for the funeral pile. But when they were about also to fix him with nails, he said, “Leave me as I am; for He that giveth me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to remain without moving in the pile.”

CHAPTER 14

THE PRAYER OF POLYCARP

They did not nail him then, but simply bound him. And he, placing his hands behind him, and being bound like a distinguished ram [taken] out of a great flock for sacrifice, and prepared to be an acceptable burnt-offering unto God, looked up to heaven, and said, “O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of the righteous who live before thee, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast counted me, worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption [imparted] by the Holy Ghost. Among whom may I be accepted this day before Thee as a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as Thou, the ever-truthful God, hast fore-ordained, hast revealed beforehand to me, and now hast fulfilled. Wherefore also I praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen.”

CHAPTER 15

POLYCARP IS NOT INJURED BY THE FIRE

When he had pronounced this amen, and so finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. And as the flame blazed forth in great fury, we, to whom it was given to witness it, beheld a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what then took place. For the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed as by a circle the body of the martyr. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace. Moreover, we perceived such a sweet odor [coming from the pile], as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been smoking there.

CHAPTER 16

POLYCARP IS PIERCED BY A DAGGER

At length, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, **there came forth a dove**, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished; and all the people wondered that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was one, having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been or shall yet be accomplished.

CHAPTER 17

THE CHRISTIANS ARE REFUSED POLYCARP'S BODY

But when the adversary of the race of the righteous, the envious, malicious, and wicked one, perceived the impressive nature of his martyrdom, and [considered] the blameless life he had led from the beginning, and how he was now crowned with the wreath of immortality, having beyond dispute received his reward, he did his utmost that not the least memorial of him should be taken away by us, although many desired to do this, and to become possessors of his holy flesh. For this end he suggested it to Nicetes, the father of Herod and

brother of Alce, to go and entreat the governor not to give up his body to be buried, "lest," said he, "forsaking Him that was crucified, they begin to worship this one." This he said at the suggestion and urgent persuasion of the Jews, who also watched us, as we sought to take him out of the fire, being ignorant of this, that it is neither possible for us ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of such as shall be saved throughout the whole world (the blameless one for sinners), nor to worship any other. For Him indeed, as being the Son of God, we adore; but the martyrs, as disciples and followers of the Lord, we worthily love on account of their extraordinary affection towards their own King and Master, of whom may we also be made companions and fellow-disciples!

CHAPTER 18

THE BODY OF POLYCARP IS BURNED

The centurion then, seeing the strife excited by the Jews, placed the body in the midst of the fire, and consumed it. Accordingly, we afterwards took up his bones, as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and more purified than gold, and deposited them in a fitting place, whither, being gathered together, as opportunity is allowed us, with joy and rejoicing, the Lord shall grant us to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have already finished their course, and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps.

CHAPTER 19

PRAISE OF THE MARTYR POLYCARP

This, then, is the account of the blessed Polycarp, who, being the twelfth that was martyred in Smyrna (reckoning those also of Philadelphia), yet occupies a place of his own in the memory of all men, insomuch that he is everywhere spoken of by the heathen themselves. He was not merely an illustrious teacher, but also a pre-eminent martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate, as having been altogether consistent with the Gospel of Christ. For, having through patience overcome the unjust governor, and thus acquired the crown of immortality, he now, with the apostles and all the righteous [in heaven], rejoicingly glorifies God,

even the Father, and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of our souls, the Governor of our bodies, and the Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

THIS EPISTLE IS TO BE TRANSMITTED TO THE BRETHREN

Since, then, ye requested that we would at large make you acquainted with what really took place, we have for the present sent you this summary account through our brother Marcus. When, therefore, ye have yourselves read this Epistle, be pleased to send it to the brethren at a greater distance, that they also may glorify the Lord, who makes such choice of His own servants. To Him who is able to bring us all by His grace and goodness into his everlasting kingdom, through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, to Him be glory, and honor, and power, and majesty, for ever. Amen. Salute all the saints. They that are with us salute you, and Evarestus, who wrote this Epistle, with all his house.

CHAPTER 21

THE DATE OF THE MARTYRDOM

Now, the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom on the second day of the month Xanthicus just begun, the seventh day before the Kalends of March, on a great Sabbath, at the eighth hour. He was taken by Herod, Philip the Trallian being high priest, Staius Quadratus being proconsul, but Jesus Christ being King for ever, to whom be glory, honor, majesty, and an everlasting throne, from generation to generation. Amen.

CHAPTER 22

SALUTATION

We wish you, brethren, all happiness, while you walk according to the doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; with whom be glory to God the Father and the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of His holy elect, after whose example the blessed Polycarp suffered, following in whose steps may we too be found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ! These things Caius transcribed from the copy of Irenaeus (who was a disciple of Polycarp), having himself been

intimate with Irenaeus. And I Socrates transcribed them at Corinth from the copy of Caius. Grace be with you all. And I again, Pionius, wrote them from the previously written copy, having carefully searched into them, and the blessed Polycarp having manifested them to me through a revelation, even as I shall show in what follows. I have collected these things, when they had almost faded away through the lapse of time, that the Lord Jesus Christ may also gather me along with His elect into His heavenly kingdom, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX 11- THE MARTYRS OF LYONS AND VIENNE

Eusebius, Church History, V. 1:

THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT FOR RELIGION IN GAUL UNDER VERUS AND THE NATURE OF THEIR CONFLICTS.

The country in which the arena was prepared for them was Gaul, of which Lyons and Vienne are the principal and most celebrated cities. The Rhone passes through both of them, flowing in a broad stream through the entire region. The most celebrated churches in that country sent an account of the witnesses to the churches in Asia and Phrygia, relating in the following manner what was done among them. I will give their own words:

“The servants of Christ residing at Vienne and Lyons, in Gaul, to the brethren through out Asia and Phrygia, who hold the same faith and hope of redemption, peace and grace and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Then, having related some other matters they begin their account in this manner:

“The greatness of the tribulation in this region, and the fury of the heathen against the saints, and the sufferings of the blessed witnesses we cannot recount accurately, nor indeed could they possibly be recorded. For with all his might the adversary fell upon us, giving us a foretaste of his unbridled activity at his future coming. He endeavored in

every manner to practice and exercise his servants against the servants of God, not only shutting us out from houses and baths and markets, but forbidding any of us to be seen in any place whatever. But the grace of God led the conflict against him, and delivered the weak, and set them as firm pillars, able through patience to endure all the wrath of the Evil One.

And they joined battle with him, undergoing all kinds of shame and injury; and regarding their great sufferings as little, they hastened to Christ, manifesting truly that ‘the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.’ First of all, they endured nobly the injuries heaped upon them by the populace; clamors and blows and draggings and robberies and stonings and imprisonments, and all things which an infuriated mob delight in inflicting on enemies and adversaries. Then, being taken to the forum by the chiliarch and the authorities of the city, they were examined in the presence of the whole multitude, and having confessed, they were imprisoned until the arrival of the governor. When, afterwards, they were brought before him, and he treated us with the utmost cruelty, Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, and a man filled with love for God and his neighbor, interfered. His life was so consistent that, although young, he had attained a reputation equal to that of the elder Zacharias: for he ‘walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,’ and was untiring in every good work for his neighbor, zealous for God and fervent in spirit. Such being his character, he could not endure the unreasonable judgment against us, but was filled with indignation, and asked to be permitted to testify in behalf of his brethren, that there is among us nothing ungodly or impious. But those about the judgment seat cried out against him, for he was a man of distinction; and the governor refused to grant his just request, and merely asked if he also were a Christian. And he, confessing this with a loud voice, was himself taken into the order of the witnesses, being called the Advocate of the Christians, but having the Advocate in himself, the Spirit more abundantly than Zacharias. He showed this by the fullness of his love, being well pleased even to lay down his life in defense of the brethren. For he was and is a true disciple of Christ, ‘following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.’ “Then the others were divided, and the proto-witnesses were manifestly ready, and finished their

confession with all eagerness. But some appeared unprepared and untrained, weak as yet, and unable to endure so great a conflict. About ten of these proved abortions, causing us great grief and sorrow beyond measure, and impairing the zeal of the others who had not yet been seized, but who, though suffering all kinds of affliction, continued constantly with the witnesses and did not forsake them. Then all of us feared greatly on account of uncertainty as to their confession not because we dreaded the sufferings to be endured, but because we looked to the end, and were afraid that some of them might fall away.

But those who were worthy were seized day by day, filling up their number, so that all the zealous persons, and those through whom especially our affairs had been established, were collected together out of the two churches. And some of our heathen servants also were seized, as the governor had commanded that all of us should be examined publicly. These, being ensnared by Satan, and fearing for themselves the tortures which they beheld the saints endure, and being also urged on by the soldiers, accused us falsely of Thyestean banquets and Oedipodean intercourse, and of deeds which are not only unlawful for us to speak of or to think, but which we cannot believe were ever done by men. When these accusations were reported, all the people raged like wild beasts against us, so that even if any had before been moderate on account of friendship, they were now exceedingly furious and gnashed their teeth against us. And that which was spoken by our Lord was fulfilled: ‘The time will come when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.’ Then finally the holy witnesses endured sufferings beyond description, Satan striving earnestly that some of the slanders might be uttered by them also?

“But the whole wrath of the populace, and governor, and soldiers was aroused exceedingly against Sanctus, the deacon from Vienne, and Maturus, a late convert, yet a noble combatant, and against Attalus, a native of Pergamos where he had always been a pillar and foundation, and Blandina, through whom Christ showed that things which appear mean and obscure and despicable to men are with God of great glory, through love toward him manifested in power, and not boasting in appearance. For while we all trembled, and her earthly mistress, who was herself also one of the

witnesses, feared that on account of the weakness of her body, she would be unable to make bold confession, Blandina was filled with such power as to be delivered and raised above those who were torturing her by turns from morning till evening in every manner, so that they acknowledged that they were conquered, and could do nothing more to her. And they were astonished at her endurance, as her entire body was mangled and broken; and they testified that one of these forms of torture was sufficient to destroy life, not to speak of so many and so great sufferings. But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, renewed her strength in her confession; and her comfort and recreation and relief from the pain of her sufferings was in exclaiming, 'I am a Christian, and there is nothing vile done by us.'

"But Sanctus also endured marvelously and superhumanly all the outrages which he suffered. While the wicked men hoped, by the continuance and severity of his tortures to wring something from him which he ought not to say, he girded himself against them with such firmness that he would not even tell his name, or the nation or city to which he belonged, or whether he was bond or free, but answered in the Roman tongue to all their questions, 'I am a Christian.' He confessed this instead of name and city and race and everything besides, and the people heard from him no other word. There arose therefore on the part of the governor and his tormentors a great desire to conquer him but having nothing more that they could do to him, they finally fastened red-hot brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body. And these indeed were burned, but he continued unbending and unyielding, firm in his confession, and refreshed and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life, flowing from the bowels of Christ. And his body was a witness of his sufferings, being one complete wound and bruise, drawn: out of shape, and altogether unlike a human form. Christ, suffering in him, manifested his glory, delivering him from his adversary, and making him an example for the others, showing that nothing is fearful where the love of the Father is, and nothing painful where there is the glory of Christ. For when the wicked men tortured him a second time after some days, supposing that with his body swollen and inflamed to such a degree that he could not bear the touch of a hand, if they should again apply the same instruments, they would overcome him, or at least by his death under his sufferings others would

be made afraid, not only did not this occur, but, contrary to all human expectation, his body arose and stood erect in the midst of the subsequent torments, and resumed its original appearance and the use of its limbs, so that, through the grace of Christ, these second sufferings became to him, not torture, but healing.

"But the devil, thinking that he had already consumed Biblias, who was one of those who had denied Christ, desiring to increase her condemnation through the utterance of blasphemy, brought her again to the torture, to compel her, as already feeble and weak, to report impious things concerning us. But she recovered herself under the suffering, and as if awaking from a deep sleep, and reminded by the present anguish of the eternal punishment in hell, she contradicted the blasphemers. 'How,' she said, 'could those eat children who do not think it lawful to taste the blood even of irrational animals?' And thenceforward she confessed herself a Christian, and was given a place in the order of the witnesses. "But as the tyrannical tortures were made by Christ of none effect through the patience of the blessed, the devil invented other contrivances, — confinement in the dark and most loathsome parts of the prison, stretching of the feet to the fifth hole in the stocks, and the other outrages which his servants are accustomed to inflict upon the prisoners when furious and filled with the devil. A great many were suffocated in prison, being chosen by the Lord for this manner of death, that he might manifest in them his glory. For some, though they had been tortured so cruelly that it seemed impossible that they could live, even with the most careful nursing, yet, destitute of human attention, remained in the prison, being strengthened by the Lord, and invigorated both in body and soul; and they exhorted and encouraged the rest. But such as were young, and arrested recently, so that their bodies had not become accustomed to torture, were unable to endure the severity of their confinement, and died in prison.

"The blessed Pothinus, who had been entrusted with the bishopric of Lyons, was dragged to the judgment seat. He was more than ninety years of age, and very infirm, scarcely indeed able to breathe because of physical weakness; but he was strengthened by spiritual zeal through his earnest desire for martyrdom. Though his body was worn

out by old age and disease, his life was preserved that Christ might triumph in it. When he was brought by the soldiers to the tribunal, accompanied by the civil magistrates and a multitude who shouted against him in every manner as if he were Christ himself, he bore noble witness. Being asked by the governor, who was the God of the Christians, he replied, 'If thou art worthy, thou shalt know.' Then he was dragged away harshly, and received blows of every kind. Those near him struck him with their hands and feet, regardless of his age; and those at a distance hurled, at him whatever they could seize; all of them thinking that they would be guilty of great wickedness and impiety if any possible abuse were omitted. For thus they thought to avenge their own deities. Scarcely able to breathe, he was cast into prison and died after two days.

"Then a certain great dispensation of God occurred, and the compassion of Jesus appeared beyond measure, in a manner rarely seen among the brotherhood, but not beyond the power of Christ. For those who had recanted at their first arrest were imprisoned with the others, and endured terrible sufferings, so that their denial was of no profit to them even for the present. But those who confessed what they were were imprisoned as Christians, no other accusation being brought against them. But the first were treated afterwards as murderers and defiled, and were punished twice as severely as the others. For the joy of martyrdom, and the hope of the promises, and love for Christ, and the Spirit of the Father supported the latter; but their consciences so greatly distressed the former that they were easily distinguishable from all the rest by their very countenances when they were led forth. For the first went out rejoicing, glory and grace being blended in their faces, so that even their bonds seemed like beautiful ornaments, as those of a bride adorned with variegated golden fringes; and they were perfumed with the sweet savor of Christ, so that some supposed they had been anointed with earthly ointment. But the others were downcast and humble and dejected and filled with every kind of disgrace, and they were reproached by the heathen as ignoble and weak, bearing the accusation of murderers, and having lost the one honorable and glorious and life-giving Name. The rest, beholding this, were strengthened, and when apprehended, they confessed without hesitation, paying no attention to the persuasions of the devil."

After certain other words they continue: "After these things, finally, their martyrdoms were divided into every form. For plaiting a crown of various colors and of all kinds of flowers, they presented it to the Father. It was proper therefore that the noble athletes, having endured a manifold strife, and conquered grandly, should receive the crown, great and incorruptible. "Maturus, therefore, and Sanctus and Blandina and Attalus were led to the amphitheater to be exposed to the wild beasts, and to give to the heathen public a spectacle of cruelty, a day for fighting with wild beasts being specially appointed on account of our people. Both Maturus and Sanctus passed again through every torment in the amphitheater, as if they had suffered nothing before, or rather, as if, having already conquered their antagonist in many contests, they were now striving for the crown itself. They endured again the customary running of the gauntlet and the violence of the wild beasts, and everything which the furious people called for or desired, and at last, the iron chair in which their bodies being roasted, tormented them with the fumes. And not with this did the persecutors cease, but were yet more mad against them, determined to overcome their patience. But even thus they did not hear a word from Sanctus except the confession which he had uttered from the beginning. These, then, after their life had continued for a long time through the great conflict, were at last sacrificed, having been made throughout that day a spectacle to the world, in place of the usual variety of combats.

"But Blandina was suspended on a stake, and exposed to be devoured by the wild beasts who should attack her. And because she appeared as if hanging on a cross, and because of her earnest prayers, she inspired the combatants with great zeal. For they looked on her in her conflict, and beheld with their outward eyes, in the form of their sister, him who was crucified for them, that he might persuade those who believe on him, that every one who suffers for the glory of Christ has fellowship always with the living God. As none of the wild beasts at that time touched her, she was taken down from the stake, and cast again into prison. She was preserved thus for another contest, that, being victorious in more conflicts, she might make the punishment of the crooked serpent irrevocable; and, though small and weak and despised, yet clothed with Christ the mighty and conquering Athlete, she might arouse the zeal of the brethren, and, having

overcome the adversary many times might receive, through her conflict, the crown incorruptible.

“But Attalus was called for loudly by the people, because he was a person of distinction. He entered the contest readily on account of a good conscience and his genuine practice in Christian discipline, and as he had always been a witness for the truth among us. He was led around the amphitheater, a tablet being carried before him on which was written in the Roman language ‘This is Attalus the Christian,’ and the people were filled with indignation against him. But when the governor learned that he was a Roman, he commanded him to be taken back with the rest of those who were in prison concerning whom he had written to Caesar, and whose answer he was awaiting.

“But the intervening time was not wasted nor fruitless to them; for by their patience the measureless compassion of Christ was manifested. For through their continued life the dead were made alive, and the witnesses showed favor to those who had failed to witness. And the virgin mother had much joy in receiving alive those whom she had brought forth as dead. For through their influence many who had denied were restored, and rebegotten, and rekindled with life, and learned to confess. And being made alive and strengthened, they went to the judgment seat to be again interrogated by the governor; God, who desires not the death of the sinner, but mercifully invites to repentance, treating them with kindness. For Caesar commanded that they should be put to death, but that any who might deny should be set free. Therefore, at the beginning of the public festival which took place there, and which was attended by crowds of men from all nations, the governor brought the blessed ones to the judgment seat, to make of them a show and spectacle for the multitude. Wherefore also he examined them again, and beheaded those who appeared to possess Roman citizenship, but he sent the others to the wild beasts.

“And Christ was glorified greatly in those who had formerly denied him, for, contrary to the expectation of the heathen, they confessed. For they, were examined by themselves, as about to be set free; but confessing, they were added to the order of the witnesses. But some continued without, who had never possessed a trace of faith, nor any

apprehension of the wedding garment, nor an understanding of the fear of God; but, as sons of perdition, they blasphemed the Way through their apostasy. But all the others were added to the Church. While these were being examined, a certain Alexander, a Phrygian by birth, and physician by profession, who had resided in Gaul for many years, and was well known to all on account of his love to God and boldness of speech (for he was not without a share of apostolic grace), standing before the judgment seat, and by signs encouraging them to confess, appeared to those standing by as if in travail. But the people being enraged because those who formerly denied now confessed, cried out against Alexander as if he were the cause of this. Then the governor summoned him and inquired who he was. And when he answered that he was a Christian, being very angry he condemned him to the wild beasts. And on the next day he entered along with Attalus. For to please the people, the governor had ordered Attalus again to the wild beasts. And they were tortured in the amphitheater with all the instruments contrived for that purpose, and having endured a very great conflict, were at last sacrificed. Alexander neither groaned nor murmured in any manner, but communed in his heart with God. But when Attalus was placed in the iron seat, and the fumes arose from his burning body, he said to the people in the Roman language: ‘Lo! this which ye do is devouring men; but we do not devour men; nor do any other wicked thing.’ And being asked, what name God has, he replied, ‘God has not a name as man has.’

“After all these, on the last day of the contests, Blandina was again brought in, with Ponticus, a boy about fifteen years old. They had been brought every day to witness the sufferings of the others, and had been pressed to swear by the idols. But because they remained steadfast and despised them, the multitude became furious, so that they had no compassion for the youth of the boy nor respect for the sex of the woman. Therefore they exposed them to all the terrible sufferings and took them through the entire round of torture, repeatedly urging them to swear, but being unable to effect this; for Ponticus, encouraged by his sister so that even the heathen could see that she was confirming and strengthening him, having nobly endured every torture, gave up the ghost. But the blessed Blandina, last of all, having, as a noble mother, encouraged her children and sent them before her victorious to

the King, endured herself all their conflicts and hastened after them, glad and rejoicing in her departure as if called to a marriage supper, rather than a feast to wild beasts. And, after the scourging, after the wild beasts, after the roasting seat, she was finally enclosed in a net, and thrown before a bull. And having been tossed about by the animal, but feeling none of the things which were happening to her, on account of her hope and firm hold upon what had been entrusted to her, and her communion with Christ, she also was sacrificed. And the heathen themselves confessed that never among them had a woman endured so many and such terrible tortures.

“But not even thus was their madness and cruelty toward the saints satisfied. For incited by the Wild Beast, wild and barbarous tribes were not easily appeased, and their violence found another peculiar opportunity in the dead bodies. For, through their lack of manly reason, the fact that they had been conquered did not put them to shame, but rather the more enkindled their wrath as that of a wild beast, and aroused alike the hatred of governor and people to treat us unjustly; that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘He that is lawless, let him be lawless still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.’ For they cast to the dogs those who had died of suffocation in the prison, carefully guarding them by night and day, lest any one should be buried by us. And they exposed the remains left by the wild beasts and by fire, mangled and charred, and placed the heads of the others by their bodies, and guarded

them in like manner from burial by a watch of soldiers for many days. And some raged and gnashed their teeth against them, desiring to execute more severe vengeance upon them; but others laughed and mocked at them, magnifying their own idols, and imputed to them the punishment of the Christians. Even the more reasonable, and those who had seemed to sympathize somewhat, reproached them often, saying, ‘Where is their God, and what has their religion, which they have chosen rather than life, profited them?’ So various was their conduct toward us; but we were in deep affliction because we could not bury the bodies. For neither did night avail us for this purpose, nor did money persuade, nor entreaty move to compassion; but they kept watch in every way, as if the prevention of the burial would be of some great advantage to them.” In addition, they say after other things: “The bodies of the martyrs, having thus in every manner been exhibited and exposed for six days, were afterward burned and reduced to ashes, and swept into the Rhone by the wicked men, so that no trace of them might appear on the earth. And this they did, as if able to conquer God, and prevent their new birth; ‘that,’ as they said, ‘they may have no hope of a resurrection, through trust in which they bring to us this foreign and new religion, and despise terrible things, and are ready even to go to death with joy. Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their God is able to help them, and to deliver them out of our hands.’”

SELECT GREEK AUTHORITIES CITED

I Clement v. 1 - vi. 2

5. 1. Ἄλλ' ἵνα τῶν ἀρχαίων ὑποδειγμάτων παυσώμεθα, ἔλθωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα γενομένους ἀθλητάς· λάβωμεν τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν τὰ γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα. 2. διὰ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον οἱ μέγιστοι καὶ δικαιοτάτοι στύλοι ἐδιώχθησαν καὶ ἕως θανάτου ἤθλησαν. 3. λάβωμεν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀποστόλους· 4. Πέτρον, ὃς διὰ ζῆλον ἄδικον οὐχ ἓνα οὐδὲ δύο, ἀλλὰ πλείονας ὑπήνεγκεν πόνους καὶ οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης. 5. διὰ ζῆλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, 6. ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, φυγαδευθεὶς, λιθασθεὶς, κήρυξ γενόμενος ἐν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν, 7. δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἔλθων καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἀνελήμφθη, ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός. 6. 1. Τούτοις τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὁσίως πολιτευσαμένοις συνηθροίσθη πολὺ πλῆθος ἐκλεκτῶν. οἵτινες πολλαῖς αἰκίαις καὶ βασάνοις διὰ ζῆλος παθόντες ὑπόδειγμα κάλλιστον ἐγένοντο ἐν ἡμῖν. 2. διὰ ζῆλος διωχθεῖσαι γυναῖκες Δαναίδες καὶ Δίρκαι, αἰκίσματα δεινὰ καὶ ἀνόσια παθοῦσαι, ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς πίστεως βέβαιον δρόμον κατήντησαν καὶ ἔλαβον γέρας γενναῖον αἰ ἀσθενεῖς τῷ σώματι.

Clement of Alexandria *apud* Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. VI. xiv. 5-7

Αὐθις δ' ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὁ Κλήμης βιβλίῳ περὶ τῆς τάξεως τῶν εὐαγγελίων παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνέκαθεν πρεσβυτέρων θέτει, τοῦτον ἔχουσαν τὸν τρόπον. προγεγράφθαι ἔλεγεν τῶν εὐαγγελίων τὰ περιέχοντα τὰς γενεαλογίας, τὸ δὲ κατὰ Μάρκον ταύτην ἐσχηκέναι τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Πέτρου δημοσίᾳ ἐν Ῥώμῃ, κηρύξαντος τὸν λόγον καὶ πνεύματι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐξειπόντος· τοὺς παρόντας, πολλοὺς ὄντας, παρακαλέσαι τὸν Μάρκον, ὡς ἂν ἀκολουθήσαντα αὐτῷ πόρρωθεν καὶ μεμνημένον τῶν λεχθέντων, ἀναγράψαι τὰ εἰρημένα· ποιήσαντα δέ, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μεταδοῦναι τοῖς δεομένοις αὐτοῦ· ὅπερ ἐπιγόντα τὸν Πέτρον προτρεπτικῶς μήτε κωλύσαι μήτε προτρέψασθαι.

Clement on Mark's Gospel *apud* Sophronius, cited in Stephanus' Textus Receptus 1550, p. 58

ΜΑΡΚΟΣ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου, καθὼς τοῦ Πέτρου ἐξηγουμένου ἀκήκοε, παρακληθεὶς ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ παρὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, βραχὺ συνέταξεν εὐαγγέλιον. ὅπερ ἐντυχὼν Πέτρος ἐδοκίμασε, καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθησόμενον αὐθεντίσας ἐξέδωκε, καθὰ συνεγράψατο Κλήμης ἐν τῷ ἔκτῳ τῶν Ὑποτυπώσεων λόγῳ. καὶ Παπίας Ἱεροπολίτης ἐπίσκοπος μέμνηται τούτου τοῦ Μάρκου, καὶ Πέτρος ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἐπιστολῇ, ἐπ' ὀνόματι Βαβυλῶνος, εἰκονικῶς Ῥώμην σημαίνων. Ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς, φησὶν, ἢ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι σὺν τῇ ἐκλεκτῇ, καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἐμὸς υἱός.

**Theophylact, Archbishop of Bulgaria, on Mark's Gospel, cited in
Stephanus' Textus Receptus 1550, p. 58**

ΤΟ κατὰ Μάρκον εὐαγγέλιον μετὰ δέκα ἔτη τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀναλήψεως
συνεγράφη ἐν Ῥώμῃ. ἦν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος ὁ Μάρκος Πέτρου μαθητής. ὄν καὶ υἱὸν
αὐτοῦ ὁ Πέτρος ὀνομάζει, πνευματικὸν πάντως. ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης.
ἀνέψιος δὲ Βαρνάβα. ἀλλὰ καὶ Παύλου συνέκδημος, τέως μέντοι Πέτρῳ συνῶν
τὰ πλεῖστα, καὶ ἐν Ῥώμῃ συνῆν. ἠτήσαντο οὖν αὐτὸν οἱ ἐν Ῥώμῃ πιστοὶ, μὴ
μόνον ἀγράφως κηρύσσειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐγγράφως αὐτοῖς ἐκθέσθαι τὴν κατὰ
Χριστὸν πολιτείαν. μόλις οὖν πεισθεὶς συνεγράψατο. τῷ δὲ Πέτρῳ ἀπεκαλύφθη
παρὰ Θεοῦ ὅτι Μάρκος συνεγράψεν εὐαγγέλιον. ἰδὼν οὖν, καὶ ἐπιβεβαιώσας ὡς
ἀληθὲς, εἶτα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον αὐτὸν ἐξαπέστειλεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον.

Dionysius of Corinth *apud* Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. II. xxv. 8

ταῦτα καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς τοσαύτης νοουθεσίας
τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου φυτείαν
γενηθεῖσαν τῶν Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ τῶν
Κορινθίων συνεκεράσατε. Καὶ γὰρ ἄμφω καὶ
εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν Κόρινθον φυτεύσαντες ἡμᾶς
ὁμοίως ἐδίδαξαν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν
Ἰταλίαν ὁμόσε διδάξαντες, ἐμαρτύρησαν
κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν.

Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. III. iii. 2-3 *apud* Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. vi. 1-3

1. θεμελιώσαντες οὖν καὶ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, Αἴνω τὴν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισαν· τούτου τοῦ Αἴνου Παῦλος ἐν ταῖς πρὸς Τιμόθεον ἐπιστολαῖς μέμνηται. 2. διαδέχεται δ' αὐτὸν Ἀνέγκλητος, μετὰ τοῦτον δὲ τρίτῳ τόπῳ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν κληροῦται Κλήμης, ὁ καὶ ἑορακῶς τοὺς μακαρίους ἀποστόλους καὶ συμβεβληκῶς αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔτι ἕναυλον τὸ κήρυγμα τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τὴν παράδοσιν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχων, οὐ μόνος· ἔτι γὰρ πολλοὶ ὑπελείποντο τότε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων δεδιδασκόμενοι. 3. ἐπὶ τούτου τοῦ Κλήμεντος στάσεως οὐκ ὀλίγη τοῖς ἐν Κορίνθῳ γενομένης ἀδελφοῖς, ἐπέστειλεν ἢ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐκκλησία ἰκανωτάτην γραφὴν τοῖς Κορινθίοις, εἰς εἰρήνην συμβιβάζουσα αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀνανεοῦσα τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν καὶ ἦν νεωστὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων παράδοσιν εἰλήφει.

Clement of Alexandria *apud* Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. II. xiv. 5 - xv. 2

14. 5. ... οὐ μὴν εἰς μακρὸν αὐτῷ ταῦτα προυχώρεν. 6. παρὰ πόδας γοῦν ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς Κλαυδίου βασιλείας ἢ πανάγαθος καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτη τῶν ὄλων πρόνοια τὸν καρτερόν καὶ μέγαν τῶν ἀποστόλων, τὸν ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων προήγορον, Πέτρον, ἐπὶ τῆν Ῥώμην ὡς ἐπὶ τηλικούτον λυμεῶνα βίου χειραγωγεῖ· ὃς οἶά τις γενναῖος Θεοῦ στρατηγὸς τοῖς θείοις ὄπλοις φραζάμενος, τὴν πολυτίμητον ἐμπορίαν τοῦ νοητοῦ φωτὸς ἐξ ἀνατολῶν τοῖς κατὰ δύσιν ἐκόμιζεν, φῶς αὐτὸ καὶ λόγον ψυχῶν σωτήριον, τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλείας, εὐαγγελιζόμενος.

15. 1. οὕτω δὴ οὖν ἐπιδημήσαντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ θείου λόγου, ἢ μὲν τοῦ Σίμωνος ἀπέσβη καὶ παραχρῆμα σὺν καὶ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλέλυτο δύναμις. τοσοῦτον δ' ἐπέλαμψεν ταῖς τῶν ἀκροατῶν τοῦ Πέτρου διανοίαις εὐσεβείας φέγγος, ὡς μὴ τῇ εἰς ἅπαξ ἱκανῶς ἔχειν ἀρκεῖσθαι ἀκοῇ μηδὲ τῇ ἀγράφῳ τοῦ θείου κηρύγματος διδασκαλίᾳ, παρακλήσεσιν δὲ παντοίαις Μάρκον, οὗ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον φέρεται, ἀκόλουθον ὄντα Πέτρου, λιπαρῆσαι ὡς ἂν καὶ διὰ γραφῆς ὑπόμνημα τῆς διὰ λόγου παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς καταλείψοι διδασκαλίας, μὴ πρότερόν τε ἀνεῖναι ἢ κατεργάσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα, καὶ ταύτην αἰτίους γενέσθαι τῆς τοῦ λεγομένου κατὰ Μάρκον εὐαγγελίου γραφῆς. 2. γνόντα δὲ τὸ πραχθέν φασὶ τὸν ἀπόστολον ἀποκαλύψαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ Πνεύματος, ἤσθῆναι τῇ τῶν ἀνδρῶν προθυμίᾳ κυρῶσαί τε τὴν γραφὴν εἰς ἔντευξιν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Κλήμης ἐν ἕκτῳ τῶν Ὑποτυπώσεων παρατίθεται τὴν ἱστορίαν, συνεπιμαρτυρεῖ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ Ἱεραπολίτης ἐπίσκοπος ὀνόματι Παπίας, τοῦ δὲ Μάρκου μνημονεύειν τὸν Πέτρον ἐν τῇ προτέρᾳ ἐπιστολῇ· ἦν καὶ συντάξαι φασὶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς Ῥώμης, σημαίνειν τε τοῦτ' αὐτόν, τὴν πόλιν τροπικώτερον Βαβυλῶνα προσειπόντα διὰ τούτων, «ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου.»

Hegesippus *apud* Eusebius Hist. Ecc. II. xxiii. 17-18

οὕτως δὲ καταλιθοβολούντων αὐτόν, εἷς τῶν
ιερέων τῶν υἱῶν Ῥηγάβ υἱοῦ Ῥαχαβεῖμ, τῶν
μαρτυρουμένων ὑπὸ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου,
ἔκραζεν λέγων, Παύσασθε· τί ποιεῖτε; εὐχεται
ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὁ δίκαιος. καὶ λαβὼν τις ἀπ' αὐτῶν,
εἷς τῶν γναφέων, τὸ ξύλον, ἐν ᾧ ἀποπιέζει τὰ
ἰμάτια, ἤνεγκεν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ δικαίου,
καὶ οὕτως ἐμαρτύρησεν.

Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. III. i. 1-3

1. ... τῶν δὲ ἱερῶν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἀποστόλων τε
καὶ μαθητῶν ἐφ' ἅπασαν κατασπαρέντων τὴν
οἰκουμένην, Θωμᾶς μὲν, ὡς ἡ παράδοσις περιέχει,
τὴν Παρθίαν εἴληχεν, Ἀνδρέας δὲ τὴν Σκυθίαν,
Ἰωάννης τὴν Ἀσίαν, πρὸς οὓς καὶ διατρίψας ἐν
Ἐφέσῳ τελευτᾷ, 2. Πέτρος δ' ἐν Πόντῳ καὶ
Γαλατίᾳ καὶ Βιθυνίᾳ Καππαδοκίᾳ τε καὶ Ἀσίᾳ
κεκηρυχέναι τοῖς (ἐκ) διασπορᾶς Ἰουδαίοις ἔοικεν·
ὃς καὶ ἐπὶ τέλει ἐν Ῥώμῃ γενόμενος,
ἀνεσκολοπίσθη κατὰ κεφαλῆς, οὕτως αὐτὸς
ἀξιῶσας παθεῖν. 3. τί δεῖ περὶ Παύλου λέγειν,
ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ
πεπληρωκότος τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ
ὕστερον ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπὶ Νέρωνος μεμαρτυρηκότος;
ταῦτα Ὠριγένης κατὰ λέξιν ἐν τρίτῳ τόμῳ τῶν
εἰς τὴν Γένεσιν ἐξηγητικῶν εἴρηται.

Eusebius Hist. Ecc. II. xvii. 1

ὄν καὶ λόγος ἔχει κατὰ Κλαύδιον ἐπὶ τῆς Ῥώμης
εἰς ὁμιλίαν ἐλθεῖν Πέτρῳ, τοῖς ἐκείσε τότε
κηρύττοντι.

Gaius of Rome *apud* Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. II. xxv. 7

Ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ τροπαῖα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔχω δεῖξαι.
ἐὰν γὰρ θελήσης ἀπελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸν Βασικάνον ἢ
ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν Ὠστίαν, εὐρήσεις τὰ τροπαῖα
τῶν ταύτην ἰδρυσασμένων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

**Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, 115r, ed. Miller, IX. 12
(but reading gnô[i] mē instead of the gnômê of the codex in line 5)**

Οὗτος ἐδογματίσεν ὅπως εἰ ἐπίσκοπος ἀμάρτοι τι, εἰ
καὶ πρὸς θάνατον, μὴ δεῖν κατατίθεσθαι. Ἐπὶ τούτου
ἤρξαντο ἐπίσκοποι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι
δίγαμοι καὶ τρίγαμοι καθίστασθαι εἰς κλήρους. Εἰ δὲ
καὶ τις ἐν κλήρῳ ὦν γινῶ μὴ μένειν τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν τῷ
κλήρῳ, ὡς μὴ ἡμαρτηκότα, ἐπὶ τούτῳ φάσκων εἰρησθαι
τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀποστόλου ρηθὲν, «Σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων
ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην;»

Hippolytus, Commentary on Daniel, IV. xxiii. 3

ἡ γὰρ πρώτη παρουσία τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν ἡ ἕνσαρκος ἐν ἣ
 γεγέννηται ἐν Βηθλεὲμ (πρὸ τεσσάρων ἀπριλίων) ἐγένετο (πρὸ
 ὀκτῶ καλανδῶν ἰανουαρίων ἡμέρα τετράδι) βασιλεύοντος
 Αὐγούστου τεσσαρακόστου καὶ δεύτερον ἔτος ἀπὸ δὲ Ἀδὰμ
 πεντακισχιλιοστῶ καὶ πεντακοσιοστῶ ἔτει· ἔπαθεν δὲ
 τριακοστῶ τρίτῳ ἔτει (πρὸ ὀκτῶ καλανδῶν ἀπριλίων) ἡμέρα
 παρασκευῆ ((ὀκτῶ)) καὶ δεκάτῳ ἔτει Τιβερίου Καίσαρος
 (ὑπατεύοντος Ῥούφου καὶ Ῥουβελλίωνος καὶ Γαίου () = om.
 Καίσαρος τὸ τέταρτον Γαίου Κέστιου Σατορνίνου). (()) = add.

**Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, VI. xv = ed. Miller, Origenis
 Refutatio Haeresium, VI, 20 (67r)**

Οὗτος ὁ Σίμων πολλοὺς πλανῶν ἐν τῇ Σαμαρείᾳ
 μαγείαις, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἠλέγχθη, καὶ ἐπάρατος
 γενόμενος, καθὼς ἐν ταῖς Πράξεσι γέγραπται, ὕστερον
 ἀπευδοκήσας, ταῦτα ἐπεχείρησεν· ἕως καὶ τῆς Ῥώμης
 ἐπιδημήσας, ἀντέπεσε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις· πρὸς οὗν πολλὰ
 Πέτρος ἀντικατέστη, μαγείαις πλανῶντα πολλοὺς.
 Οὗτος ἐπὶ τέλει ἐλθὼν ἐν τῇ ... τῇ, ὑπὸ πλάτανον
 καθεζόμενος ἐδίδασκε. Καὶ δὴ λοιπὸν ἐγγὺς τοῦ
 ἐλέγχεσθαι γινόμενος, δις τὸ ἐγχρονίζεῖν ἔφη ὅτι εἰ
 χωσθείη ζῶν, ἀναστήσεται τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. Καὶ δὴ
 τάφρον κελεύσας ὀρυγῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν μαθητῶν, ἐκέλευσε
 χωσθῆναι. Οἱ μὲν οὖν τὸ προσταχθὲν ἐποίησαν, ὁ δὲ
 ἀπέμεινε ἕως νῦν· οὐ γὰρ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.

Ignatius, To the Romans, iv. 3

οὐχ ὡς Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος διατάσσομαι ὑμῖν.
ἐκεῖνοι ἀπόστολοι, ἐγὼ κατάκριτος· ἐκεῖνοι
ἐλεύθεροι, ἐγὼ δὲ μέχρι νῦν δοῦλος.

Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. III. i. 1 *apud* Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. V. viii. 2-4

2. Ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν
διαλέκτῳ καὶ γραφῇ ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Πέτρου
καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ
θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν· 3. μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων
ἔξοδον Μάρκος, ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου, καὶ
αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν
παραδέδωκεν· καὶ Λουκᾶς δέ, ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ
ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βίβλῳ
κατέθετο. 4. ἔπειτα Ἰωάννης, ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ
καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσών, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκεν
τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατρίβων.

Gospel of John 21. 15-19

15 Ὅτε οὖν ἠρίστησαν, λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Σίμων Ἰωνᾶ, ἀγαπᾷς με πλεῖον τούτων; Λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναὶ Κύριε· σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. Λέγει αὐτῷ, Βόσκει τὰ ἀρνία μου. 16 Λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεύτερον, Σίμων Ἰωνᾶ, ἀγαπᾷς με; Λέγει αὐτῷ, Ναὶ Κύριε· σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. Λέγει αὐτῷ, Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου. 17 Λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον, Σίμων Ἰωνᾶ, φιλεῖς με; Ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον, Φιλεῖς με; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, σὺ πάντα οἶδας· σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Βόσκει τὰ πρόβατά μου. 18 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ὅτε ἦς νεώτερος, ἐζώνυες σεαυτόν, καὶ περιεπάτεις ὅπου ἤθελες· ὅταν δὲ γηράσης, ἐκτενεῖς τὰς χεῖράς σου, καὶ ἄλλος σε ζώσει, καὶ οἴσει ὅπου οὐ θέλεις. 19 Τοῦτο δὲ εἶπεν σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ δοξάσει τὸν Θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν λέγει αὐτῷ, Ἀκολουθεῖ μοι.

II Corinthians 8. 18-19

18. συνεπέμψαμεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ διὰ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν· 19. οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ χειροτονηθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν συνέκδημος ἡμῶν σὺν τῇ χάριτι ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένῃ ὑφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου δόξαν καὶ προθυμίαν ὑμῶν.

Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. VII. xxvii. 2

οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ποιμένες ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν ὡς
ἐπὶ λυμεῶνα τῆς Χριστοῦ ποιμνῆς συνήρσαν οἱ πάντες
ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν σπεύδοντες

**Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, IX. vii = ed. Miller, Origenis
Refutatio Haeresium, IX. 12 (115v)**

καὶ γὰρ καὶ γυναιξὶν ἐπέτρεψεν, εἰ ἄνδρῳ εἶεν καὶ
ἡλικία τε τέκαιον, τὰ ἐν ἀξία (ἢ ἑαυτῶν, ἀξίαν ἦν μὴ
βούλοιντο) καθαίρειν.

Miller's transcription:

... ἡλικία τε τε καίοντα ἐναξία ἢ ἑαυτῶν ἀξίαν ἦν μὴ
βούλοιντο....