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THE MORAL ORDER OF SEX.¹

There are two great conceptions very generally altogether overlooked, which it is all important to hold in full view in our efforts to understand and interpret the mighty problem of human life. In the first place, this life, while it culminates and becomes complete only in the form of morality or spirit, has its root always in the sphere of nature, and can never disengage itself entirely from its power; in the second place, while it reveals itself perpetually through single individuals, it is nevertheless throughout an organic process, which necessarily includes the universal race, as a living whole, from its origin to its end.

Nature, of course, can never be truly and strictly the mother of mind. The theory of an actual inward development of man's life, out of the life of the world below him, as presented for instance in the little work entitled the "Vestiges of Creation," is entitled to no sort of attention or respect. The plant can by no possibility creep upwards into the region of sensation, and just as little may we conceive of a transition on the part of the mere animal, over into the world of self-conscious intelli-

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to miraculous works: "Miracles are authenticated and made credible by being done in the Church Catholic, and not the Catholic Church by having in it the miracles." The less can never prove the greater, as something on the outside of it and apart from it wholly, but only as itself bound to it and joined with it in such subordinate relation.

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THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ST. JOHN.

§. 1. *Youth and Education of John.*

The Apostle and Evangelist *John*, the son of Zebedee, a fisherman of Galilee, and of Salome, the brother of the elder James, was born, as is most probable, like the Apostles Peter, Andrew, and Philip, in Bethsaida (Matth. 4: 21; 10: 2, Mark 1: 19; 3: 17; 10: 35, Luke 5: 10, Acts 12: 2). His parents, though not rich, seem to have been at least in good circumstances. His father, according to Mark 1: 20, was in the habit of employing hired servants; his mother belonged to that class of women who supported Jesus with their property (Matth. 27: 56, Mark 15: 40, Luke 8: 3) and purchased spices for his embalming (Mark 16: 1, Luke 23: 50, 56); John himself owned a house in Jerusalem into which he welcomed the mother of Jesus after his crucifixion (John 19: 27). It is natural and reasonable to suppose that his pious mother planted the first seeds of piety in the tender soil of his youthful heart. Salome, it is true, was yet entangled in the false hopes of the Messiah generally prevalent in her time and in the incitements of vanity, as may be gathered from her petition to the Lord that He would grant her two sons the highest places of honor in His kingdom (Matth. 20: 20, ff.), but she adhered to Christ with unwavering fidelity and did not desert Him even when surrounded with the terrors of the Cross (Mark 15: 40).¹ With the other Apostles, Paul ex-

¹ According to the latest exegesis of John 19: 25, which *Wieseler* has proposed and advocated with acuteness and learning in the "Studien und Kritiken," 1840, No. 3, p. 648, &c.; Salome would be the sister of the mother of Jesus; in such case John would have been a cousin of the Lord. The phrase "sister of his mother" he does not interpret to be, as has hitherto been supposed, Mary, the wife of Cleopas (on account of the improbability that two sisters would have the same name,) but a form of language,

cepted, John received no learned or scientific education (comp. Acts 4: 13). His personal intercourse of three years' duration with the Master of all masters and the supernatural illumination of the Holy Spirit, abundantly supplied every deficiency in his mental training. In early life, no doubt, he was carefully indoctrinated in the precepts of the Old Testament which ministered to his natural tendency for profound thought, and to his tender, susceptible disposition, a nourishment vastly superior to the learning of the Pharisaic schools, filled, as it was, with many maxims of the most dangerous character.

In early life he became a disciple of John the Baptist. Of the two disciples of John spoken of in John 1: 35, &c., he is beyond all doubt the one not mentioned. His susceptible disposition which anxiously awaited the hope of Israel must have recognised in no long time a divine messenger in the earnest preacher of repentance who prepared the way for Christ and preceded his coming, like the faint streak of morning before the full-orbed sun. Through the instrumentality of this herald he was directed, together with Andrew, on the banks of the Jordan in Perea, to Jesus as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. His first acquaintance with the Saviour was accompanied with circumstances so impressive in character that he never forgot it and, even in his old age, still remembered the hour of meeting (John 1: 40). Having passed a day in intercourse with the Son of God and listened to the words that fell from his lips, he returned with Peter and Andrew to his home and trade as a fisherman. In this quiet retreat, opportunity was given for the free and uninterrupted growth of the good seed which had been implanted in his heart. His life in this respect furnishes a conspicuous illustration of the manner which Christ pursued, who never violently checks the pure natural disposition of men and nullifies their education prior to conversion, in attracting to his person followers from among the members of the human family. In no long time, however, John together with James, Peter and Andrew were summoned by Jesus to abandon their trade and enlist under his banner (Matth. 4: 18, &c., Mk.

similar to the one which John used to indicate himself ("The disciple, whom Jesus loved") designed to represent his own mother Salome who, as may be gathered from the parallel passages Matth. 27: 56, Mark 15: 40, was really present at the crucifixion and could not well have been passed by in silence by her son. Serious objections, however, stand in the way of this explanation. Comp. *Neander's Train. and Plant. of the Church*, II. 609, my work on James, etc., p. 22, &c., and the article on John by *W. Grimm* in the *Encyclopedia of Ersch. and Gruber*, Sect. II. Th. 22, p. 1, &c.

1: 16, &c., Luke 4: 1-11). He is thus the representative of those disciples who are gradually brought into fellowship with the Saviour by the quiet operation of holy influences, unaccompanied by violent internal struggles and unusual outward changes, whilst the Apostle Paul exhibits the most prominent example of a sudden conversion. The first mode of conversion is specially adapted to persons of a mild, tender, and contemplative disposition, such as Thomas a Kempis, Melancthon, Spener, Bengel, Zinzendorf; the second, to persons of strong, independent, and choleric character, such as Augustine, Luther, and Calvin.

John, whose disposition qualified him for the forming of lasting friendship and the exercise of undying love, became one of the most confidential of Christ's disciples. He, in connection with his brother James, and Simon Peter, formed a select circle of friends on whom the Son of God looked with special favor. They only were eye-witnesses of the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5: 37), of the transfiguration of Christ on Tabor (Matth. 17: 1), and of his sufferings in Gethsemane (Matth. 26: 37, Mark 14: 33). The reason of this preference lies partly in the free choice of Christ, and partly in the peculiar character of the three Apostles. Of James our knowledge is very limited. He seems to have been of a quiet, earnest, profound nature, and died in the year 44 the death of a martyr, and thus became the leader of that glorious band of heroes who sealed their devotion to Christianity by their blood. As regards position and influence, to some extent at least, Paul became his substitute. Peter is best known as a man whose rash, impetuous, and practical disposition admirably qualified him to organize congregations and lay the foundations of the Church deep and strong in the prolific soil of his own confession. John cannot compare with Peter in point of practical energy and zeal; in the depths of his being, however, burned more brightly and warmly the fire of holy love. The invincible tenacity of his love which gave to his religious feeling a marked originality, placed him in a position superior to that occupied by his two associates, and made him most conspicuous among the trio of the friends of the Son of God and Man. He enjoyed the great privilege of leaning on the bosom of Jesus¹ and listening to the

¹ On which account he is called by the Greek Church fathers *ἡ κοιλία*, he who leaned on his bosom, or, as we say, the bosom friend of Jesus. Augustine makes the following beautiful remarks concerning John the Evangelist. "He poured forth the waters of life which he had himself drunk."

pulsations of the heart that beat high and warm with feelings of eternal mercy (John 13: 23). In modest self-concealment and, at the same time, with feelings of the profoundest gratitude, he generally calls himself in his Gospel "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13: 23, 19: 26, 20: 21: 7, 20). This phrase is in all probability, a significant paraphrase and explanation of his proper name, in which he saw a prophecy of this perfect friendship, of his enjoyment of the special favor of Christ, the incarnate Jehovah (comp. John 12: 41 with Isaiah 6: 1).

In the hour of his sufferings John evinced his attachment to the Lord and followed him with Peter into the palace of the high priest (John 18: 19). He was the only one of the disciples who attended the crucifixion when Jesus committed to his care his mother because he was best qualified for the exercise of filial duties (19: 26). He took her to his home (v. 27), and kept her according to traditional report to the day of her death, which, according to Nicephorus, happened at Jerusalem in the year 48, (according to other accounts at Ephesus). On the day of the resurrection he hastened in company with Peter, to the grave and found it empty (20: 3, &c.). The last account we have of him in the Gospels is, that he was engaged in fishing with six other disciples in the sea of Genesareth. Their efforts were unsuccessful until Jesus himself came to their aid. Most remarkable is the difference that obtained in the conduct of John and Peter on this occasion. The former immediately recognized the Lord with an intuitive gaze of love, but sat still in the ship because fully conscious of a saving interest in His master and completely absorbed in Him; the latter whose knowledge of having denied Him and earnest desire for full pardon excited strong feelings of restlessness, (and being desirous of preceding the others,) plunged into the waves and swam to the shore to the feet of Jesus, (John 21: 2, &c.). Thus also the contemplative Mary quietly awaited in the house the coming of the Lord, whilst the busy Martha went to meet him and make him acquainted with her grief (11: 20).

§. 2. *His Apostolic Labors.*

Though John did not, like Peter, on account of the intense

For it is not without reason that it is said of him in his own Gospel that during the Supper he lay on the bosom of the Lord. From this bosom he quietly drank, and what he thus enjoyed in secret, he has revealed unto the world for its delight and nourishment."

inwardness of his character, take such active part in public transactions, and never played the orator but followed in his steps wholly absorbed in the contemplation of heavenly truth, yet, in the Acts he appears next to Peter as the most important personage in the first, Jewish-Christian period of the Church. With Peter he healed the lame man, (Acts 3: 1, &c.); with him he was sent to Samaria, in order to confirm by the communication of the Holy Ghost (8: 14, &c.) the Christians who had been baptized by the deacon Philip. From Samaria he returned to Jerusalem, where he met Paul in the year 50; who, together with the oldest Apostles, discussed the binding authority of the Mosaic Law. He designates him and James and Peter as Jewish Apostles, and as pillars of the Church (Gal. 2: 1-9). Down to this time, John seems to have confined his labors to the Jews and to Palestine. Even then, however, he was in possession of a principle strong enough to reconcile the distinctions that held apart the Jewish and Gentile portions of the Church. For it cannot be proven that the Jews appealed to him as an authority, as the followers of Cephas to Peter (1 Cor. 1: 12,) and the yet more strict party to James (Gal. 2: 12), or that a school was formed that acknowledged John as its leader. He stood above mere partizan interest. When Paul came for the last time to Jerusalem, A. D. 58, he was not present; otherwise Luke would have certainly recorded it (Acts 21: 18). For accounts of the closing portions of his life, we must have recourse to his own writings and to ecclesiastical tradition.

At a later period John took up his permanent abode in the distinguished commercial city of Ephesus, in which had been planted by Paul one of his most important congregations. The concordant and unanimous testimony of Christian antiquity places this fact beyond all doubt;¹ from the book of Revelation (1: 11, c. 2 and 3), it is evident that he had the superintendence of the Churches in Asia Minor. From the data now known, historians are not able to deduce the precise time of the transfer of his labors to Grecian soil. It is certain, however, that he went to Ephesus if not after, at any rate, not long before the

¹ Among the vouchers for this are *Irenæus*, the pupil of Polycarp who knew John personally, *adv. haer.* III. 1, 3, and other passages, also in the letter to Florinus in Eusebius, H. E. V, 20, *Clemens Alex.* in the homily *quis dives salvetur* c. 42., *Apollonius* and *Polycrates* of Ephesus at the close of the second century, in Eusebius, V. 18, 24 and III, 91., *Origen* and *Eusebius*, &c. In the face of such testimony, it required the obtuse scepticism of the Deist *Lützelberger* to pronounce the residence of John at Ephesus a fable.

death of Paul. For, neither in the farewell address which Paul delivered at Miletum to the elders of the church at Ephesus, nor in the Epistles written during confinement to the Ephesians and Colossians, nor in the second epistle to Timothy, is any mention made of John; Paul still regarded himself then as the overseer of the congregations in Asia Minor. In all probability, the death of the Gentile Apostle, A. D. 64, and the dangers and convulsions consequent upon it which he himself had anticipated (Acts 20 : 29, 30), induced John to visit this important city, to take the place of Paul, and to build upon the foundation which he had laid. The place of his residence in the interim (between 50 and 60) cannot be discovered.¹

As the energetic activity that prevailed in the second century which bears upon it the impress of John's influence, fully testifies, Asia Minor was selected as the main theatre for the action of the second period in the history of the Church. Here were gathered all the elements necessary to bring about a thorough purification of ecclesiastical life, the germs of the two fundamental heresies which the Church was called upon to vanquish. On the one hand a Pharisaico-Jewish spirit labored to impose afresh the slavery of the law, as is evident particularly in the Galatian congregations; on the other, there was forming a false gnosis, a speculative tendency composed of Jewish and Pagan elements whose workings arbitrarily overleaped the wholesome bounds of sound thought which is vigorously and successfully opposed in the epistles to Timothy, the Colossians, and in the second epistle of Peter and Jude. At a later period the Gnostic Cerinthus, who was a contemporary of John, gave to this speculative tendency a more sharply defined form. Danger was not only to be apprehended, however, from heretics. Believers both among the Jews and Gentiles were not yet united in the bonds of a consistent, permanent unity, while the former were still disposed to look with suspicious eye on the liberal views entertained by Paul touching the Law. In order to pacify narrow minded Israelites, Peter thought it necessary to set forth in clear light for the benefit of those sections of the Church his substantial agreement with Paul in the faith. John was admirably qualified in this critical posture of affairs to check the pernicious action of

¹ The later report that he preached to the Parthians originated from an inscription on some Latin MSS. on the first Epist of John "ad Parthos," and this inscription from a misunderstanding of the predicate *παρθίων*, which name John obtained on account of his celibacy. Comp. Lücke comment. on the first Ep. John, 2nd Ed. p. 23, &c.

such unscriptural tendencies, and not only to overcome them negatively, but positively also, by recognizing and putting in proper relations the wants and truths of which they were perversions. As a native of Palestine and one who had been an Israelite he enjoyed the confidence of Jewish Christians, while the facility with which he entered into the truth involved in modes of thought foreign to his own, and the susceptibility of his disposition, enabled him to appropriate with ease the Grecian element and adopt the principles of Paul. Inasmuch as he reconciled in his own person these two primary forms of Apostolic Christianity, so far as they were correct, and exhibited the different sides of one and the same truth, he was fitted to bind up the entire Church of Asia Minor in that compact, well-fortified unity, which was absolutely necessary for a defence in conflict with internal foes, as well as in suffering under the bloody hand of persecution.

§. 3. *Persecution of Christians under Domitian and the Expulsion of John to Patmos.*

He was interrupted in the midst of his efficient labors, the monuments of which are scattered in rich profusion through his Gospel and Epistles, by the persecution of the Christians in the reign of Domitian. His banishment, however, in no wise seriously checked the progress of our holy religion. With prophetic vision, he unfolded the future history of the Church, and contributed in this way to her welfare and edification.

Domitian succeeded his brother Titus, A. D. 81, and reigned to the time of his assassination 96. The happy beginnings of his rule were soon disturbed by an unbounded tyranny, which led to execution or banishment the best and most respectable of his subjects, who became the victims of his murderous suspicions by venturing to check his insatiate ambition. So great was his vanity, that he gloried in the deification of himself, and may fairly be charged with the crime of unlimited blasphemy. If we except Caligula, he was the first of Roman emperors presumptuous enough to arrogate to himself the name of God; he began his letters with the words "Our Lord and God commands;"¹ nay, he thought himself superior to the gods, caused

¹ *Sueton* Domit. c. 13. "Dominus et Deus noster hoc fieri jubet." Unde institutum posthac, ut ne scripto quidem ac sermone cujusquam appellaretur aliter.

his statue to be erected in the most sacred place of the temple, and whole herds of sacrificial animals to be offered to his divinity.¹ A man of such character would very naturally regard an open confession of Christ as an offence against the crown, worthy of the severest punishment. In his time, many Christians and amongst them his own cousin, the Consul Flavius Clemens,² died the martyr's death; urged by unfounded suspicions, and fears of attempts to displace him from the throne, he effected the murder of the remaining descendants of David, and even had two relations of Jesus brought from Palestine to Rome for examination, whose poverty and obscurity soon convinced him of the vanity of his fears.³

Tradition affirms that, during the reign of this emperor, the Apostle John was banished to the lonely, barren island of Patmos, (now Patmo or Palmosa), in the Ægean sea, not far from the coast of Asia, and in a southwestern direction from Ephesus. Here it was that he received the Revelation, concerning the conflicts and victories of the Church.⁴ To the fact of his having enjoyed a vision while in exile on this island he himself testifies in Rev. 1: 9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." To the fact of this

¹ *Pliny*, Panegy. c. 52, cf. 33.

² According to *Dio Cassius*, he with many others was accused of atheism, which was used without doubt to designate the christian faith. See the passages given by Gieseler C. H. I. 1. p. 135.

³ According to *Hegesippus* in Euseb. H. E. III 19 20. According to *Tertullian* de præscr. hæc, c. 36 John was brought to Rome (the emperor's name is not mentioned), plunged into a barrel of burning oil, and, having sustained no injury, was banished to Patmos (ubi, namely at Rome, apost. Joh. posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur). As this species of punishment is in itself very improbable and as it is only once more mentioned, namely by Jerome, who bases his remark on the authority of Tertullian, we are perfectly justified in remanding it back into the region either of invented or exaggerated legends.

⁴ To this day travellers are pointed to the cavern at the harbor of de la Scala, in which the beloved Apostle received in rapt vision, on the Lord's day, an insight into the future weal of the Church. Tischendorf (travels in the East II. p. 257, &c.) describes the island in the following terms: "Speechless lay before me, in the light of the dawn of morn, the small island; several olive trees enlivened the dreary desert of the mountain on it. The sea was silent as the grave, Patmos reposed in it like a dead saint. . . . John—this is the thought of the island. It belongs to him, it is his sanctuary. The stones on it preach of him, and every heart cleaves to him."

vision having occurred in the time of Domitian Christian antiquity bears almost unanimous witness. Nor does the proper meaning of the book in any wise conflict with this hypothesis. Irenæus, the oldest witness, who deserves special attention because of his intimate relations with Polycarp the personal friend of John, says expressly and with great assurance that John enjoyed the visions recorded in the Apocalypse not long before, and almost in his time, namely, towards the close of the reign of the emperor Domitian.* With him coincides Eusebius, who, in several passages in his Church History, based upon the testimony of tradition, places the banishment of the Apostle in the reign of Domitian and, according to his chronology, in the 14th year of it (that is, in the year 95), his return to Ephesus in the reign of Nerva.⁶ So also Jerome⁷ and others. Two other witnesses, Clemens of Alex. and Origen, who in the order of time come directly after Irenæus, mention indeed the name of the emperor, but designate him, the former as "Tyrant,"⁸ the latter as "King of the Romans."⁹ Both titles, however, suit the character of Domitian full as well as that of Nero. The appellation of "tyrant" expresses more clearly, perhaps, the nature of Domitian, who of all Roman emperors was the most

* Adv. hæc. V, 30: οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐωράθη (ἡ ἀποκάλυψις), ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Λομετιανοῦ ἀρχῆς. The fanciful opinion of Guericke who, in order to harmonise this passage with his present view touching the composition of the Apocalypse (at an earlier period he advocated the correct view in his "contrib. to New Test." p. 55 and in the "continuation" of it p. 20), wishes, in opposition to the rules of languages to regard Λομετιανῶς as an adjective and to apply it to Domitius Nero, is utterly untenable because of what immediately precedes which by no means accords with the thirty years distant from the time of Nero. The omission of the article proves nothing against the word taken as a substantive; because Eusebius who by it understands Domitian, also omits the article; H. E. III, 23. μετὰ τὴν Λομετιανοῦ τελευτήν; so also Philostratus, Vita Apoll. VII, 4. τῆς Λομετιανοῦ φορᾶς.

⁶ H. E. III, 18. "In his reign (Domitian) it is said in accordance with tradition that the Apostle and Evangelist John, who then flourished, was condemned to the island of Patmos because of his testimony in behalf of the divine word;" further III, 20, 23, and Chron ad ann. 14 Domitian.

⁷ De viris illustr. c. 9: Johannes quarto decimo anno secundam post Neronem persecutionem movente Domitiano in Patmos insulam relegatus scripsit Apocalypsim.

⁸ Quis dives salv. c. 42 and by Euseb. H. E. III, 23: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τοῦ τυράννου τελευτήσαντος; ἀπὸ Πάτμου τῆς νήσου μετέλλθεν εἰς τὴν Ἐφέσον.

⁹ Orig. ad Matth. 20: 23, 23, Opp. Ed. de la Rue III, 720. Comp. on this witness the remarks in the first volume of Hengstenberg's Commentary on Revelation p. 4, &c. who ably and thoroughly defends the view of its composition in the time of Domitian against modern criticism.

arbitrary despot. Tacitus says, "that he exhibited his cruel ferocity not only at intervals, and on select occasions, but labored systematically to destroy at one fell swoop the general prosperity." Eusebius also applied to him the passage of Clemons. The uncritical and frivolous Epiphanius first proposed a different opinion, by putting the banishment of the Apostle into the reign of Claudius. His view, however, is utterly untenable and was universally rejected.¹ In our day the authority of Ewald, Lücke and Neander, has given almost general prevalence to the opinion, that the Apocalypse (which the last mentioned does not consider as a production of the Apostle but of the Ephesian Presbyter John), was composed soon after the death of Nero, in the time of Galba, A. D. 68 or 69. The only witness in this case who deserves respect, is the Syrian translator of this book² who in no wise confirms his opinion by tradition, but seems to have derived it from his view of its contents. At any rate, as respects authority he cannot be compared with the elder Irenaeus. The view of these modern interpreters rests confessedly for support on *internal* grounds. It is believed that in the book itself are to be found clear evidences that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem (c. 11), whilst the persecution by Nero and the burning of Rome were fresh in the mind, during the reign of the sixth Roman Emperor (Galba), and before the generally expected re-appearance of Nero who

¹ Agric. c 44, comp. the representation which *Pliny* gives of this "immanissima bellua" panegyry, c 48.

² We cannot therefore allow Dr. Lücke the right of speaking about "a fluctuating of the ecclesiastical tradition touching the time of exile and the writing of the Apoc, (see his attempt at a thorough introduction to the Revelation of John," p. 409). Tradition, so far as it has an historical character, delivers unanimous testimony. Variations from it consist of isolated subjective opinions which are mutually contradictory.

³ Namely, in the writing: *Revelatio, quam Deus Joanni Evangelistæ in Patmo insula dedit, in quam a Nerone Caesare relegatus fuerat.* The Syriac translation, however, of the Apoc. is not found in the original Peschito and belongs to the *hiloxeniana*, or their revision by *Thomas*; it dates therefore from the 7th century, according to the account of a Florentinian MS. from the year 622 (comp. Hug's introd. in N. T., I p. 353 &c., and De Wet-te's, §11, a.), and its isolated account concerning the composition of the Apoc. has for this reason no critical value. Touching this point *Theophylact* of the 12th century deserves still less attention, because he evidently confounds two things entirely distinct in character, supposing (comment. on Ev. Joh. Int.) the *Gospel of John* to have been composed on the island of Patmos 32 years after the ascension of Christ, in the time of Nero whom he does not mention—an opinion universally rejected. Hence it may be inferred with what reason *Guericke* (Int. p. 285) should in this connection speak of the "critical and discerning" *Theophylact*.

seems to be denoted by the number 666 in the character of Antichrist (c. 17). But these *internal* reasons cannot possibly lead to a decisive judgment, because the interpretation of this mysterious book in general, and of those separate parts in particular, has always induced a strife of discordant opinions.¹ Besides, the persecution under Nero, which did not happen in the year 67, as computed by the erroneous chronology of Eusebius, but, according to the distinct testimony of Tacitus, in the year 64, continued but for a short time, and was, in all probability, on account of its occasion, namely a false charge upon the christians of having set fire to Rome, confined to Rome. At any rate down to the time of Orosius, who, however, deserves little attention because of his slavish adherence to Suetonius, we have no historical testimony to prove its extension to the provinces and to Asia Minor. Finally, we know not whether Nero punished christians with exile; whilst Dio Cassius narrates in express language, that Domitian banished to Pandateria because of her atheism, that is, her faith in the christian system, his relative Flavia Domitilla, the wife of the above mentioned Clemens (according to Eusebius, she was his niece).²

In this conflict of opinions, we feel disposed to adopt the oldest and most generally received view concerning the time of John's banishment, and the composition of the book of Revelation, because Irenaeus had abundant opportunity to learn the truth in the case from the friend and pupil of John. Criticism only injures its character and detracts from its influence, when it stubbornly opposes the clear testimony of history, especially in the interpretation of a writing whose mysterious meaning imposes the duty of modesty and caution.

§. 4. *The Return of John to Ephesus and the Close of His Life.*

In the year 96, when this tyrant died, the Apostle, after having passed, as is most probable, more than a year in exile, again obtained his freedom. The successor of Domitian, the just and

¹ Comp. *Dr. Chr. R. Hofman's Prophecy and Fulfillment* (1841) II, p. 301, and in detail the commentary of Hengstenberg and the introduction p. 27, &c.

² *Dio. B. 67, 14, Comp. 69, 1, and Euseb. H. E., III, 18.* Banishment was a common punishment with Domitian. Tacitus thinks Agricola happy in not having survived under the emperors *tot consularium cædes, tot nobilissimarum feminarum exilia et fugas*, (*vita Agr. c. 44*).

philanthropic Nerva, recalled, according to the account given by Dio Cassius, those who had been banished, and abolished the trade of informers and courtly sycophants. John, having returned to Ephesus, recommenced his labors and ruled to the day of his death the Church in Asia.¹ With the closing period of his life are connected two events, which have impressed upon them the unmistakable marks of truth.²

Clemens of the Alexandrine school, who flourished at the close of the second century, has given an account of one of them. It sets forth in beautiful portrait a picture of the tender, self denying love, that always characterised the pastoral visitations of the venerable Apostle. Clemens narrates³ that John on his return from Patmos to Ephesus, visited the adjacent countries with the intention of installing bishops and organising congregations. In a town at no great distance from Ephesus he met with a young man, whose extraordinary beauty and ardent zeal so engaged his affections, that he committed him to the special care of the bishop, who instructed him in the precepts of the Gospel and received him into the bosom of the Church by holy Baptism. The bishop however, now relaxed his vigilance, and the young man, who was thus early deprived of parental care, was seduced by evil companions and became the leader of a robber band. His wickedness became proverbial; in acts of violence and bloody ferocity his associates acknowledged his superior proficiency. In no long time John again visited that town, and eagerly inquired for the young man. "Come," said he to the Bishop, "give back to us the pledge which I and the Saviour entrusted to your care in presence of the congregation." The bishop sighed and answered: "The young man has fallen away from his allegiance to God and become a robber. Instead of being in the Church he now dwells with his companions within a mountain." With loud cries the Apostle tore his garments, struck his head, and exclaimed: "O what a guardian I

¹ Clemens Alex. and Euseb. III, 20, 23. The somewhat singular remark of Polycrates by Eusebins that John wore the "petalon," the tiara of the high priest, may be referred to his oversight of the Church in Asia Minor.

² Other traits must be remanded to the region of fables, e. g., that John destroyed the celebrated temple of Diana (Nicephorus, H. E. II, 42) and that, shortly before his death, he drank without injury a cup of poison (first in *Augustine's* soliloquies). This last is referred by Papias (Euseb. III, 39) to Josias Barnabas, and may have its foundation in Mark 16: 13 and Math. 20: 23.

³ Quis dives salv. c. 42, and in Euseb. III, 23. Herder has given this beautiful legend a poetical form under the caption "The rescued Youth."

placed over the soul of my brother!" He hastily mounted a horse, and in company with a guide proceeded to the retreat where dwelt the robber-band. Though seized by the guard, he never attempted to escape, but besought them to conduct him to the leader, who, on recognizing John, fled for shame. The apostle, forgetful of his age, pursued him with might and main, crying: "Wherefore fleest thou me, O child! thy father, an unarmed old man? Pity me, O child! be not afraid! Thou hast still hope of life. I will give account to Christ on your behalf. I will lay down my life for you. Stop! believe, Christ has sent me." These words, like so many swords, pierced the very soul of the unfortunate man. He halted, threw down the weapons of his murderous warfare, trembled, and cried bitterly. The venerable apostle having approached him, the young man clung to his knees, prayed with strong lamentations for pardon, and with tears of repentance submitted as it were to a second baptism. The Apostle declared that he had obtained forgiveness for him, fell upon his knees and kissed his hand. He then led him back to the congregation, in which he prayed earnestly with him, and labored with him in fasting, and admonished him in conversations, until he was able to return him to the Church as an example of thorough conversion.

Jerome, one of the Church fathers, in his interpretation of the Epistle to the Galatians, makes mention of another incident equally pathetic. In the closing period of his life, John was too weak to walk to the Church, and had to be carried thither. He was not able to deliver long discourses, but simply said: "Little children, love one another." On being asked why he continually repeated this exhortation, he answered: "Because this is the command of the Lord, and because enough is done if this holy duty be performed." A most true saying; for as God is himself love, love to Him and to the brethren is the substance of religion and morality, the fulfilment of the law and of the prophets, and the bond of perfection.

All the ancient accounts agree in affirming, that John lived to the reign of the emperor Trajan, who ascended the throne in the year 98 A. D., and that he died a natural death at Ephesus about the ninetieth year of his age.¹ While the majority of the other Apostles were baptised in the bloody baptism of martyrdom, he

¹ Thus *Irenæus*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, &c. The last mentioned says de vir. ill. c. 9, of John: sub Nerva principe redit Ephesum, ibique usque ad Trajanum principem perseverans totas Asiæ fundavit rexitque ecclesias, et confectus senio anno sexagesimo octavo post passionem Domini (i. e. a. 100, VOL. II.—NO. VI. 38 *

passed through the sufferings of the primitive Church in the enjoyment of heavenly peace, and calmly breathed his last, reclining on the bosom of love." From a misunderstanding of the puzzling language of Jesus, John 21: 22: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" arose the report that John did not really die, but only fell into a state of slumber, and was moving by his breathing the mound over his tomb until the final coming of the Lord.¹ In his writings, it is true, he lives eternally, the full understanding of which seems to stand in special connection with the future perfection of the Church, and her preparation for the welcome of the heavenly bridegroom. For they close with the significant assurance and prayer (Rev. 22: 20): "Yea, I come quickly. Amen. Yea, come, Lord Jesus!"

§. 5. *The Character of John.*

Let us now endeavor to form a proper estimate of the genius and religious character of John, from the testimony of history, and mainly from his own writings. The theoretic and practical abilities which God bestows upon men as a natural dowry, are not destroyed by the action of regenerating faith, but cleansed from the base alloy of sin, sanctified unto the service of Christ, and carried forward to the point of their fullest growth. John undoubtedly belongs to that class of persons, whose native richness abounds in a spirit of nice sensibility and quiet meditation, in feelings of impressive tenderness and lively action, in an imagination of fiery energy and in a disposition of surpassing loveliness. Yet, every order of talent and trait of character is vitiated by a certain species of original sin, which cleaves to it and is

since this Church father places the death of Christ in the year 32) mortuus juxta eandem urbem sepultus est.

¹ When the Ephesian bishop *Polykrates* in Euseb. H. E. III. 31, V, 26 calls John a martyr, reference is had either to his labors in preaching or (because *διόσκalos* immediately follows) to his banishment to Patmos. In order to reconcile the above tradition with the prophecy of the Lord touching the fate of the sons of Zebedee Matth. 20: 23, Jerome ad Matth. 20: 23 adopts the legend of Tertullian, which affirms that John was plunged into heated oil without experiencing any injury, and, in this way, proved himself possessed of the *spirit* of a martyr and drank the calix *confessionis*.

² *Augustin*, Tract. 124 in *Evang. Joann.* According to a legend of later date (by *Pseudo-Hippolytus* de consummatione mundi, comp. *Lampe* Comment. in. *Ev. Jo. I.* p. 98), John was taken alive to heaven as Enoch and Elias and will appear with these saints of the Old Testament as heralds of the visible coming of Christ, as John the Baptist prepared the way for the first coming of Christ.

in danger of particular abuse. His tendency towards meditation, under the influence of evil principles, might easily have led him to adopt a system of phantastic, pantheistic speculation, destroying the distinction that separates the world from God. A believing sight, however, of the Word made flesh converted this gift into a holy wisdom. By means of intercourse with the living truth he became the leader of Christian philosophers, the representative of knowledge inspired with devotion to God, the "Theologos" in a most emphatic sense. He had the power of setting forth in the simplest style the most profound thoughts, which furnish the ripest thinker with an inexhaustible quantity of food for reflection. The Church has set forth his character under the expressive symbol of an eagle, which flies with eager joy to the highest regions; on this account, the genial Raphaël has represented him as resting on the wings of an eagle, and gazing with keen eye into the heights of heaven. In this significant way the Church designed to convey an idea of the acute prophetic talent, the elevated thought and noble, imposing greatness of John.¹

As respects his religious character, in spite of the good natural tendencies that adorned it, he was not free from sin. Such tender-hearted, loving souls are invariably inclined to suspicion and envy, to refined self-love and vanity. A revengeful spirit seems to have given rise to the account recorded in Luke 9: 49, 50 and Mark 9: 38, 40, and a spirit of unlawful ambition to his petition to the Lord for the first honor in the kingdom of the Messiah (Mark 10: 35). Of special importance is the fact which Luke 9: 51, 56 narrates. The inhabitants of a town in Samaria having refused to receive Jesus, both the disciples John and James gave vent to their feelings in the angry words: "Lord, if thou wilt, we will call fire from heaven to devour them, as Elias did." Here is evidently displayed a hasty, carnal zeal, an impure spirit of revenge, which confounded the nature of the Old Testament with that of the New, and forgot that the Son of

¹ *Jerome, Comment. ad Matth. Proœm. remarks: Quarta aquilæ (facies, comp. Ezek. 1: 10) Joannem (significat), quia sumtis pennis aquilæ et ad altiora festinans de verbo Dei disputat.—An old Epigram says of John: More volans aquilæ verbo petit astra Joannes, and a hymn from the Middle Ages sings of him:*

Volat avis sine meta,
Quo nec vates nec propheta
Evolavit altius.
Tam implenda, quam impleta,
Nunquam vidit tot secreta
Purus homo purius.

Man came not to destroy but to save. This fact teaches at the same time that John had not, as is often represented, a weak, sentimental disposition which received impressions without analyzing or resisting them. His love was of a strong, deep order, and might, on this very account, pass over into as strong a hatred, for hatred is only love inverted. Most probably the surname: "Sons of Thunder," which Jesus gave to the sons of Zebedee Mark 3: 17, had reference to this trait, and denotes the intensity of feeling, the passionate strength of the affections, which might easily give rise to such angry outbursts as occurred on the occasion mentioned. An impetuous disposition grapples to itself with great force the object of its love, and repels with as great force whatever stands in conflict with it. Whilst this temperament was not purified and sanctified by the divine Spirit, it might have operated in a violent, destructive way, like the destroying, dark rolling thunder. In giving John this surname, Jesus rebuked his imprudent zeal and his carnal passion, and gave him a significant hint of the necessity of curbing his nature and rooting out its ungodly elements. But if this temperament were once brought under the influence and guidance of the Spirit, it might, like every other natural gift, bring to pass great things in the kingdom of God. In this respect, the appellation "Sons of Thunder" carries in it something of honor, inasmuch as the same thunder which at one time destroys, at another purifies the air and fructifies the earth with its accompanying showers.¹ That which was good and true in his zeal, remained in the regenerate John, namely, the moral energy and decision with which he loved the good and hated the bad. The natural gift was cleansed from all sinful admixtures, mellowed and made to subserve the interests of Christianity. Over the pages of the Apocalypse rolls loudly and mightily the thunder of his wrath, against the enemies of the Lord and of his bride. In the Gospel and in the Epistles, it is true, there breathes a gentle, quiet spirit, but the storm frowns at least in the distance, when he describes the coming to judgment of the Son of God c. 5: 25, 30. With what holy abhorrence he speaks of the traitor and of the increasing rage of the Pharisees against the Messiah! He allows the Lord to call the Jews who harbored murderous thoughts

¹ Incorrect is the opinion of the Greek Church fathers who refer the title *Βασίλειος* or *υιοί βροντῆς* to the striking presentation of profound ideas, and to the convincing power of eloquence. In such case it would convey simply the idea of honor or merit and not at the same time of reproach, and would stand in no connection with the fact in Luke 9: 51-56.

children of the devil (8 : 44); he himself calls every one who does not confirm his christian profession with a godly walk a liar (1 John 1 : 6, 8, 10), who hates his brother, a murderer, (3 : 15), who commits sin wilfully, a child of the devil (3 : 8). How earnestly and urgently he warns men of the denier of the Christ Incarnate, as of the liar and the Antichrist (1 John 2 : 18 ; 4 : 1, &c.)! In the second Epistle v. 10 and 11 he even forbids to salute a heretic, and to take him into the house. Bearing this in mind, the narration of *Irenæus*' will appear in no wise improbable. This venerable Apostle, it is said, having met with the Gnostic Cerinthus in a public bath, left it with these words: he was afraid the building might fall to pieces, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth was in it. If we do not consider the character of John as composed to a great extent of weakness in the opinion, at least, of sentimental romance writers, we will be able without much difficulty to reconcile these apparently contradictory traits, his inward glow of love and the consuming wrath, his heavenly-meekness and impetuous zeal. It was one and the same inward disposition which exhibited itself in both cases, but in different modes; at one time it drew within its embrace what accorded with the Divine will, at another it rejected what was opposed to it, just as the sun, which shines upon and warms that which has life, but advances the putrefaction of that which is dead. He who supposes christian love to be a good-natured indulgence to sin, has an entirely perverted notion of its nature, and only destroys the moral character of him whom he would save by such sentimental indifference. In proportion to the depth of the love with which a mother loves a child will be her vigilance to discover and punish its faults, that it may by repentance, improve in spirit, and become more attractive. The more intensely and unreservedly a man loves God, the more decidedly and unchangeably will he hate sin and Satan.

If we compare John with *Peter*, we will find that, though agreeing in faith and united by the bond of love, they exhibited in different ways the glorified image of God. Peter had a disposition which took delight in outward activity, in organizing congregations and legislating for their wants; John, on the contrary, loved to retire within the secret chambers of the soul, to converse with its heavenly aspirations and was admirably qualified for training up an organized congregation in the spirit of sound doctrine, and of love. In the Acts, we find both at the

* Adv. hæc III, 3, comp. Euseb. III, 28, and IV, 14.

head of the infant Church; Peter, however, greatly surpassed John in the imposing grandeur of his deeds; he always stood forth as the convincing preacher, the powerful worker of miracles, the prince of the Apostles, who courageously cleared the way for the advance of the Christian system. The Apostle of love stood modestly by his side, wrapped in mysterious silence, and yet commanding in his very silence; for men felt that he bore in his quiet soul a whole world of ideas, which he would reveal at the proper time and on the proper occasion. Whilst Peter and Paul had the talent of planting, he, like Apollos, had that of watering. Christ did not commit to him the duty of laying the foundation of the Church, but of building it up when laid. As his Gospel both in time and nature presuppose the other three, so, also, his writings in general, in order to be fully understood, require the presence of a matured experience in Christian knowledge. In temperament Peter is of the sanguine order, with a strong admixture of the choleric; on this account, very susceptible of outward influences, quick of decision, easily excited, not always persevering and reliable, because moved by outward impressions, a man for the present, and of direct word and act. John is melancholic; on this account not so easily aroused to action, but when once excited, more deeply agitated, and disposed to cling with more intense affection to the object of his love; indifferent to the affairs of the outward world, he lingered with fond delight along the track of the Past, and has the honor of being a master in knowledge and love. Both disciples loved the Lord with all their might, but, as Grotius truly remarks, Peter was a friend of *Christ* (φιλόχριστος), John, a friend of *Jesus* (φιλοῖησούς), i. e. the former admired particularly the office of the Saviour, his Messianic dignity, the latter gazed first upon His person, and, on this account, stood in closer connection with him, and was, so to speak, his bosom friend. Besides, the love of the one was more productive and manly, that of the other more receptive and virgin-like. Peter found his happiness in exhibiting in act his love to the Lord; John in permitting himself to be loved by Him, and in the consciousness of being loved by Him, on which account he so often calls himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. A similar relation obtains in the female characters of the New Testament, between the practical, busy, ever-active *Martha*, and the contemplative *Mary*, who calmly reposed on the love of Jesus and forgot the bustle and noise of the outward world. Yet upon both rested the good pleasure of the Lord; both were necessary for the kingdom of God; the absence of either of them would mar the beauty of the Christian life, as displayed in the New Testament.

John had, in common with *Paul*, profundity of knowledge. They are the two Apostles who have left behind them the fullest and most complete doctrinal system. But their knowledge is of a different order. Paul who received his training in the schools of the Pharisees, is a thinker of extraordinary acuteness, and an accomplished dialectician;—a representative of *Scholasticism*, in the best sense of the term, who exhibits the christian system by a progressive development of ideas from cause to effect, from the general to the particular, from propositions to their conclusions, with logical clearness and acumen. The knowledge of John is intuition and contemplation. He gazes in spirit upon the object of his love, he surveys everything as in a picture, and thus presents the profoundest truths, as an eye-witness, without any proof, in their original, native simplicity and freshness. His knowledge of heavenly things is the profound insight of love, which always darts its look to the central point of things, and from this forth surveys in one view all the parts of the periphery. He is the representative of all genuine *Mysticism*. Both together furnish supplies for the wants of the spirit that thirsts for wisdom, for the acute, discriminating understanding, as well as for the speculating reason which binds in unity the scattered fragments of thought, for the mediated reflection as well as for the immediate intuition. Paul and John have revealed in their two fundamental forms the eternal characteristics of all true Theology and Philosophy; eighteen hundred years have passed, but the contents of their writings have not yet been exhausted. —Peter has been aptly styled the Apostle of *Hope*, Paul the Apostle of *Faith*, John the Apostle of *Love*. The first is the representative of Catholicism, the second of Protestantism, the third of the ideal Church, in which the discordances of the first two will be brought to an end.

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