

# Irenaeus of Gaul and Tertullian of Africa

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The close of the second century reveals a marked change in the character and position of the church. Christianity had won its way to the heart of the simple and appealed to the judgment of the philosopher, but it had yet "to claim the deference of the statesman." Later the subjugation of the civil power paved the way for the corruption of the church by material influences. The church was now in the process of establishment in the empire, and an independent literature arose acknowledging most of the New Testament books as canonical.<sup>1</sup>

## I. Time Foreshortened to Early Expositors

Within certain attendant limitations, the church of this period was strongly premillennialist. But difficulties and misunderstandings arose over the time element concerning the great "falling away" from the faith and practice of apostolic times. Such a development could not be clearly comprehended until clarified by the actual historical developments. And the character of the reign of the glorified saints during the thousand years after the second advent, was a cause of controversy which brought discredit to premillennialist doctrine, as we shall see.<sup>2</sup>

We shall find in this period the seventy weeks of Daniel interpreted as 490 years, but there was no application of the

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<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-334.

<sup>2</sup> See page 306.

year-day principle to the longer time periods by any Christian writer of this early era—not, indeed, until we come to the twelfth century. Only in the seventy weeks was this principle clearly applied—and that, obviously, because they were recognized as actually past and certified through the first advent of Christ. But in no instance in the early centuries was this principle carried over and applied to the prophesied 1260 days in its varying forms of numeration in Daniel or the Apocalypse.

There could be no concept, on the part of any of these early expositors, of a long reign of entrenched apostasy through centuries—as the symbolic time would indicate—before the final developments and the return of Christ. Time was naturally foreshortened to them, for they looked for the speedy return of their Lord. Indeed, only as history actually unrolled the prophetic scroll through fulfillment, could its intent be perceived. To have unfolded clearly in unveiled terminology the spreading span of the intervening ages would doubtless have been to shake or crush the faith of the harassed martyr church. Yet for the prophets not to have spoken thus would have left God without this matchless predictive witness, and would have deprived later generations of the certainties of such prophetic declarations.

As will be seen as we progress, it has been the misconception and misapplication of aspects of these outline prophecies that has led to much of the fanaticism that has marred the centuries, often bringing odium and suspicion upon a sound and wholesome belief in the advent to take place at the destined time of God's appointment.

## **II. Irenaeus—Stresses Antichrist, Resurrections, and Millennium**

Nothing is known positively as to the origin of the Gallican church, but probably its pathfinders came from Asia Minor, which was connected in many ways with the church of Gaul. A fierce persecution of the Christians of Lyons and Vienne in A.D. 177, was the occasion of an epistle to "the brethren in Asia and

Phrygia."<sup>3</sup> At this time we find Irenæus, then a presbyter, as their representative and letter bearer.<sup>4</sup>

IRENÆUS (c. 130-c. 202), bishop of Lyons at the end of the second century, was born in Asia Minor. Although he had received a Greek education, he nevertheless belonged to the West, and was one of the most renowned and learned of the early fathers. Irenæus is quoted as saying that in his youth he listened to Polycarp, who had had personal acquaintance "with John and with others who had seen the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

Irenæus combined a vast missionary and literary activity, laboring by tongue and pen for the evangelization of southern Gaul, sending missionaries into other regions of what is now France. Thus we are introduced to the church in her Western outposts, on the banks of the Rhone. Taking a leading part in ecclesiastical and controversial matters of the time, Irenæus was the champion of orthodoxy against the Gnostic heresy in the last quarter of the second century, and acted as mediator between the East and the West. As a premillennialist he specifically defended his faith against the Platonizing Gnostics.<sup>6</sup>

I. LIFE DEVOTED TO BATTLING HERESIES.—During the terrible persecution in the reign of Aurelius (A.D. 177), Irenæus was sent to Rome with letters of remonstrance against the increasing menace of heresy. Arrived there, he found the bishop of Rome under the influence of Montanism. This situation led Irenæus into his lifelong struggle with heresy and the sects. When, upon his return, the emissaries of heresy began to extend their licentious practices and foolish doctrines, he studied these fallacies as a physician studies diseases—classifying, describing, and countering them. He even sought to correct the bishop of Rome, reproving "the heresy of Eleutherus and the spirit of Diotrephes in Victor," the next bishop in line.<sup>7</sup>

Irenæus was the first patristic writer to make full use of

<sup>3</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, pp. 335, 336.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Church History*, book 5, chaps. 1-4, in *NPNF*, 2d series, vol. 1, pp. 211-219.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 20, pp. 238, 239, citing Irenæus' letter to Florinus.

<sup>6</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, pp. 448-450.

<sup>7</sup> Coxe, Introductory Note, *Irenæus Against Heresies*, in *ANF*, vol. 1, pp. 309, 310.

the New Testament, showing both the Old and the New Testament to be in opposition to Gnosticism. He likewise distinguished between the canonical and the apocryphal writings.<sup>8</sup> His monumental works include the five-book treatise *Against Heresies*, described as the "polemic theological masterpiece of the ante-Nicene age, and the richest mine of information respecting Gnosticism and the church doctrine of that age."<sup>9</sup> The intent can be grasped only as the time and circumstance of writing are considered. With the Gnostic heresy sweeping like a pestilence over great sections of the church, Irenaeus labored to make it impossible for anyone to confound Gnosticism with Christianity, and impossible for such a monstrous system to survive. He demonstrated its essential oneness with the old mythology and with heathen philosophy.

Although the first four books constitute a minute analysis and refutation of the heretical Gnostic doctrines,<sup>10</sup> the fifth is a statement of positive belief. To the constantly shifting and contradictory opinions of the heretics, Irenaeus opposes the steadfast faith of the church. This he rests upon the doctrine of Christ and of the apostles as transmitted through their epistles, and upon the teachings of the church,<sup>11</sup> then but a century and a half old. Thus we see how later tradition came to have its inception.

2. ROME, THE FOURTH KINGDOM, TO BE PARTITIONED.— Irenaeus, like Justin, appeals to the prophecies to demonstrate the truthfulness of Christianity. The close relationship between the predicted events of Daniel 2 and 7 is brought out with remarkable clarity, with Rome as the fourth kingdom in the great succession to end in a tenfold partition.<sup>12</sup>

"In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom *the empire which now rules*

<sup>8</sup> Richard Adelbert Lipsius, "Irenaeus," in William Smith and Henry Wace, *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. 3, p. 270.

<sup>9</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, p. 753.

<sup>10</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 5, Preface, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 526.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. 25, 26, pp. 553-555.

[the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel."<sup>13</sup>

"Daniel also says particularly, that the end of the fourth kingdom consists in the toes of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, upon which came the stone cut out without hands; and as he does himself say: 'The feet were indeed the one part iron, the other part clay, until the stone was cut out without hands, and struck the image upon the iron and clay feet, and dashed them into pieces, even to the end.' Then afterwards, when interpreting this, he says: 'And as thou sawest the feet and the toes, partly indeed of clay, and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, and there shall be in it a root of iron, as thou sawest iron mixed with baked clay. And the toes were indeed the one part iron, but the other part clay.' The ten toes, therefore, are these ten kings, among whom the kingdom shall be partitioned, of whom some indeed shall be strong and active, or energetic; others, again, shall be sluggish and useless, and shall not agree."<sup>14</sup>

3. STONE SMITES KINGDOM AFTER DIVISION.—Irenæus shows that Christ, the prophesied "stone," cut out of the mountain without hands, does not smite the image before but *after* Rome's division.<sup>15</sup> He definitely dates the heaven-descending stone smiting the monarchy-image in the time of the "toes."

4. LITTLE HORN SUPPLANTS THREE OF ROME'S TEN DIVISIONS.—Irenæus asserts that the "little horn" is to supplant three of Rome's ten divisions.<sup>16</sup> He also identifies the ten divisions of the empire with the "ten horns" of Daniel 7 and with the "ten horns" in Revelation 17. Thus he makes Daniel's "little horn" the still future "eighth" in Revelation, supplanting three and subjecting the remainder. And he climaxes with the destruction of all at the second advent.

"In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: 'And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. . . . These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings.' It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], *he who is to come* shall slay

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 26, p. 554. (Translator's brackets; italics supplied.)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 555.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 25, sec. 3, pp. 553, 554.

three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord." 17

#### 5. ANTICHRIST IS MAN OF SIN, BEAST, AND LITTLE HORN.—

Irenaeus regards Antichrist as another name for Paul's apostate Man of Sin.

"By means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e. one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: 'Unless there shall come a falling away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.' " 18

He definitely identifies the same Man of Sin with Daniel's Little Horn:

"Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. . . . Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says: 'And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one's] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 26, pp. 554, 555. (Translator's brackets; italics supplied.)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 25, sec. 1, p. 553. (Translator's brackets.)

And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity.'"<sup>19</sup>

He also identifies Antichrist as John's Beast, quoting Revelation 13:2-10:

"For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly 'be cast into the lake of fire:' [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, 'that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;' whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: 'And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might.'"<sup>20</sup>

Irenæus seeks to apply other expressions to Antichrist, such as "the abomination of desolation," mentioned by Christ (Matt. 24:15) and the "king of a most fierce countenance," in Gabriel's explanation of the Little Horn of Daniel 8. But he is not very definite as to how "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away" during the "half-week,"<sup>21</sup> or three and one-half years of Antichrist's reign. Under the notion that the Antichrist, as a single individual, might be of Jewish origin, he fancies that the mention of "Dan," in Jeremiah 8:16, and the omission of that name from those tribes listed in Revelation 7, might indicate Antichrist's tribe.<sup>22</sup> This surmise became the foundation of a series of subsequent interpretations, as will appear later.

6. THREE AND A HALF TIMES LITERAL YEARS.—Irenæus, like the other early church fathers who could not foresee the lapse of ages before the end of all things, interpreted the three and one-half "times" of the Little Horn of Daniel 7 as three and one-half literal years, which would immediately precede

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 3, pp. 553, 554. (Translator's brackets.)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 28, sec. 2, p. 557. (Translator's brackets.)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 25, secs. 2-4, pp. 553, 554.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 30, p. 559.

Christ's second advent, identified with the lawless reign of Antichrist.

“He shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time, *that is, for three years and six months*, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth. Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says: ‘And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming.’”<sup>23</sup>

Antichrist's three and a half years of sitting in the temple are placed by Irenaeus immediately before the second coming of Christ, and are identified as the second half of the “one week” of Daniel 9. He says nothing of the seventy weeks; we do not know whether he placed the one week at the end of the seventy or whether he had a gap. He mentions only the half week, which he gives to Antichrist.<sup>24</sup> The interpretation of the three and a half times as literal years, it may well be noted, was common to the early fathers who discussed this particular time period.

7. 666 NOT DISCERNIBLE BEFORE ROME'S DIVISION.—Irenaeus also calls John's second, or lamblike, beast, in Revelation 13, the first beast's “armourbearer,” and adds that John terms it “false prophet.” He is also the first of the fathers to stress the mystic number 666,<sup>25</sup> the solution of this numerical riddle intriguing ecclesiastical writers from that time forward. Irenaeus considered the Beast-Antichrist the “recapitulation” of all apostasy, in whose number 666 he found curious symbolism of Noah's age and the size of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image.<sup>26</sup> He relates how names had even then been sought to contain this number, but warned of the danger of deception,<sup>27</sup> admonishing all to wait until Rome's division before attempting to solve the riddle.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 25, sec. 3, p. 554. (Translator's brackets; italics supplied.)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 4, p. 554; cf. chap. 30, sec. 4, p. 560.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 28, sec. 2, p. 557.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 29, sec. 2, p. 558.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 30, sec. 3, p. 559.



"But, knowing the sure number declared by Scripture, that is, six hundred sixty and six, let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then, in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdom, [let them learn] to acknowledge that he who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation."<sup>28</sup>

Irenaeus cites three names that had been suggested, *Evanthas*, *Lateinos*, and *Teitan*. Concerning the first he was dubious. As to the second (*Lateinos*) he said it was a "probable" solution, inasmuch as it came from the name of the fourth kingdom seen by Daniel. But *Teitan* appealed to him as having the most merit of the three, as the name which "the coming man" shall bear; however, he refused to be dogmatic, preferring to await the fulfillment to provide the solution.<sup>29</sup> Of *Lateinos*, Schaff says, "This interpretation is the oldest we know of, and is already mentioned by Irenaeus, the first among the Fathers who investigated the problem."<sup>30</sup>

8. ANTICHRIST DESTROYED AT ADVENT.—Irenaeus declares that this world conqueror's (Antichrist's) future three-and-a-half-year reign, when he sits in the temple at Jerusalem, will be terminated by the second advent, with destruction for the wicked, and the millennial reign of the righteous.<sup>31</sup>

9. FIRST RESURRECTION AFTER ANTICHRIST'S COMING.—Irenaeus plainly states that the "resurrection of the just" takes place after the Antichrist has appeared, and is followed by the reign of the righteous with Christ on earth.

"For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 3, p. 559.

<sup>30</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 1, p. 844, note on Latinus, or the Roman Empire. (*Latinus* is the Latin form; the Greek equivalent is *Lateinos*.)

<sup>31</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 5, chap. 30, sec. 4, in *ANF*, vol. 1, p. 560.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 35, sec. 1, p. 565. (Translator's brackets.)

He contends, against those who would doubt the actual resurrection of the body, that it is much less difficult for God to reanimate than originally to create.<sup>33</sup>

10. RESURRECTED RIGHTEOUS REIGN DURING MILLENNIUM.—Irenaeus calls those “heretics” who maintain the glorification of the saints immediately after death, before their resurrection.<sup>34</sup> He avers that the millennial kingdom and the resurrection are actualities, not allegories,<sup>35</sup> the first resurrection introducing this promised kingdom in which the risen saints are described as ruling over the renewed earth during the millennium, between the two resurrections.<sup>36</sup>

11. 6,000-YEAR THEORY IS FROM JEWISH TRADITION.—Irenaeus held to the old Jewish tradition that the first six days of creation week were typical of the first six thousand years of human history, with Antichrist manifesting himself in the sixth period. And he expected the millennial kingdom to begin with the second coming of Christ to destroy the wicked and inaugurate, for the righteous, the reign of the kingdom of God during the seventh thousand years, the millennial Sabbath, as signified by the Sabbath of creation week.<sup>37</sup> As noted, neither he nor any other writer of those early centuries had any conception of the time to elapse before the awaited advent, and naturally expected a short duration of Antichrist’s power. Time was foreshortened to his gaze as well. But Irenaeus stresses the prophecies concerning the Antichrist, the resurrection at the advent, and the millennium.<sup>38</sup>

12. CONFUSES THE TRADITIONAL AND BIBLICAL VIEWS.—In common with many of the fathers, Irenaeus fails to distinguish between the new earth re-created in its eternal state, the thousand years of Revelation 20, when the saints are with Christ after His second advent, and the Jewish traditions of the

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 3, sec. 2, p. 529.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 31, pp. 560, 561.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 35, pp. 565, 566.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. 32-35, pp. 561-566.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 28, sec. 3, chap. 30, sec. 4, chap. 33, sec. 2, pp. 557, 560, 562 respectively.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. 28, 30, pp. 557-559; chap. 35, pp. 565, 566.

Messianic kingdom. Hence, he applies confused Biblical and traditional ideas to his descriptions of this earth during the millennium, throughout the closing chapters of book 5. This conception of the reign of resurrected and translated saints with Christ on this earth during the millennium—popularly known as chiliasm—was the increasingly prevailing belief of this time.<sup>39</sup>

Although Irenaeus was tintured with Jewish tradition on the millennium, he was not looking for a Jewish kingdom. He definitely interpreted Israel as the Christian church, the spiritual seed of Abraham.<sup>40</sup>

At times his expressions are highly fanciful. He tells, for instance, of a prodigious fertility of this earth during the millennium, after the resurrection of the righteous, “when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food.” In this connection he attributes to Christ the saying about the vine with ten thousand branches, and the ear of wheat with ten thousand grains, and so forth, which he quotes from Papias.<sup>41</sup>

13. GENERAL RESURRECTION FOLLOWS NEW JERUSALEM DESCENT.—The general resurrection and the judgment, declares Irenaeus, follow the descent of the New Jerusalem at the end of the millennial kingdom.

“In the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth. For *after the times of the kingdom*, he says, ‘I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them.’ *And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment*, mentioning ‘the dead, great and small.’ ‘The sea,’ he says, ‘gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. Moreover,’ he says, ‘the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death.’ Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled eternal fire. ‘And if any one,’ it is said, ‘was not found written in the book of life, he was sent into the lake of fire.’ And after this, he says, ‘I saw a new heaven and a new earth,

<sup>39</sup> See chapter 13.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 32, sec. 2, pp. 561, 562.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 33, sec. 3, pp. 562, 563 (see also p. 216 of the present work).

for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband.' 'And I heard,' it is said, 'a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them as their God. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things have passed away.'"<sup>42</sup>

Irenaeus' exegesis does not give complete coverage. On the seals, for example, he merely alludes to Christ as the rider on the white horse.<sup>43</sup> But he stresses the five determining factors of Adventism with greater clarity and emphasis than Justin—the literal resurrection of the righteous at the second advent, the millennium bounded by the two resurrections, the Antichrist to come upon the heels of Rome's breakup, the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse in their relation to the last times, and the kingdom of God to be established by the second advent. But with it all were involved incipient distortions due to the admixture of current traditions, which figure in the extreme forms of chiliasm that were to cause the reaction against the earlier interpretations of Bible prophecies. His writings, with those of Justin, constitute a two-fold witness: first, they constitute the holdover of gradually fading apostolic truth; and second, they disclose that increasing departure that finally took form in the general apostasy of the church, which eventually turned her eyes from the future advent hope and caused her to set herself up as the millennial kingdom of God on earth.

### III. Tertullian Expounds Order of Last Events

TERTULLIAN (c. 160-c. 240) was born in Northern Africa, at Carthage, the ancient rival of Rome. He was perhaps the

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 35, sec. 2, p. 566. (Translator's brackets; italics supplied.)

It is interesting to note here that Irenaeus, who abhors the Gnostics and other heretics who accepted the pagan notion of the inherent evil of matter, cites without disapproval—although without vouching for it—a tradition which shows the infiltration into the church of the idea of at least the inferiority of the material earth even in its re-created state. He says that some of the elders say that only the lower grade of the redeemed, those who have produced thirtyfold, will inhabit the New Jerusalem on the earth, whereas the sixtyfold and hundredfold saints will be, respectively, in Paradise (which he does not locate) and the heavens. (*Ibid.*, chap. 36, sec. 2, p. 567.)

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 21, sec. 3, p. 493.

most conspicuous religious writer of his time. Receiving a liberal Graeco-Roman education, and probably legal training, he lived in pagan blindness and licentiousness to his thirtieth or fortieth year, knowing well the coarseness and repulsiveness of it all. He was strongly attracted by the martyr courage and life of holiness of the Christians, in contrast to the life of the sensual cynic and proud stoic.

Accepting Christianity, he embraced it with all the strength of maturity and all the fiery energy of his soul, defending it thenceforth against pagan, Jew, and heretic. In passing from paganism to Christianity, Tertullian believed himself to be passing from darkness to light and from corruption to purity. His vehemence, therefore, against any form of Christian precept or practice that fell short of his ideal may be the more easily understood. Brilliant and versatile, but fiery and tempestuous in temperament, he spurned every kind of recognized compromise.

I. CARTHAGINIAN SCHOOL OF LATIN THEOLOGY.—This gifted, once-pagan lawyer became the father of Latin theology and creator of the church language in the Latin tongue. He laid the foundations upon which Cyprian and Augustine built, though, curiously enough, he died out of harmony with Rome. He paved the way for the labors of Jerome, who, in creating the Vulgate, lifted the Western churches to a position of intellectual parity with the East. Tertullian's was an extraordinary literary activity in two languages, most of which fell in the first quarter of the third century. His most powerful polemic works were against the Gnostics.

It is essential to have this historic background and setting for Tertullian's witness, and it is desirable to note, first, that the *apostolic* church was principally Jewish, the *ante-Nicene* was largely Greek, and the *post-Nicene*, predominantly Roman. The literature of the Roman church was at first dominantly Greek, and her earliest writers wrote exclusively in Greek.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, p. 626.

Latin began to appear in Christian literature at the end of the second century, and then not in Italy but in Africa, not in Rome but in Carthage, and with lawyers and rhetoricians, not speculative philosophers.

Strangely enough, Rome itself under the emperors was essentially a Greek city, with Greek as its second language. The first sermons preached at Rome were in Greek; for the mass of the poorer population, among whom Christianity took root, were predominantly Greek speaking. Paul wrote to the Roman church in Greek, as did Clement, and various others that followed. The apologies to the Roman emperors were phrased in Greek. The churches in Gaul, evangelized by missionaries from Asia Minor, wrote out the story of their persecutions in Greek, and Irenaeus employed it. On the other hand, Latin Christianity had its birthplace in North Africa. The *Vetus Latina* (Old Latin) version of the Bible evidently had its origin in Africa. By the close of the second century Carthage was a thriving Christian center—a second Rome. Greek was no longer current there, having been supplanted by Latin.<sup>45</sup> So Tertullian was truly the first Latin father, his writings offering the starting point in the history of the Latin church.

A century of missionary endeavor reached a place where the missionary fire blazed out in Tertullian, and, by the middle of the third century, had so grown that several councils were held in Carthage, each attended by not less than seventy bishops. Thus came the great expansion of the church in Africa. And this Carthaginian school of Latin theology molded Christian thought for centuries. Also, Northern Africa probably gave to the Western church the first Latin translation of the Bible, miscalled the *Itala*, which was the basis of Jerome's Vulgate.<sup>46</sup> Rome, at the close of the third century, was still but a prominent member of the sisterhood of Christian churches, and reputable authorities claim there were some ten million

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<sup>45</sup> Westcott, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-254.

<sup>46</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, pp. 27, 28; Landon, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 117-120.

Christians within the bounds of the Roman Empire at this time.<sup>47</sup>

## 2. VIOLENT PERSECUTIONS BRING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PLEA.

—It is essential further to note that martyrdom in Africa began in the second century, when a tempest of persecution broke upon the church in various sections of the empire.<sup>48</sup> The fires of religious fanaticism burst into flame. Many were imprisoned, torture and death followed, and the African church received her share of the baptism of blood. Violent attacks destroyed Christian homes and places of worship, rifling the resting places of the dead, and depriving the living of their church assemblies.

The intensive persecution in the reign of Septimius Severus was most active at the height of Tertullian's career. The flood-gate opened, and the tide of fury swept on, full and strong. Tertullian's *Apology* to the Roman rulers is a monument to this heroic martyr age of the church, which is stamped in letters of blood upon its pages. Tertullian resisted the attacks of heathen bigotry, and demanded equal rights and freedom of religion for Christians. He appealed not for mercy but for justice.<sup>49</sup> This may be regarded as the first plea for religious liberty as an inalienable right, which just governments should, in their own interest, respect and protect. His legal training is observable throughout this affirmation of rights. Juridical in style, Tertullian is ever the advocate for the unnamed army of Christian martyrs. "*The blood of Christians is seed,*" he said.<sup>50</sup>

## 3. RESURRECTION AT SECOND ADVENT, NOT AT DEATH.—

Tertullian believed in and expressly taught the second advent:

"For two comings of Christ having been revealed to us: a first, which has been fulfilled in the lowliness of a human lot; a second, which impends over the world, now near its close, in all the majesty of Deity unveiled; and, by misunderstanding the first, they [the Jews] have concluded that the second—which, as matter of more manifest prediction, they set their hopes on—is the only one."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, p. 22.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>49</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 24, and *To Scapula*, chap. 2, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 38, 39, and 105 respectively; see also Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 50, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 55.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 35.

Tertullian was a decided premillennialist, and affirms it customary for Christians to pray for a part in the first resurrection, which literal resurrection takes place at the advent at the end of the world, and not at death.<sup>52</sup>

4. CHRIST THE STONE THAT SMITES THE IMAGE.—He specifically declares Christ to be the stone of Daniel 2 that will smite at His second coming the “secular kingdom” image of Daniel 2.

“Now these signs of degradation quite suit His first coming, just as the tokens of His majesty do His second advent, when He shall no longer remain ‘a stone of stumbling and rock of offence,’ but after His rejection become ‘the chief corner-stone,’ accepted and elevated to the top place of the temple, even His church, being that very stone in Daniel, cut out of the mountain, which was to smite and crush the image of the secular kingdom. Of this advent the same prophet says: ‘Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days; and they brought Him before Him, and there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.’”<sup>53</sup>

5. FULFILLED PROPHECIES ASSURE FUTURE EVENTS.—Tertullian was the first Latin father to use the prophecies to show the superiority of Holy Scripture over all pagan productions.

“We bring under your notice something of even greater importance; we point to the majesty of our Scriptures, if not to their antiquity. If you doubt that they are as ancient as we say, we offer proof that they are divine. And you may convince yourselves of this at once, and without going very far. Your instructors, the world, and the age, and the event, are all before you. All that is taking place around you was fore-announced; all that you now see with your eye was previously heard by the ear.”<sup>54</sup>

After declaring that what was then taking place had been foreannounced, and that the truth of prophecy is the fulfillment of things predicted, he continues:

“The truth of a prophecy, I think, is the demonstration of its being from above. Hence there is among us an assured faith in regard to coming events as things already proved to us, for they were predicted along with

<sup>52</sup> Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 22, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 560, 561.

<sup>53</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 326.

<sup>54</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 20, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 33.



what we have day by day fulfilled. They are uttered by the same voices, they are written in the same books—the same Spirit inspires them. All time is one to prophecy foretelling the future.”<sup>55</sup>

6. ANTICHRIST—BEAST—MAN OF SIN IS NEAR.—Tertullian, like Irenaeus, identifies the Antichrist with the Man of Sin and the Beast.<sup>56</sup> On the one hand he speaks of many antichrists—as indeed John himself does—men who rebel against Christ at any time, and he specifically mentions Marcion and his followers as antichrists.<sup>57</sup> Yet on the other hand he expects the specific Antichrist just before the resurrection, as a persecutor of the church, under whom the second company of martyrs, awaited by those under the altar of the fifth seal, will be slain, and Enoch and Elijah will meet their long-delayed death.<sup>58</sup> Unlike Irenaeus, however, Tertullian does not describe Antichrist as a Jew sitting in a Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Indeed, he says that the temple of God is the church.<sup>59</sup> He expects Antichrist soon.<sup>60</sup>

7. ROME'S CONTINUANCE DELAYS ANTICHRIST'S APPEARANCE.—Commenting on the Antichrist of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-6, he observes truly that it is the Roman state that is the restraining “obstacle” which, by being broken up into the “ten kingdoms,” would make way for Antichrist, who would ultimately be destroyed by the brightness of the advent.

“‘For that day shall not come, unless indeed there first come a falling away,’ he [Paul] means indeed of this present empire, ‘and that man of sin be revealed,’ that is to say, Antichrist, ‘the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or religion; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, affirming that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was with you, I used to tell you these things? And now ye know what detaineth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hinders must

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 5, chap. 16, and *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 25, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 463, 464, and 563 respectively.

<sup>57</sup> Tertullian, *On Prescription Against Heresies*, chap. 4, and *Against Marcion*, book 3, chap. 8, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 245 and 327 respectively.

<sup>58</sup> Tertullian, *On the Resurrection*, chaps. 25, 27, and *Scorpiace*, chap. 12, and *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 30, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 563, 565, and 646, and 227, 228 respectively.

<sup>59</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 3, chaps. 7, 23, 25, and *On the Resurrection*, chap. 26, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 326, 341, 342, and 564 respectively.

<sup>60</sup> Tertullian, *De Fuga in Persecutione* (On Flight in Persecution), chap. 12, in *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 124.

hinder, until he be taken out of the way.' *What obstacle is there but the Roman state, the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)? 'And then shall be revealed the wicked one, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.'*"<sup>61</sup>

8. **BABYLON THE RECOGNIZED FIGURE OF ROME.**—The "Babylon" of the Apocalypse is, by Tertullian, applied to the city of Rome and her domination.

"So, again, Babylon, in our own John, is a figure of the city Rome, as being equally great and proud of her sway, and triumphant over the saints."<sup>62</sup>

Consonant with such a view, he depicts her as "drunk" with the blood of martyred "saints."<sup>63</sup> Such was the obviously immediate application.

9. **ROME'S BREAKUP SIGNAL FOR END.**—The mighty shock hanging over the world, Tertullian declares, is retarded only by the continuing existence of the Roman Empire. Rome's breakup will be the signal for the terrors of the end; and so they definitely prayed for Rome's continuance.

"There is also another and a greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the emperors, nay, for the complete stability of the empire, and for Roman interests in general. For we know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth—in fact, *the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes—is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire.* We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in *praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration.*"<sup>64</sup>

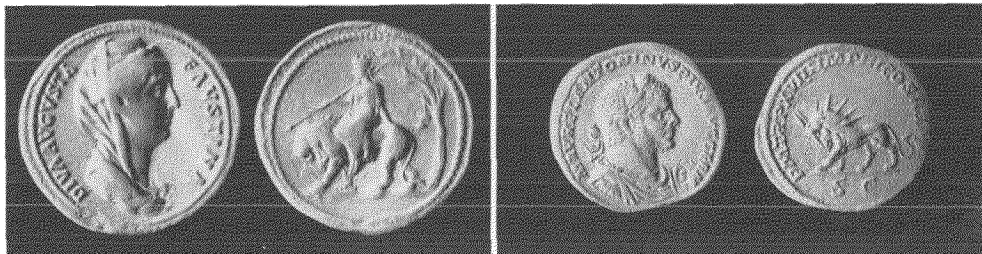
10. **ENUMERATES ORDER OF LAST EVENTS.**—Tertullian attempts to enumerate the order of last-day events, as brought to view in the Apocalypse—the plagues, Babylon's doom, Antichrist's warfare on the saints, the devil cast into the bottomless

<sup>61</sup> Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 24, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 563. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>62</sup> Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, chap. 9, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 162.

<sup>63</sup> Tertullian, *Scorpice*, chap. 12, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 646.

<sup>64</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 32, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 42, 43. (Italics supplied.)



**PROPHETIC SYMBOLS FIND COUNTERPARTS  
ON ROMAN COINS**

Emblem on Back of Faustina Coin Reminds One of the Woman in Purple Riding the Scarlet Beast, in Revelation 17 (Upper Left); Caracalla Coin Picturing Rays, Like Horns on Beast, Exemplifying the Multiple-Horn Device, Used in Prophecy, Was Employed in Roman Days (Right); Maximian Coin Showing Hercules Seeking to Destroy Hydra-headed Symbol of Christianity (Lower Left)

pit, the advent, the resurrection of the saints, the judgment, and the second resurrection, with the harvest at the end of the world; and the sixth seal extending to the final dissolution of the earth and sky, in which he included the stars.<sup>65</sup>

11. PROPHECY SPANS FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS.—Tertullian regarded prophecy as largely prefiguring, in orderly succession, the chief events and epochs of the church and the world from Christ's first advent to His second coming, and assures us that the events surrounding the second advent, such as the resurrection, were as yet unfulfilled.<sup>66</sup>

12. MILLENNIUM FOLLOWS RESURRECTION OF DEAD.—In controverting Marcion, the most formidable Gnostic heretic who had yet opposed revealed truth, Tertullian contends against the Jewish hope of the restoration of Judea, and for the spiritual significance of the promises to Israel. He maintains that the thousand years of the Apocalypse will follow the resurrection, upon the earth, with the New Jerusalem in its midst, and precede the eternity of heaven.

"Our inquiry relates to what is promised in heaven, not on earth. But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built

<sup>65</sup> Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chap. 25, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 563; *Against Hermogenes*, chap. 34, pp. 496, 497.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 22, pp. 560, 561.

city of Jerusalem, 'let down from heaven,' which the apostle also calls 'our mother from above;' and, while declaring that our *πολίτευμα*, or citizenship, is in heaven, he predicates of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld. . . .

"This city [new Jerusalem] <sup>67</sup> has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with the abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which in the world we have either despised or lost; since it is both just and God-worthy that His servants should have their joy in the place where they have also suffered affliction for His name's sake."<sup>68</sup>

As the next quotation shows, Tertullian describes the resurrection of the saints as covering a period of time, some rising sooner than others.

13. AFTER MILLENNIUM, WORLD'S DESTRUCTION AND HEAVEN.—Tertullian further declares that the world's destruction, at the execution of the judgment, will come at the close of the thousand years spent by the saints in the New Jerusalem on earth.

"Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment: we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom in heaven."<sup>69</sup>

14. SEVENTY WEEKS FULFILLED BY FIRST ADVENT.—Tertullian contends that by the prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks <sup>70</sup> the time of Christ's incarnation, as well as of His death, is foretold. He gives an extensive sketch of the chronology of the seventy hebdomads, or weeks of years, starting them from the first year of Darius, and continuing to Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans under the command of Titus. This was to show that the seventy weeks were then fully completed, the vision and prophecy thus being sealed by the advent of Christ,

<sup>67</sup> It is characteristic of the credulity of the ancients, that Tertullian mentions a report of what was evidently a mirage city seen in Judea, and regards it as an advance view of the heavenly city.

<sup>68</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 3, chap. 25, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 342, 343.

<sup>69</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 3, chap. 25, in *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 343.

<sup>70</sup> Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, chaps. 8, 11, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 158, 159, 168.

which he places at the end of the sixty-two and one-half weeks. His knowledge of chronology is, of course, inexact, as is demonstrated by his putting the destruction of Jerusalem fifty-two and a half years after the birth of Christ.<sup>71</sup>

15. ESPOUSED MONTANISM IN PROTEST OF ROMAN LAXITY. —The Montanist movement arose after the middle of the second century. This group purposed to restore what they considered the original Christianity. The Manichaeans, on the contrary, attempted to reconstruct Christianity, and questioned the integrity and the authenticity of the Christian records and writers. About the beginning of the third century Tertullian espoused Montanism,<sup>72</sup> noted for its moral austerity. Repelled by the growing laxity of the Roman clergy and the worldly conformity of the Roman church, he was attracted by the martyr enthusiasm and chiliastic beliefs of the Montanists, who became extremists in millenarian positions.<sup>73</sup>

The Montanists lived under the vivid impression of the final catastrophe, and directed their desires toward the second advent and the end of the world; but the abatement of the advent hope in the dominant church brought increase of worldliness, as she began to establish herself in the earth. Thus the separating line over this issue of worldly establishment began to be rather definitely drawn as relates to the advent expectancy.

Tertullian ruthlessly exposed the corruptions of the Roman church. He attacked the lax edict of the Roman bishop who had given remission for gross, carnal sins, ironically calling

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-160, 168.

<sup>72</sup> Montanism, named after Montanus, arose in Phrygia about A.D. 150. It was a reactionary movement against innovations introduced through Gnostic and pagan influences, especially of *gnosis* (knowledge) at the expense of faith. The Montanists were inclined toward extravagance in religion, but it is to their credit that they inveighed against lax morals and lax discipline. They insisted upon holiness at the expense of catholicity. They were strongly ascetic, and wholly rejected the use of wine. They claimed to be the recipients of special revelations, and were intrigued by speculations as to the approaching end of the world. The movement spread among the more spiritual in Asia Minor, Proconsular Africa, and the East. It was Tertullian's reaction against the scandalous laxity of discipline seen in the Roman church under Bishop Zephyrinus, which led him to cast his lot with the Montanists, becoming their greatest theologian. The errors of Montanism consist in an exaggeration of Christian ideas and requirements. Hence it may be regarded as a forerunner of the ascetic emphasis of the fourth and following centuries. (Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, p. 421; Albert H. Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, vol. 1, pp. 202-206, 258-260.)

<sup>73</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, pp. 417-420, 820, 821.

him "the *Pontifex Maximus*"—a term then referring only to the pagan chief priesthood, which was held by the Roman emperors at this time.<sup>74</sup> He likewise challenged the power of the "keys" as usurped by the church at Rome.<sup>75</sup>

16. THE SABBATH AND TRADITION.—Before leaving Tertullian we must turn briefly to a different aspect of the picture. While still holding to the advent hope, Tertullian had, in common with the majority, already departed considerably from the original teachings and practices of the church, in bringing in traditional customs which he admits are non-Biblical, as will be seen. Writing against Marcion the Gnostic, he upholds the Sabbath as consecrated by God the Father for the good of man, and not rescinded by Christ but sanctified by His life and action.<sup>76</sup> But to the Jews he writes that the Sabbaths were Jewish and temporal, and argues for a perpetual, spiritual sabbath, just as he contends for a spiritual eternal law in contrast to a temporal law, and both beginning with the new covenant.<sup>77</sup>

He answers lamely the contention that they were like the worshipers of the sun-god—because they also prayed toward the east and celebrated Sunday—simply by saying, "Do you do less than this?"<sup>78</sup> He also takes pains to disavow the observance of the Jewish Sabbath.<sup>79</sup> He explains how the pagans would not join in Christian customs, lest they seem to be Christians, but at the same time declares that Christians were not fearful of being called heathen, though they joined the pagans in their observance of the annual heathen festivals.<sup>80</sup> Thus the pagans appeared truer to their convictions as to separation than the Christians.

In discussing the Christian soldier's refusal to wear the crown of laurel leaves, Tertullian touches the relation of Scripture to tradition, and whether none save a written tradition

<sup>74</sup> Tertullian, *On Modesty*, chap. 7, in *ANF*, vol. 4, pp. 74, 75.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 21, p. 99.

<sup>76</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 4, chap. 12, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 362-364.

<sup>77</sup> Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, chaps. 4, 6, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 155-157.

<sup>78</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 16, and *Ad Nationes*, book 1, chap. 13, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 31 and 123 respectively.

<sup>79</sup> Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, chaps. 13, 14, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 68-70.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 14, p. 70.

ought to be received. In this connection he reveals the extent to which customs based on "tradition alone" had crept into the church. He mentions dipping three times in baptism (thus exceeding the Scripture mandate), offerings for the dead, abstaining from fasting or from kneeling in worship on the "Lord's day" and from Easter to Whitsunday, undue veneration for bread and wine, and the use of the sign of the cross.<sup>81</sup> Then comes this startlingly frank admission: "*If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer.*"<sup>82</sup>

Nevertheless, we find in this period our five determining factors in the advent belief still standing forth—the literal resurrection of the dead at the second advent; the millennial period following the advent; the Antichrist expected upon the heels of Rome's breakup; and, in the interpretation of outline prophecies, Christ's first advent fulfilling the seventy weeks of Daniel, Christ's second coming as the smiting stone of Daniel 2, Rome as the fourth world power to be divided into ten kingdoms, and considerable emphasis upon last-day events as disclosed in the Apocalypse. Thus premillennialism, despite certain departures, is still predominant.

#### IV. Clement of Alexandria's Chronology of Seventy Weeks

As the second century drew to its eventful close, the growing church entered upon a new stage in its history. It had already spread from the land of its birth out to Britain in one direction and to the Ganges in the other, and all the way from its original base in Syria to the delta of the Nile. Alexandria, with its great libraries, was famous as a seat of learning. The Alexandrian church, which became the rival of Antioch and Rome, was at the center of two streams of influence. There, says Schaff, "the religious life of Palestine and the intellectual

<sup>81</sup> Tertullian, *The Chaplet, or de Corona*, chaps. 1-3, in *ANF*, vol. 3, pp. 93-95.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 95. (Italics supplied.)

culture of Greece commingled and prepared the way for the first school of theology which aimed at a philosophic comprehension and vindication of the truths of revelation."<sup>83</sup>

Alexandria's catechetical school was well known, with Pantaenus of Sicily as one of its early heads. Farrar gives a valuable pen picture of Alexandria that may well be borne in mind in familiarizing ourselves with Clement of Alexandria:

"But Alexandria was pre-eminently the home of theosophy, the seat of those studies in which Judaism and the religions of the East were deeply affected by contact with Platonism and other schools of Greek philosophy. Christianity, while making itself felt among these forms of belief, received in turn a powerful impress from the prevalent conceptions. In such a city as Alexandria—with its museum, its libraries, its lectures, its schools of philosophy, its splendid synagogue, its avowed atheists, its deep-thinking Oriental mystics—the Gospel would have been powerless if it had been unable to produce teachers who were capable of meeting Pagan philosophers and Jewish Philonists and eastern Eclectics on their own ground."<sup>84</sup>

It was during this time that Clement, who soon developed into one of the best-known early Christian writers, became one of Pantaenus' students. Through his writings he showed paganism to be an outworn, futile creed, to be dismissed with contempt, as he exposed the folly and irrationality of its multiple gods. He showed that pagan mythologies had polluted the very atmosphere of life. And he became the ethical philosopher of the Christians, as he sketched the reformation which Christianity imposed on society.<sup>85</sup>

TITUS FLAVIUS CLEMENS, or Clement of Alexandria (*c.* 150-*c.* 220), whose birthplace is unknown, was originally a pagan philosopher. Upon entering the Christian church he sought instruction from its most eminent teachers, traveling extensively in Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Palestine. Thus he came to Pantaenus at Alexandria, and soon became celebrated for his learning, and was made a presbyter in the church of Alexandria. He became the illustrious head of the Catechetical

<sup>83</sup> Schaff, *History*, vol. 2, p. 778.

<sup>84</sup> Farrar, *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 262.

<sup>85</sup> Coxe, Introductory Note to Clement of Alexandria, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 165; see also Farrar, *Lives*, vol. 1, pp. 261-290; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 5, pp. 799, 800, art. "Clement of Alexandria."



School, possibly about 189, succeeding his master, Pantaenus. Among his pupils was Origen, who was his successor in the same school. He left the city during the severe persecution under Septimius Severus, fleeing to Syria about 202. Later he appeared in Palestine and Asia Minor.

Clement was the contemporary of Tertullian of Carthage, but he wrote in Greek. His Old Testament quotations are from the Septuagint, as Greek was the universal language of the eastern Mediterranean, and even the churches of the West were really Greek religious colonies. His chief works form a trilogy—*The Exhortation to the Heathen* (an exposure of the sordidness of heathenism), *The Instructor* (a guide for the formation of Christian character), and his greatest, the *Stromata* (Miscellanies). This latter is an unorganized discussion of doctrinal theology or Christian philosophy, written in opposition to Gnosticism. It is a medley, bringing out the blended beauties and monstrosities of the pagan world of antiquity. It contains chronology, philosophy, and poetry. Clement's tendency was to construe the Bible philosophically, and to lean toward speculation. Greek philosophy was to him the preparatory stage of the Christian faith. This tendency continued to grow until it changed the whole emphasis of the church.

1. SEVENTY WEEKS INCLUDE CHRIST'S ADVENT.—A treatise *On Prophecy* is included in a list of works which Clement refers to "as written or about to be written" by him. There is only scattered treatment of prophecy in the *Stromata*. Clement was one of the first, of whom we have record, to apply the seventy weeks historically. In *Stromata*, after quoting Daniel 9:24-27, Clement declares that the temple was built in the prophesied "seven weeks,"<sup>86</sup> or first period. During the "sixty and two weeks" all Judea was quiet. Then "Christ our Lord, 'the Holy of Holies,' having come and fulfilled the vision of the prophecy, was anointed in His flesh by the Holy Spirit of His Father." Clement says that Christ was "Lord" during the

<sup>86</sup> Clement, *The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, book 1, chap. 21, in *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 329.

one week. Clement thought that in the first "half of the week" Nero held sway, and placed the abomination in the holy city Jerusalem; and in the other half of the week he was taken away, and Otho, and Galba, and Vitellius reigned. Then "Vespasian rose to the supreme power, and destroyed Jerusalem, and desolated the holy place"<sup>87</sup> at the end of the period.

2. DANIEL'S LONGER PERIODS APPLIED TO JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION.—Later in the chapter, in discussing further the time phase of Daniel's prophecy, Clement gives more detail. He applies not only the seventieth week to the seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, but the 1290, 1335, and 2300 days as well:

"I mean the days which Daniel indicates from the desolation of Jerusalem, the seven years and seven months of the reign of Vespasian. For the two years are added to the seventeen months and eighteen days of Otho, and Galba, and Vitellius; and the result is three years and six months, which is 'the half of the week,' as Daniel the prophet said. For he said that there were two thousand three hundred days from the time that the abomination of Nero stood in the holy city, till its destruction. For thus the declaration, which is subjoined, shows: 'How long shall be the vision, the sacrifice taken away, the abomination of desolation, which is given, and the power and the holy place shall be trodden under foot? And he said to him, Till the evening and morning, two thousand three hundred days, and the holy place shall be taken away.'<sup>88</sup>

"These two thousand three hundred days, then, make six years four months, during the half of which Nero held sway, and it was half a week; and for a half, Vespasian with Otho, Galba, and Vitellius reigned. And on this account Daniel says, 'Blessed is he that cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.' For up to these days was war, and after them it ceased. And this number is demonstrated from a subsequent chapter, which is as follows: 'And from the time of the change of continuation, and of the giving of the abomination of desolation, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three and thirty-five days.'<sup>89</sup>

This very imperfect attempt at the chronology of the seventy weeks by Clement was next taken up by Julius Af-

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> In his endeavor to explain and to harmonize Bible truth with Grecian dialectics, after the manner of Philo, Clement made Daniel 8:14 read "the holy place shall be *taken away*" to make it fit the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70—a mistranslation unless he followed a text different from both the Septuagint and the Theodotion versions of Daniel.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

ricanus, with whom he was a partial contemporary.<sup>90</sup> Maitland's comment on Clement's discussion is, "The attempt can scarcely be termed successful."<sup>91</sup> However, later expositors rectified and clarified this vital prophecy of the Messianic prophecy of the seventy weeks of years.

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<sup>90</sup> For Africanus, see page 279.

<sup>91</sup> Charles Maitland, *The Apostles' School of Prophetic Interpretation*, p. 166.