

By the ABBÉ CONSTANT FOUARD

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH

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THE LAST YEARS OF SAINT PAUL

**SAINT JOHN AND THE CLOSE OF THE
APOSTOLIC AGE**

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SAINT JOHN
AND
THE CLOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

Nihil obstat.

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ABBÉ CONSTANT FOUARD

SAINT JOHN

AND

THE CLOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

By THE ABBÉ CONSTANT FOUARD

MEMBER OF THE BIBLICAL COMMISSION

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NOTE.

God has called away the distinguished Author of *The Christ, the Son of God* and *The Beginnings of the Church*. The Abbé Fouard is dead, on the eve of the appearance of his work on Saint John, wherein he sets forth the condition of the Church during the period in which the Apostle's writings first saw the light. In conformity with his intentions, we publish his manuscript, which will give his readers fresh cause to regret the premature end of a man whose works and whose life had but the single end in view of glorifying Jesus. God has paid the wage of this good workman in advance. To-day his eyes behold the divine countenance of the Christ, Whom he has depicted so lovingly and made to live again in so many hearts. After the example of Saint Thomas, when the Lord says to him, "Thou hast written well concerning me; what wilt thou for thy reward?" doubtless his answer will be: "Naught save Thyself, O my God!"

From the Paris Edition, 1904.

INTRODUCTION.

Up to this stage in the series on "The Beginnings of the Church" I have confined myself to the purely historical narrative, not dwelling on controverted points. As was said in the very first lines of "The Christ the Son of God," "my only wish is to make the Saviour better known and loved."¹ With this end in view, the several studies of the Apostolic Missions followed in natural sequence. The work now before us, born of the same spirit, is intended to furnish the reader with a picture of religious conditions toward the close of the first century, at the period when the Fourth Gospel was composed by Saint John, who had outlived all his brethren in the Apostolate, and had attained a very advanced age. Men had even come to believe that death would spare that hallowed head, basing this opinion on a single saying of Jesus which seemed to imply that the dearly beloved disciple was to await the Master's coming here on earth. With charming candor the holy patriarch protested, The Lord did not say this: what He did say has no such meaning.² He was greatly exercised lest any one be misled; but who could doubt his word, since he alone was left of "those who had seen Jesus?"

This divine memory rested like an aureole over his snowy locks, and invested his person, not merely with a venerableness well-nigh universally acknowledged, but with an authority unquestioned in the Church. Accordingly his name, as formerly the names of the great Apostles Peter and Paul, would seem appropriate to represent the period wherein his closing years were spent, a period over which, by his deeds as well as by his writings, he exercised so profound an influence. Of the life of Saint John all we shall

¹ *The Christ, the Son of God*, vol. i., Preface.

² John xxi. 23.

see is his great work, or, rather, it is in this work that we shall study the man himself, for therein he has depicted his whole character, at once ardent and tender-hearted; like the eagle, fitted to soar to the loftiest peaks, whence with undazzled gaze his eyes could contemplate the blinding glare of the heavens; anon, descending from those heights, he wears his disciples with his ceaseless exhortations "to love one another." Though like a veritable "son of the thunderbolt,"¹ he does, at times, fulminate against the unfaithful bishops;² yet how much oftener is he inspired by that love with whose perfume his heart was penetrated as he leaned upon the breast of Jesus!

Far more fitting would it be to devote all our attention to this winning aspect of his personality, if thereby we might but catch new glimpses of those heavenly features which had enraptured his soul. But the never-ending attacks wherewith his works are assailed force us to forego this more agreeable plan and first seek a solid foundation for the objective matter of our present study: those inspired writings wherein he has revealed the Saviour to us in a new and striking light. Assuredly I have no intention of discussing such unsavory questions, much ventilated nowadays, as, for instance, "Whether Jesus Himself believed that He was God," or again, "Just when did He become aware of His Messianic Mission." Aside from the fact that the Mystery of the Incarnation must ever remain impenetrable to our puny intellects, inquiries so temerarious as these — not to term them assaults upon the divine personality of the Christ — would surely shock the pious instincts of my readers. This, however, is not the case with the proofs which go to establish the authenticity of the Apostolic documents. These we shall examine, beginning with those which have reference to the Fourth Gospel; then we shall pass on to the three Epistles of Saint John styled "catholic"; finally, we shall see what claims his Apocalypse has to be treated as equally authentic.

¹ Mark iii. 17.

² Apocal. Letter to the Seven Churches, i.-iii.

I.

The Apostle wrote his Gospel toward the end of the first century, or perhaps in the beginning of the second. Some years later, about the year 107, Saint Ignatius of Antioch would seem to have been acquainted with it and borrowed material from it.¹ At all events, there is no question that, at about the same date, the "Ancients" of Ephesus, who instructed Saint Irenæus, had in their possession this work of the Apostle and displayed it to their disciple.² Two of their contemporaries, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Papias of Hierapolis, have made use of his First Epistle.³ Hence, in all likelihood, it would seem that the Fourth Gospel, so intimately connected with this letter as it is, must also have been known to them. Furthermore, Basilides, a Gnostic who taught at Alexandria about the year 120, refers, in his commentaries on the Gospel, to the work of Saint John.⁴ It is true that nothing in these remote bits of testimony actually establishes the identity of the author. Nevertheless they are too important to be passed over in silence, since they attest the existence of the last Gospel in the first quarter of the century which followed its appearance, and show that it was held in such high esteem as to justify its rapid spread throughout Asia, along the Syrian coast, and even as far as Egypt.

¹ This is the opinion of Zahn (*Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, ii. p. 903 *et seq.*), and of Resch (*Aussercanonische Paralleltex-te zu Johannes*, pp. 11-12). However, one of the most learned commentators on S. Ignatius, Von der Goltz, refuses to regard the alleged citations as being quotations from John (*Ignatius von Antiochien als Christ und Theologe, Texte und Untersuchungen*, xii. 3, 1891, pp. 118-144; 197-206). Harnack (*Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*, i. p. 674, note 1) takes the same view.

² S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* ii. 22, 5; v. 36, 2.

³ S. Polycarp, *Ad. Philipp.*, 7. We learn from Eusebins (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. xxxix) that Papias had read the First Epistle of S. John, and had made use of it.

⁴ *Philosophoumena*, vii. 22, 27.

After this date and during the course of the second century we find that his text is regarded everywhere as of equal rank and authority with those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with them making up a fourfold Gospel, unified and dominated by the self-same spirit.¹ In all the churches it is quoted: at Antioch, by Bishop Theophilus;² at Alexandria, by Clement;³ at Athens, by Athenagoras;⁴ in Gaul, in the letters addressed by the Churches of Lyons and Vienne to the fraternities of Asia Minor.⁵ At Rome the evidences are abundant and especially explicit. Saint Justin, who embraced Christianity in Ephesus about the year 130, went from thence to teach at the capital of the Empire: he quotes the Fourth Gospel.⁶ In like manner does his disciple Tatian.⁷ Valentinus, an Egyptian by birth, on coming to Rome in the time of Antoninus (138-161), makes use of John's work in his defence of Gnosticism⁸ and attributes such overwhelming authority to it that his disciple Heracleon⁹ uses this sacred book in preference to all others in his commentaries. So then, in the middle of the second century, both heretics as well as orthodox Christians of Rome agree in accepting our Fourth Gospel as an Apostolic document.

Twenty or thirty years later some unknown person in

¹ S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 8.

² S. Theophilus, *Ad. Autolyc.*, ii. 22.—Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, iv. xxiv) fixes his episcopate between the years 169 and 177.

³ Clement of Alexandria (about 190), quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, vi. xiv).

⁴ Athenagoras (177), *Legat. pro Christ.*, 10.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 1, 15. This letter was written in 177-178.

⁶ S. Justin (100-167), *Apol.*, i. 61; *Contra Tryph.*, 165.

⁷ Tatian (110-172), *Orat.*, 13, 19, etc. His *Harmony* of the four Gospels, styled the *Diatessaron*, has not come down to us. To judge from the commentary S. Ephrem made upon it, it began with the "Prologue" from S. John. See *Evangelii concordantis expositio facta a S. Ephrem*, by J. B. Aucher; Müzinger edit. *Venetæ*. Compare the Arabic *Diatessaron*, edited by Father Ciasca, Rome, 1888.

⁸ S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 15.

⁹ Origen, *In Joan.*, *passim*. The reader will find in S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i. 8, 5, a curious commentary on the prologue of S. John made by another of Valentinus' disciples, named Ptolemy.

Rome drew up a list of our inspired writings. Note the terms in which he mentions the traditions he had gathered from those with whom he was living : "John, one of the disciples, composed the Fourth Gospel, at the solicitation of the other disciples and of his companions in the Episcopacy.

"'Fast with me for three days,' he said to them, 'and we will make known to one another whatsoever shall be revealed unto us.'

"That same night it was revealed unto Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John was to write the whole in his own name, under the supervision of the others. This, then, is why, although each of the Gospels begins its teachings after a different fashion, that fact in no wise affects the faith of believers, since it is the breath of one almighty and sole Spirit which proclaims everything that concerns the Birth, the Passion, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, His conversation with His disciples ; His twofold coming: the first in lowliness and contempt, which has already taken place; the second in His royal and glorious power, which is to come. Why need we be surprised, therefore, when John, even in his Epistles, so strongly asserts each fact, since he could well say of himself, 'That which our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, our hands have handled, this is what we are writing for you.' Thereby he declares that he has been not an eye witness only, but a hearer as well, and the writer of all the marvellous deeds of the Lord whose history he has compiled."¹

Many details in this largely legendary account must, of course, be rejected. One fact, however, does stand out strikingly and remains incontrovertible: namely, that in the latter half of the second century a Gospel by "John, one of the disciples" was known in Rome and considered

¹ *Muratorian Canon*. Muratori, a learned Italian ecclesiastic (1672-1750), discovered in 1740, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, the manuscript known by his name, which once formed part of a Canon of the New Testament, written in Rome about the year 170. This celebrated fragment has furnished material for a goodly number of studies. See Vigouroux, *Manuel Biblique*, 1897, vol. i. p. 106.

authentic. It is true that in the text we have just read it is not distinctly asserted that this disciple John was the Apostle, the son of Zebedee; but a contemporary of this writer, Saint Irenæus of Lyons, makes this point clear. "John," he tells us, "the disciple of the Lord, he who lay upon His breast, likewise published a Gospel while he was dwelling in Asia."¹

This testimony, however much the rationalistic critics may endeavor to lessen its weight, is and must remain of capital importance. No one, indeed, was in a better position to ascertain the origin of the last Gospel than this same Bishop of Lyons. Born in Asia, in the very locality where this book was composed, he had known Polycarp and those "Ancients" who had conversed with John.² During the persecution of 177 we find him in Gaul, and about the same date at Rome, whither he was bearing a letter from the Lyonese confessors to Pope Eleutherius. During his sojourn in the Holy City he might easily have corrected the Roman traditions by confronting them with those he had gathered in his native land. Evidently he noticed no points of divergence between them, for it was after his return that he composed his work *Against Heresies*, wherein, without any hesitancy, he attributes the authorship of the Fourth Gospel to John, son of Zebedee, whose head had rested on the Lord's bosom.

Nor was he ignorant, futhermore, that at that very date and for the first time, certain persons in lower Asia had seen fit to attack the authenticity of the divine book in question; but with very good reason he deemed their opinion worthless. Those that had mooted it were Phrygians of no repute, vaguely designated by the name of Alogi, who had been alarmed by the success attending the preaching of the Millenialists in their country. This was the epoch marked by the appearance of the heresiarch Montanus and his prophetesses, who went about announcing the speedy advent of the Paraclete who was to overthrow the work of

¹ S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1, 1.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20, 5-7. — S. Irenæus, *op. cit.*, iii. 3, 4.

Jesus and inaugurate the thousand years' reign foretold in the Apocalypse, a reign of unparalleled glory and happiness for the elect. Listening to these Illuminati, as they based their chimerical beliefs on the Revelations and Gospel of Saint John, the group of Christians mentioned above could hit upon no better way to confute them than to cast doubt upon the authenticity of these same documents.¹ Simple and poorly educated folk, as were, indeed, the common run of the faithful in those distant provinces, they apparently were content with the narratives of the first three Evangelists, and were little likely to appreciate the more abstract teachings of the fourth. Comparing the latter with the popular form of the Synoptics,² and finding them outwardly so different, they might easily, and in perfectly good faith, distrust their origin, and feel it their duty to discredit them.

Unknown to fame, the supporters of this novelty made small headway and attracted less attention outside the Phrygian hamlets where their dogmas were in vogue, and the unanimous belief of their contemporaries on this subject seems not to have been shaken. Indeed in the neighboring, but much more educated, congregation of Hierapolis we find Apollinaris, its bishop, quoting as evangelical writings certain words of Saint John;³ Theophilus does the same at Antioch.⁴ Nor can any one retort that these pastors might have been unaware of the doubts raised by the nearby congregations as to the origin of the Johannine writings, for rumors of this action on their part had finally got abroad, doubtless because it was in opposition to all received ideas. In far away Gaul, Saint Irenæus makes some allusion to it; but solely to deplore and deride such fruitless attacks.⁵ Rome, too, had gotten

¹ S. Epiphanius, *Hæres.*, li. — Philaster, *De Hæres.*, lx.

² It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the reason why we designate the first three Evangelists by this name is because the plan common to them all can be taken in, as it were, at a glance.

³ S. Apollinaris, *Fragmenta.* — Migne, *Patrol. Grec.*, vol. vi. p. 1297.

⁴ S. Theophilus, *Ad. Autolyc.*, ii. 22. — Migne, *Id.* p. 1088.

⁵ S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.*, iii. 11.

wind of them; but there more attention was vouchsafed them, for this capital of the world had become the centre of Christianity; consequently the slightest attack on the integrity of the faith was sure to meet with a response there. Very likely, indeed, it was with a view of controverting the Alogi that the author of the Muratorian Canon goes so much in detail into the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel. Furthermore, we know that their errors were discussed in the Roman schools. One of the most renowned masters of that day, Saint Hippolytus,¹ had composed a treatise specially devoted to refuting their inventions. Another doctor of the same school, Caius, the priest, seems to have been quite as eager in defending the authenticity of John's Gospel,² and his evidence is all the more noteworthy since he shared the opinions of the Alogi, in so far as the Apocalypse is concerned, and, deeming this book below the level of the Apostle's other works, he attributed its authorship to John's adversary, Cerinthus.

The same remarks would apply, after a study of the ensuing period, to Dionysius of Alexandria and Eusebius of Cæsarea.³ They, too, questioned whether the Apocalypse could have been written by the son of Zebedee; but so far

¹ Ὑπερ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγελίου καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως found engraved on a marble fragment in 1551 in the cemetery of Hippolytus.

² Camerlinck, *De Quarti Evangelii Auctore*, pp. 80-85.

³ S. Dionysius of Alexandria and the historian Eusebius, not willing to recognize the son of Zebedee as the author of the Apocalypse, were at a loss as to what John they should ascribe it to. Now a disciple of that name appears twice in a list of Apostolic men given by Papias (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. xxxix). Eusebius suggests the idea of regarding these as two distinct personages, — the Apostle John, author of the Gospel, and a simple Elder of Ephesus, "John the priest," whom we are to thank for the visions of Patmos. Rationalistic exegesis, in quest of arguments to evade the unanimous evidence of tradition, affects to believe that this hypothesis offers a solution to the whole Johannine problem. A supposition hazarded by the Bishop of Cæsarea appears so likely in their eyes that they consider it incontestable. It is strange they should lend so much weight to a supposition diffidently proposed by Eusebius. Accordingly many critics refuse to admit the actual existence of this "priest John" whom no one, prior to the fourth century, had ever heard of. Their arguments, which to me at least appear decisive, will be found in Camerlinck's *De Quarti Evangelii Auctore*, pp. 52-125.

as the Gospel is concerned, there is no sign in their writings of any similar hesitancy; with one voice and in harmony with their contemporaries they attribute it "to the disciple whom Jesus loved, to John, the Apostle and Evangelist."¹ Thus, then, in the first centuries the Alogi are the only ones who run counter to the opinion of all the churches. Now any one may judge, from the sketch given above of the small group in opposition, just how much credibility is due to their assertions. From the outset they were despised and confuted, while in after days they continue to rest under a cloud, insomuch that Saint Epiphanius, finding them leaderless and nameless, invented the nickname "Alogians," to designate them, thus branding them, at one and the same time, as having rejected the "Logos" of Saint John, and, consequently, as being "men devoid of reason."²

Even such critics as are bent on denying the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, for intrinsic reasons, recognize the necessity of backing up this paltry testimony in their favor. To accomplish their end, they have drawn largely on their imaginations. Some have invented a sect of Roman Alogi, which never existed as an historical fact;³ others assert that in certain documents of this epoch there are traces discoverable of an opposition to the authenticity of our Gospel; they quote as of especial weight a Latin prologue to Saint Mark,⁴ certain doctrines professed by the Antitrinitarian heretics, and Theodotus of Artemon.⁵ None of these laboriously erected fabrics rests on a solid foundation. Were they capable of withstanding the objections brought against them, they would, after all, be adding but a few discordant notes to the outcries of the Alogi. And what

¹ S. Dionysius, quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, vii. xxv; iii. xxiii).

² S. Epiphanius, *Hær.*, li. iii.

³ See Rose, *La question Johannique. Les Aloges asiates et les Aloges romains*, vi. pp. 516-534. 1897.

⁴ Corsen, *Monarchianische Prologe zu den vier Evangelien*, pp. 30-50. Leipzig, 1896. For a refutation of this hypothesis, see Camerliuck, *De Quarti Evangelii Auctore*, pp. 177-189.

⁵ See Camerliuck, *op. cit.*, pp. 173 *et seq.*

weight should be given to such a small minority against the mass of witnesses who, in the second and third centuries, concur in quoting the Gospel "according to St. John" and assure their hearers of its authenticity? Most of all, of what avail are they when opposed to the formal declarations of Saint Irenæus? His evidence is so overwhelming that our opponents, in their efforts to weaken it, have been reduced to the necessity of discrediting this witness. Were we to believe them, the venerable Bishop of Lyons, held in such high esteem down to our day, was a weak and credulous creature, devoid of all critical acumen, quite capable of becoming confused in his childhood reminiscences and turning them into falsehoods, whenever the opinion he wishes to uphold would be benefited by such a travesty of the truth.¹ To go to such lengths as this in their detractions is equivalent to confessing the weakness of their own case; furthermore, it is a grievous misrepresentation of the distinguished part played by Saint Irenæus in the history of the second century and that supreme mastery and profound knowledge of the Scriptures displayed by him in the doctrinal discussion of his times. Thereby they seek to destroy the high reputation he enjoyed among his contemporaries, a renown so widespread, not alone in Gaul, but at Rome and in the East, that he felt warranted in intervening as arbitrator between Pope Victor and Polycarp of Ephesus.

That this illustrious Father of the Church sometimes showed himself deficient in critical powers and was led into inserting certain legendary tales into his works² is un-

¹ This prejudiced view is the more noteworthy in the case of M. Renan, and surprises us coming from so well balanced a mind; others, less critical, push it to the last extreme. What shall we say of the opinion expressed in one of the latest works of Protestant exegesis: Irenæus "gulps down, with infinite delight, the most stupid traditions." And elsewhere, "Accordingly there is no reason why we should contest the veracity of Irenæus' evidence *a priori*. But we may be allowed to question whether he has not deluded himself as to the exact purport of his childhood's reminiscences, by ruminating over them with the sole end in view of how best to use them for the refutation of his adversaries." Jean Réville, *La Quatrième Évangile*, p. 10.

² One of the principal errors laid at S. Irenæus' door is that he held

deniable; but it should be borne in mind that this was precisely the one weak point common to all the historians of old. Not even the most serious among them — Livy, Tacitus, Pliny — are exempt from this failing. From this no one argues that, so far as their essential facts are concerned, these authors do not merit our confidence. In the same spirit it behooves us to judge the evidence offered us by Saint Irenæus as to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. Assuredly the question must have seemed a crucial one to his thinking, since he frequently has recourse to this sacred book,¹ and it was of capital importance to him to know whether the text he was using contained but an echo of Apostolic traditions, or whether it was the very words of one of the Twelve. Now no one — and we cannot insist upon this point too strongly — was in a better position to ascertain this than was he. Himself a pupil of the immediate disciples of Saint John, he received from them the Gospel as being the Apostle's own handiwork, and it would seem that these Asiatics were quite as well informed as we moderns are, as to the origin of the sacred book.

As to the internal notes of authenticity, — in other words, those which become apparent on examination of the text itself, — there is little need to dilate upon them here, because the proofs enumerated above would appear ample for our purpose. It is interesting, nevertheless, to note how, from a fine feeling of modesty, not at all surprising in so high-souled a character, although Saint John in the course of his work often refers to himself, it is never by name: in the first place, where he tells of the calling of the Apostles, and relates the words of Jesus' appeal to the two disciples, "one of whom was Andrew, Simon's brother,"² scholarly

that the Christ lived to be over thirty-three, almost fifty years of age. This idea he based, in part, on the reply of the Jews to Jesus when He claimed to be as old as Abraham, "Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast thou seen Abraham?" Compare *L'Évangile selon S. Jean*, by P. Calmes, pp. 15 *et seq.*

¹ See A. Resch, *Aussercanonische Paralleltexzte zu den Evangelien, viertes Heft.*, passim.

² John i. 35, 43.

writers have agreed that, in all probability, this is the first covert allusion to the son of Zebedee in his history of his intercourse with Jesus.¹ Certain it is that John covers as with a veil all circumstances surrounding this divine intimacy, as though he feared by revealing he might profane it: "the other disciple," "the disciple that Jesus loved";² after such circumspect fashion he conceals his individuality. These forms of speech imply that the person alluded to is well known to the reader, and the circumstances under which they occur testify that the person was an Apostle. Finally, the same formula recurs, after the manner of a conclusion to the last chapter:³ "this is that same disciple who testifieth to these things, and we know that his testimony is true." Granted the fact recorded by the Synoptics that Jesus honored with a special degree of confidence three of His Apostles, Peter, James, and John;⁴ that James was dead long before the composition of the Fourth Gospel (in the year 44); that Peter, on the other hand, is explicitly designated in this work as distinct from "the disciple whom Jesus loved,"⁵ the conclusion is inevitable that this disciple must be John himself. Then, again, we are haunted by the feeling that between this Apostle and the anonymous author of the book there is a connection so intimate as to strongly suggest a personal identity. His well-known modesty easily explains this mystery which he guards so carefully. At all events, nothing could bear less resemblance to the conduct of the apocryphal authors, who vie with one another in lending undue prominence to the personage whose name and rôle in life each endeavors to usurp.⁶

¹ This line of reasoning is very clearly carried out in P. Calmes' *L'Évangile selon S. Jean*, 99. 29 *et seq.* 1904.

² John xiii. 23; xviii. 15-16; xix. 26; xx. 2, 10; xxi. 20.

³ John xxi. 24.

⁴ Examples thereof are numerous; at the Transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 28; at the healing of Jairus' daughter, Mark v. 37; Luke viii. 51; in the Garden of Olives, Mark xiv. 33; Matt. xxvi. 37.

⁵ John xiii. 24; xviii. 15 *et seq.*; xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20, etc.

⁶ These supposititious works generally betray their origin in a manner much more direct, and are bent especially on accentuating the names

To all these evidences let us add but one more conclusion, the importance of which, doubtless, none will dispute, since it emanates from the man who, more than any one else, has helped to undermine the authority of the Gospels in France.¹ "But especially 't is the reading of the book itself which most impresses us. Therein the author speaks always as an eye-witness; he would have us believe that he is the Apostle John. Consequently, if this work is not really by the Apostle, we are forced to consider it as a forgery, of which fact the author at least must be fully cognizant. Now, though the ideas of that period, so far as literary honesty is concerned, differed widely from ours, yet in the Apostolic age there is no example of a counterfeit document of this character." And after a study of the text in detail, he concludes, "Hence the lack of order in the composition, the unevenness of movement . . . are features which are quite inexplicable if we suppose this Gospel to be nothing more than a theological thesis, historically valueless; but which, on the contrary, are easily understood if we consider them, in conformity with ancient tradition, as the recollections of an aged man."²

which they try to make use of as their passports. Here there is nothing of the kind. Supposing that the author had wished to deceive his readers, he doubtless would have felt that he must pose as an Apostle in so many words. But this he is so little inclined to do that when introducing the only John that he mentions by name, he does not even add the distinguishing term "the Baptist," as is done everywhere else. One would, therefore, be rather inclined to judge that he was anxious to have his readers forget that there was another of that name who might have played a part in his narrative. Reuss, *Theol. Johannique*, p. 100. — The apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* furnishes us with frequent examples of the methods of the forgers: "And I, Simon Peter with Andrew my brother took our nets," etc., pp. 59, 60.

¹ Renan, *Origines du Christianisme*, i. Introduction.

² Were it needful to add anything to this decisive testimony it could be supported by that of an undeniable authority, Professor Harnack (*Chronologie*, i. p. 675), who recognizes that the author of the Fourth Gospel and the Seer of the Apocalypse are one and the same person. Now the author of the Apocalypse does give his name as John; he dwells in Asia Minor and occupies a position of considerable authority in the Hierarchy, since he can venture to address weighty monitions to the "Seven Churches." Such

II.

Between the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of Saint John there are notes of resemblance so close and, taken as a whole, so striking, that the first of these Epistles has ever been considered to be an introductory note to the Gospel. Its prologue, couched in the same mystical style; the unity of their fundamental ideas concerning the world and the Christ, the place accorded to His creatures by God; the same abstract images, as "to abide with God, in light, in darkness, in death;" the identity of thought and language, what more were needed to lead us to conclude that the authorship is likewise identical? Accordingly the authenticity of the First Epistle has scarcely ever been questioned before our times. Among ecclesiastical writers of the remotest antiquity we find it asserted. Saint Polycarp and Papias, both of them disciples of the Apostle Saint John, give evidence of familiarity with it. According to the statements of Eusebius, the latter even made literal quotations therefrom.¹ Saint Irenæus reproduces two passages from the first Epistle,² expressly declaring that it is actually

an act would be fitting only in a man clothed with unquestionable prerogatives, such as his intimacy with Jesus lent to the last survivor of the Twelve.

It seems unnecessary to increase the length of this dissertation, unavoidably rather abstract, by going into a special discussion of the three passages in the Fourth Gospel the authenticity of which has been most rigorously assailed: the Angel at the Pool of Bethesda (v. 3, 4.); the narrative of the adulterous woman (ch. vii. 53; ch. viii. 11); finally, the last Chapter (xxi). The first two episodes are wanting in a large number of manuscripts. Chapter Twenty-one, on the contrary, is reproduced by all; the only reasons for impugning its authenticity are internal ones. A careful study of these three passages, with a closely reasoned array of arguments, is to be found in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, article: *Évangile de S. Jean*, signed by M. Mangenot.

¹ Phil. viii. — Funk, *Patrum Apos. Opera*, i. p. 274. Tübingen, 1887. — Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. xxxix. vol. xx. col. 300.

² S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres*, iii. 16, no. 8.

the work of Saint John. His testimony is confirmed by Eusebius.¹ The Canon of Muratori repeats the first verse and draws certain conclusions from it. From that date down to to-day, tradition is so unanimous that it would seem useless to dwell more at length on it.² We may pause to note, however, that Dionysius of Alexandria, though agreeing with the Alogi in their denial of the authenticity of the Apocalypse, parts company with them when they impugn that of the First Epistle,³ which he regards as incontestable.

The same evidence can be called in support of the two other Epistles, which differ from the First in many points. While the latter would appear to have been written with the view of addressing the universal Church, and in length and general make-up is cast in the mould of a doctrinal exposition, the Second and Third Epistles are mere notes addressed to certain specified persons, — one a lady, designated under the name of Electra, by which it is supposed is meant some particular church; the other to a Christian in Asia Minor, named Gaius. We shall examine the general tenor of these documents in the body of this work. The tokens of authenticity are nearly the same for one as for the other. It seems self-evident, at first glance, that they were penned by one man's hand. In the opening words Saint John entitles himself "the Elder," a title apparently befitting his great age as well as his dignity as an Apostle, while serving at the same time to distinguish him from any other person of the same name. He makes use of the very terms of speech which are so noticeable in the First Epistle, and which harmonize so perfectly with the abstract style of the Fourth Gospel; finally, the errors he denounces are identical with those he is continually seeking to confute.

Notwithstanding all this, it would be a mistake to infer

¹ Eusebius, *op. cit.*, v. 8.

² Tertullian, *De Præscript.*, 33. — S. Cyprian, *Epist.*, xxv. no. 2; lvi.
2. — Clement of Alexandria, *Pædag.*, iii. 11, 12, etc.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

that these two letters have, from the very first, been unanimously attributed to their real author. Though their existence in the earliest times is proved by either allusions or quotations found in Saint Polycarp, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Saint Irenæus, Tertullian, the Muratorian Canon,¹ we have to come down to Saint Dionysius of Alexandria in our search for any really positive testimony in behalf of their authenticity.² Saint Jerome, though personally admitting it, states that this opinion is disputed.³ It is not until the time of Pope Saint Damasus that we find, in his Canon of the Bible, an echo of the rumors which ascribed the authorship of these two last Epistles to some one other than Saint John.⁴ Eusebius of Cæsarea puts them in the list of disputed texts.⁵ But, once arrived at the fourth century, the council of Hippo, Saint Augustine and the letter of Pope Innocent I to the Bishop of Toulouse leave no doubt that the belief of the church on this question was thenceforth fixed in consonance with its teachings ever since that time.⁶ As these two documents were, after all, but cursory notes addressed to individuals, it is small wonder that the ancient fathers did not regard them as of an importance anyway equal to that of the Apostle's more weighty productions.

¹ S. Polycarp, *Philipp.*, vii. 3; in Funk's *Opera Patr. Apost.*, i. p. 271. — S. Ignatius, *Smyrn.*, iv. 1; *ibid.*, p. 236; Tertullian, *De Pudicit.*, 19, ii. col. 1020; *Muratorian Canon*, ii. col. 170.

² In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

³ S. Jerome, *Epist.*, l. iii. no. 8.

⁴ *Demonstrat. Evangel.*, iii. 5, vol. xxii. col. 216.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.

⁶ S. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christi*, ii. 8, vol. xxxiv. col. 41.

III.

The Apocalypse, on the contrary, occupies so striking a place among the works of Saint John and represents a body of doctrines of such high import that we encounter vestiges of it in the earliest ages subsequent to its appearance. Indeed, there are few writings in existence the authenticity of which is of more ancient renown, as even those who contest its claims confess.¹ Saint John's own disciple, Saint Polycarp, refers to it when using expressions which are to be found nowhere else.² From the statements of Andrew of Cæsarea we learn that Saint Papias, another of John's disciples, Saint Methodius, and Saint Hippolytus, testified to its authority. Origen, the Alexandrian Clement, and Tertullian,³ do not hesitate to mention it as being actually the work of that person who, in the very opening lines, declares he is the author. Theophilus of Antioch makes use of the Apocalypse to combat the heresiarch Hermogenus, who endeavored to combine the ideas of Zeno with the dogmas of Christianity.⁴ Saint Melito, Bishop of Sardis, one of those churches in whose behoof Saint John utters his warnings, writes an entire commentary on the Apocalypse.⁵ Saint Irenæus is still more explicit. "It was not in the long ago," he says, "that this vision came to pass, but almost in our own day, toward the close of Domitian's reign."⁶ Finally, Saint Justin, Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho,⁷ which took place in Ephesus itself,

¹ "Were we to listen to the most ancient witnesses, those who alone have any independent worth, no one of the Johannine writings is better certified to than the Apocalypse." Jean Réville, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, p. 37. — See F. Chr. Baur, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonische Evangelien*, p. 345.

² *Philip.*; inscript. v. col. 1005.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 25.

⁴ *Id.* vi. 24; and v. 18.

⁵ Eusebius, *op. cit.*, iv. 26.

⁶ *Adversus Hæreses*, v. xxx. 3.

⁷ *Dialogue with Trypho*, cli. lxxx. — Eusebius, iv. 18.

testifies distinctly to the existence and authenticity of John's Apocalypse. Among the canonical books, the Canon of Muratori mentions the Apocalypse of John and that of Peter.¹

Thus, then, if we except the Alogi already spoken of above, it is a perfectly established fact that in the course of the first two centuries the Apocalypse was received throughout the whole Church as the authentic work of John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Accordingly it is of little moment that in the age which followed, borne of the breath of dogmatic prejudices, a new school should have risen up to combat a belief theretofore unanimously accepted. It was Alexandria, the fatherland of all manner of abstractions and chimeras, which witnessed the birth of Millenialism. Its partisans appealed to a passage in the Apocalypse in support of their arguments that the righteous should reign a thousand years with the Christ.² Here, again, the Bishop of this city, Saint Dionysius, could conceive of no other way to dispel their errors save to deprive them of all semblance of Apostolic support. Accordingly, he endeavored to withdraw the paternity of this work from Saint John by attributing it to another personage, one equally venerable, but one who was not an Apostle. This solution, in the event so unfortunate, however laudable in its purpose, resulted in creating two absolutely contrary currents in public opinion, which little by little ran their course and disappeared, together with Millenialism which had set them in motion. Furthermore, we should note that Saint Dionysius could not avail himself of any traditional testimony, so completely were his doubts at variance with the common feeling then prevalent among Christians; hence he had been forced to confine himself to what we nowadays call "internal criticism," and it is precisely these remarks of his — couched in most respectful terms, let us

¹ There exist but a few fragments of the Apocalypse of Peter, collected by Hilgenfeld, *Novum Testamentum extra canonem receptum*, iv. 71, 74. 1884.

² Apoc., xx. 4-7.

add—which serve as basis for the arguments brought forward by the rationalists of our times.

These scholars seek to emphasize, not without laying themselves open to the charge of exaggeration, the alleged divergencies between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel; some acknowledging, others denying the authenticity of the latter book, their general conclusion being that the two documents could not emanate from the same author. Neither one, however, takes into account as a possible factor Divine Inspiration, which, as it is diverse according to the variety of conditions and the ends in view, must needs, in some degree, justify the differences, which, considered in this light, can easily be interpreted. Of these we shall examine but the principal ones, which have to do with the manner of speech and the ideas.

It would be childish to deny that in literary workmanship the Apocalypse and the Gospel in no wise resemble one another. One is a prophetic revelation; the other, a doctrinal recital. Can any one deny that the self-same mind is capable of composing works in very various forms and fashions, especially granting the fact that all the circumstances of his age, his times, and his surroundings have largely altered? As has just been said, the Apocalypse is an example of poetic prophecy; what is there surprising in the fact that it is inspired by the speech and reproduces the visions of the ancient Seers, held in such veneration by Israel, on whose dreams John's earliest recollections had been nurtured? We might say that the whole work is altogether a tissue of imagery drawn from Daniel and Ezechiel. Consequently, we might expect it to reproduce, up to a certain point, the turn of the phrases, if not the very locutions, which embody the individual genius of the Hebraic tongue. Nevertheless there are many expressions to be found therein peculiar to the author, which are nowhere to be met with save in the Gospel attributed to him.¹ A closer study of the composition of his later production reveals the reasons which caused

¹ These are to be found in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, under Apocalypse, p. 746.

this change of style. Living so many years in Ephesus, among Alexandrian Greeks, becoming wonted to their language and their abstract modes of thinking, John clothes his thoughts in consonance with his environment, at first from sheer force of habit, thereafter intentionally, with the idea of appealing more strikingly to those he desired to convince.

As to the thoughts advanced, when scrutinizing those enumerated in the Apocalypse, it behooves us to bear in mind always that saying of Saint Jerome: "In this Book are contained as many mysteries as there are words." In so far as we are able to fathom their exact meaning, we notice no antinomy between the prophetic enthusiasm of the Vision of Patmos and the Christology of the Gospel of Ephesus. They are different views, or rather it is one and the same object contemplated under various aspects, nowhere are there any contradictory doctrines. The end the Gospel keeps ever in view is to relate the History of the Incarnate Word, dwelling among men under those conditions of lowliness and self-humiliation wherewith He clothed Himself, that He might teach us by His example to bear patiently the trials of man's daily life. The principal underlying theme is that supreme act of renunciation of Jesus for our sake, an act which, nevertheless, in no wise alters His unity with His unseen Father. The spirit which rules throughout is a spirit of loving-kindness, as befits the Redeemer of the world, the Good Shepherd, Who giveth His life for His sheep.¹ Therein Jesus declares that He is obliged to use an earthly language to men, knowing well that, were He to speak that of Heaven, He would not be understood.² Ever and anon, however, despite this unflinching gentleness, we are thrilled by His warnings to those who harden their hearts against the Faith: the wrath of God abideth on them and He shall blot them out of life.³

Is not this "language of Heaven," so hard to understand, and which Jesus was so reluctant to use, precisely that of the Apocalypse, as reported by John after he had listened

¹ John x. 2-14.

² Id. iii. 12.

³ Ibid., 36.

to it in the mysterious colloquies of Patmos? Far from contradicting the teachings of Jesus, rather it completes them, by exhibiting the crowning of the work of Redemption in the definitive triumph of its Author. The Gospel tells us of the first advent of the Christ, lowly as is that humanity wherein He arrayed Himself; the Apocalypse foretells to us His second coming, glorious as is the Divinity which is His very nature. The diadem of spiked thorns, which crimsoned the brow of the Lamb Divine, is changed into a nimbus of sparkling stars; instead of the insults of the mob and the blows of ruffian soldiers, He is greeted by the hymning of virgins' voices, by the prostrations of ancient worthies, by the incense of God's chosen ones; Calvary's hill-top, which He had once climbed with stumbling steps, is become the site of His throne where the whole world shall worship Him; Jerusalem, the guilty city, that slaughtered the prophets and shed the blood of a God, purified by its ruin, is transformed into the Heavenly City, flashing with precious stones.

There all things shall be set aright in accordance with justice: the righteous shall stand forth, glorified for their constancy and their faith; the wicked, stricken with confusion at their own rebelliousness, shall render homage by their sentence to the God who punishes them. It is the coming of that Kingdom so long predicted; the return of the Christ, awaited by the church ever since He left her; but howsoever triumphantly He may demean Himself, does not that figure of the Lamb recall, as it were, by consummating it, the gentle spirit of the Gospel? And although in no other part of the Scriptures are the great truths of the Faith set forth in more majestic imagery, nowhere else, perhaps, is their penetrating sweetness brought nearer to our hearts. Where shall we look for words of deeper pity for our human wretchedness? "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain."¹ This the Church has ever understood: wherefore, in her Office of the Dead, she sets those words

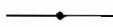
¹ Apoc. xxi. 4.

of Jesus at Lazarus' tomb, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he be dead, yet shall he live,"¹ side by side with these others which a voice from Heaven bade the Seer write down: "Blessed are they that die in the Lord, they shall rest from their labours and their works shall follow them."² John's Gospel and Apocalypse are verily written by one and the same hand; both proceed from the heart of one man.

¹ John xi. 25.

² Apoc. xiv. 13.

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SAINT JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

JEWRY AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

NEVER was any city more utterly laid waste than Jerusalem, when, spent of breath and of blood, she had fallen at length beneath the pikes of the legionaries. We have seen, at the close of the foregoing narrative,¹ with what fury the ruthless soldiery swept down upon the wreckage of that unhappy town. With the exception of a remnant of its ramparts, kept to enclose their camping-place, together with some of the Herodian towers, for a memorial of their victory, everything had been razed to the ground: houses, monuments, walls. And, lest any man dare dream of dwelling in these waste places, the Tenth Legion was quartered midmost the scene of devastation, with orders to keep it tenantless.²

Titus withdrew his army with him, never for an instant thinking that Judea, stricken to her very heart, could prolong the struggle further. Their fanatical rage

¹ *The Last Years of Saint Paul*, chap. xv.

² The main body of this army (*Legio Xma Fretensis*) continued to be stationed at this post assigned it by Titus, for, at the close of the II. Century it was still garrisoned in Judca (Dio Cassius iv. 23). Bricks found with the stamp of this Legion (L X F) witness to their having erected buildings there; other vestiges of their long sojourn, such as inscriptions, medals, etc., abound in the ruins and tombs of this region. *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, pp. 158-170, 1872. De Sauley, *Revue Archéologique*, xx. 251-260, 1869; *Numismatique de la Terre-Sainte*, pp. 82-83, pl. v. nos. 3, 4; *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, ii. 292, n. 345; 293, n. 346; v. 618, n. 144. Merrill, *Quarterly Statements*, 1885, 133; 1886, 73. Schick, *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina Vereins*, xii. 198, 199. 1889.