

CHAPTER XXVI. ROME -- THE GREAT APOSTASY

That Man of Sin -- Men Speaking Perverse Things -- The Mysteries -- Worshiping Toward the East -- Ambition of the Bishop of Rome -- The New Platonists -- School of Clement and Origen -- The Two Pagan Streams -- Political Designs -- The New Paganism -- The Two Streams Unite; a New Religion

WHEN Paul was at Thessalonica, he preached to the people about the second coming of the Lord. After he had gone away, he wrote to them a letter in which he said more about this same event; and in his writing he made it so much of a reality, and his hope was so centered in the event, that apparently he put himself among those who would see the Saviour come, and wrote as though he and others would be alive at that time. He wrote: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

1 {1898 ATJ, GEP 374.1}

2. The Thessalonians, not bearing in mind what he had told them when he was there, misinterpreted these strong and apparently personal statements, and therefore put into the apostle's words a meaning that he did not intend should be there. Upon this they fell into the mistake of supposing that the second coming of Christ was immediately at hand, and was so near that they could even live without working until He should come. This idea had been worked up quite fully among them by persons pretending to have received revelations by the Spirit; by others pretending that they had received word from Paul to that effect; and yet others went so far as to write letters to that effect, and forge Paul's name to them. These facts coming to the apostle's knowledge, he wrote a second letter to correct the mistakes which, in view of the teaching he had given when he was present with them, they were wholly unwarranted in making. {1898 ATJ, GEP 374.2}

375

3. In this second letter Paul did not modify in the least the doctrine that Christ is coming, nor that He will then certainly gather His people to himself. There was no mistake in the doctrine concerning the fact of His coming. The mistake was in the time when they expected Him to come. This is the point which the apostle corrects in his second letter, and writes thus: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." 2 {1898 ATJ, GEP 375.1}

4. All this he had taught them when he was there with them, and therefore reminded them, in the fifth verse, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" Then, having recalled to their minds the fact, he simply appeals to their knowledge, and says: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he [the son of perdition] might be revealed in his time." This plainly sets forth the

prophecy of a great falling away or apostasy from the truth of the gospel. The purity of the gospel of Christ would be corrupted, and its intent perverted. {1898 ATJ, GEP 375.2}

5. The falling away of which Paul wrote to the Thessalonians is referred to in his counsel to the elders of the church at Ephesus, whom he called to meet him at Miletus. To them he said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." 3 {1898 ATJ, GEP 375.3}

6. This warning was not alone to the people of Ephesus in the three years that he was there. It is seen through all his epistles. Because of this readiness of individuals to assert themselves, to get wrong views of the truth, and to speak perverse things, the churches had constantly to be checked, guided, trained, reproved, and rebuked. There were men even in the church who were ever ready to question the authority of the apostles. There were those who made it a business to follow up Paul, and by every possible means to counteract his teaching and destroy his influence. They declared that he was not an apostle of the Lord at all, but of men; that he had never seen the Lord; that he was simply a tent-maker going about over the country working at his trade, and passing himself off as an apostle. Others charged him with teaching the doctrine that it is right to do evil that good may come. {1898 ATJ, GEP 376.1}

7. But it was not alone nor chiefly from these characters that the danger threatened. It was those who from among the disciples would arise speaking perverse things, of which an instance and a warning are given in the letter to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." 4 {1898 ATJ, GEP 376.2}

8. Nor yet was it with such as these that the greatest danger lay. It was from those who would arise not only speaking perverse things, but "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Through error of judgment, a man might speak perverse things with no bad intention; but the ones here mentioned would speak perverse things purposely and with the intention of making disciples for themselves -- to draw away disciples after them instead of to draw disciples to Christ. These would pervert the truth, and would have to pervert the truth, in order to accomplish their purpose. He who always speaks the truth as it is in Jesus, will draw disciples to Jesus and not to himself. To draw to Christ will be his only wish. But when one seeks to draw disciples to himself, and puts himself in the place of Christ, then he must pervert the truth, and accommodate it to the wishes of those whom he hopes to make his own disciples. This is wickedness; this is apostasy. {1898 ATJ, GEP 376.3}

9. There was another consideration which made the danger the more imminent. These words were spoken to the bishops. It was a company of bishops to whom the apostle was speaking when he said: "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." From that order of men who were chosen to guide and to care for the church of Christ, from those who were set to protect the church -- from this order of men there would be those who would pervert their calling, their office, and the purpose of it, to build up themselves, and gather disciples to themselves in the place of Christ. To watch this spirit, to check its influence, and to guard against its workings, was the constant effort of the apostle, and for the reason, as stated to the Thessalonians, that the mystery of iniquity was already working. There were at that time elements abroad which the apostle could plainly

see would develop into all that the Scriptures had announced. And scarcely were the last of the apostles dead when the evil appeared in its practical workings. {1898 ATJ, GEP 377.1}

Stopped 6/18/2021 Look up Bishop

10. No sooner were the apostles removed from the stage of action, no sooner was their watchful attention gone and their apostolic authority removed, than this very thing appeared of which the apostle had spoken. Certain bishops, in order to make easier the conversion of the heathen, to multiply disciples, and by this increase their own influence and authority, began to adopt heathen customs and forms. {1898 ATJ, GEP 377.2}

11. When the canon of Scripture was closed, and the last of the apostles was dead, the first century was gone; and within twenty years of that time the perversion of the truth of Christ had become wide-spread. In the history of this century and of this subject the record is, -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 377.3}

"It is certain that to religious worship, both public and private, many rites were added, without necessity, and to the offense of sober and good men." -- Mosheim. 5 {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.1}

12. And the reason of this is stated to be that -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.2}

"The Christians were pronounced atheists, because they were destitute of temples, altars, victims, priests, and all that pomp in which the vulgar suppose the essence of religion to consist. For unenlightened persons are prone to estimate religion by what meets their eyes. To silence this accusation, the Christian doctors thought it necessary to introduce some external rites, which would strike the senses of the people, so that they could maintain themselves really to possess all those things of which Christians were charged with being destitute, though under different forms." Mosheim. 6 {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.3}

13. This was at once to accommodate the Christian worship and its forms to that of the heathen, and was almost at one step to heathenize Christianity. No heathen element or form can be connected with Christianity or its worship, and Christianity remain pure. {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.4}

14. Of all the ceremonies of the heathen, the mysteries were the most sacred and most universally practised. Some mysteries were in honor of Bacchus, some of Cybele, but the greatest of all, those considered the most sacred of all and the most widely practised, were the Eleusinian, so called because celebrated at Eleusis in Greece. But whatever was the mystery that was celebrated, there was always in it, as an essential part of it, the elements of abomination that characterized sun-worship everywhere, because the mysteries were simply forms of the wide-spread and multiform worship of the sun. {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.5}

15. Among the first of the perversions of the Christian worship was to give to its forms the title and air of the mysteries. For says the record: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.6}

"Among the Greeks and the people of the East, nothing was held more sacred than what were called the mysteries. This circumstance led the Christians, in order to impart dignity to their religion, to say that they also had similar mysteries, or certain holy rites concealed from the vulgar; and they not only applied the terms used in the pagan mysteries to Christian institutions, particularly baptism and the

Lord's Supper, but they gradually introduced also the rites which were designated by these terms." -- Mosheim. 7 {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.7}

16. That this point may be more fully understood, we shall give a sketch of the Eleusinian mysteries. As we have stated, although there were others, these were of such pre-eminence that they acquired the specific name, by way of pre-eminence, of "the mysteries." The festival was sacred to Ceres and Proserpine. Everything about it contained a mystery, and was to be kept secret by the initiated. "This mysterious secrecy was solemnly observed and enjoined on all the votaries of the goddess; and if any one ever appeared at the celebration, either intentionally or through ignorance, without proper introduction, he was immediately punished with death. Persons of both sexes and all ages were initiated at this solemnity; and it was looked upon as so heinous a crime to neglect this sacred part of religion that it was one of the heaviest accusations which contributed to the condemnation of Socrates. The initiated were under the more particular care of the deities, and therefore their lives were supposed to be attended with more happiness and real security than those of other men. This benefit was not only granted during life, but it extended beyond the grave; and they were honored with the first places in the Elysian fields, while others were left to wallow in perpetual filth and ignominy." -- Anthon. 8 {1898 ATJ, GEP 379.1}

17. There were the greater and the lesser mysteries. The greater were the Eleusinian in fact, and the lesser were invented, according to the mythological story, because Hercules passed near Eleusis, where the greater mysteries were celebrated, and desired to be initiated; but as he was a stranger, and therefore could not lawfully be admitted, a form of mysteries was adopted into which he could be initiated. These were ever afterward celebrated as the lesser, and were observed at Agrae. In the course of time the lesser were made preparatory to the greater, and the candidate must be initiated into these before he could be initiated into the greater. {1898 ATJ, GEP 379.2}

18. "No person could be initiated at Eleusis without a previous purification at Agrae. This purification they performed by keeping themselves pure, chaste, and unpolluted during nine days, after which they came and offered sacrifices and prayers, wearing garlands of flowers, and having under their feet Jupiter's skin, which was the skin of a victim offered to that god. The person who assisted was called Hudranos from hudor, water, which was used at the purification; and they themselves were called the initiated. A year after the initiation at the lesser mysteries they sacrificed a sow to Ceres, and were admitted into the greater, and the secrets of the festivals were solemnly revealed to them, from which they were called inspectors. {1898 ATJ, GEP 379.3}

19. "The initiation was performed in the following manner: The candidates, crowned with myrtle, were admitted by night into a place called the mystical temple, a vast and stupendous building. As they entered the temple, they purified themselves by washing their hands in holy water, and received for admonition that they were to come with a mind pure and undefiled, without which the cleanliness of the body would be unacceptable. After this the holy mysteries were read to them from a large book called petroma, because made of two stones, petrai, fitly cemented together; and then the priest proposed to them certain questions, to which they readily answered. After this, strange and fearful objects presented themselves to their sight; the place often seemed to quake, and to appear suddenly resplendent with fire, and immediately covered with gloomy darkness and horror." -- Anthon. 9 After initiation, the celebration lasted nine days. {1898 ATJ, GEP 380.1}

20. These mysteries, as well as those of Bacchus and others, were directly related to the sun, for "the most holy and perfect rite in the Eleusinian Mysteries was to show an ear of corn mowed down in silence, and this was a symbol of the Phrygian Atys." 10 {1898 ATJ, GEP 380.2}

21. The Phrygian Atys was simply the incarnation of the sun, and the mysteries being a form of sun-worship, the "sacred" symbols can not be described with decency. Therefore, it is not necessary to describe the actions that were performed in the celebration of the mysteries after the initiation, any further than is spoken by the apostle with direct reference to this subject. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." 11 {1898 ATJ, GEP 380.3}

22. It was to accommodate the Christian worship to the minds of a people who practised these things that the bishops gave to the Christian ordinances the name of mysteries. The Lord's Supper was made the greater mystery, baptism the lesser and the initiatory rite to the celebration of the former. After the heathen manner also a white garment was used as the initiatory robe, and the candidate, having been baptized, and thus initiated into the lesser mysteries, was admitted into what was called in the church the order of catechumens, in which order they remained a certain length of time, as in the heathen celebration, before they were admitted to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the greater mystery. {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.1}

23. "This practise originated in the Eastern provinces, and then after the time of Hadrian (who first introduced the pagan mysteries among the Latins) it spread among the Christians of the West." The reign of Hadrian was from 117-138. Therefore, before the second century was half gone, before the last of the apostles had been dead forty years, this apostasy, this working of the mystery of iniquity, had so largely spread over both the East and the West, that it is literally true that "a large part, therefore, of the Christian observances and institutions, even in this century, had the aspect of the pagan mysteries." -- Mosheim. 12 {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.2}

24. Nor is this all. These apostates, not being content with so much of the sun-worship as appeared in the celebration of the mysteries, adopted the heathen custom of worshiping toward the east. So says the history: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.3}

"Before the coming of Christ, all the Eastern nations performed divine worship with their faces turned to that part of the heavens where the sun displays his rising beams. This custom was founded upon a general opinion that God, whose essence they looked upon to be light, and whom they considered as being circumscribed within certain limits, dwell in that part of the firmament from which he sends forth the sun, the bright image of his benignity and glory. The Christian converts, indeed, rejected this gross error [of supposing that God dwelt in that part of the firmament]; but they retained the ancient and universal custom of worshiping toward the east, which sprang from it. Nor is this custom abolished even in our times, but still prevails in a great number of Christian churches." -- Mosheim. 13 {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.4}

25. The next step in addition to this was the adoption of the day of the sun as a festival day. To such an extent were the forms of sun-worship practised in this apostasy, that before the close of the second century the heathen themselves charged these so-called Christians with worshiping the sun. A presbyter of the church of Carthage, then and now one of the "church fathers," who wrote about A. D. 200, considered it necessary to make a defense of the practise, which he did to the following effect in an address to the rulers and magistrates of the Roman Empire: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.1}

"Others, again, certainly with more information and greater verisimilitude, believe that the sun is our god. We shall be counted Persians perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you, also under pretense sometimes of worshipping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. In the same way, if we devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than sun-worship, we have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day of Saturn to ease and luxury, though they too go far away from Jewish ways, of which indeed they are ignorant." -- Tertullian. 14 {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.2}

26. And again in an address to all the heathen he justifies this practise by the argument, in effect, You do the same thing, you originated it too, therefore you have no right to blame us. In his own words his defense is as follows: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.3}

"Others, with greater regard to good manners, it must be confessed, suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray toward the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity. What then? Do you do less than this? Do not many among you, with an affectation of sometimes worshipping the heavenly bodies, likewise move your lips in the direction of the sunrise? It is you, at all events, who have admitted the sun into the calendar of the week; and you have selected its day, in preference to the preceding day, as the most suitable in the week for either an entire abstinence from the bath, or for its postponement until the evening, or for taking rest and banqueting." -- Tertullian. 15 {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.4}

27. This accommodation was easily made, and all this practise was easily justified, by the perverse-minded teachers, in the perversion of such scriptures as, "The Lord God is a sun and shield," and, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." 16 {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.5}

28. As this custom spread, and through it such disciples were multiplied, the ambition of the bishop of Rome grew apace. It was in honor of the day of the sun that there was manifested the first attempt of the bishop of Rome to compel the obedience of all other bishops, and the fact that this attempt was made in such a cause, at the very time when these pretended Christians were openly accused by the heathen of worshipping the sun, is strongly suggestive. {1898 ATJ, GEP 383.1}

29. From Rome there came now another addition to the sun-worshipping apostasy. The first Christians being mostly Jews, continued to celebrate the Passover in remembrance of the death of Christ, the true Passover; and this was continued among those who from among the Gentiles had turned to Christ. Accordingly, the celebration was always on the Passover day, -- the fourteenth of the first month. Rome, however, and from her all the West, adopted the day of the sun as the day of this celebration. According to the Eastern custom, the celebration, being on the fourteenth day of the month, would of course fall on different days of the week as the years revolved. The rule of Rome was that the celebration must always be on a Sunday -- the Sunday nearest to the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. And if the fourteenth day of that month should itself be a Sunday, then the celebration was not to be

held on that day, but upon the next Sunday. One reason of this was not only to be as like the heathen as possible, but to be as un like the Jews as possible; this, in order not only to facilitate the "conversion" of the heathen by conforming to their customs, but also by pandering to their spirit of contempt and hatred of the Jews. It was upon this point that the bishop of Rome made his first open attempt at absolutism. {1898 ATJ, GEP 383.2}

30. We know not precisely when this began, but it was practised in Rome as early as the time of Sixtus I, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 119-128. The practise was promoted by his successors, and Anicetus, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 157-168, "would neither conform to that [Eastern] custom himself nor suffer any under his jurisdiction to conform to it, obliging 'them to celebrate that solemnity on the Sunday next following the fourteenth of the moon." -- Bower. 17 In A. D. 160, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, made a journey to Rome to consult with Anicetus about this question, though nothing special came of the consultation. Victor, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 192-202, likewise proposed to oblige only those under his jurisdiction to conform to the practise of Rome; but he asserted jurisdiction over all, and therefore presumed to command all. {1898 ATJ, GEP 383.3}

31. "Accordingly, after having taken the advice of some foreign bishops, he wrote an imperious letter to the Asiatic prelates commanding them to imitate the example of the Western Christians with respect to the time of celebrating the festival of Easter. The Asiatics answered this lordly requisition by the pen of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, who declared in their name, with great spirit and resolution, that they would by no means depart in this manner from the custom handed down to them by their ancestors. Upon this the thunder of excommunication began to roar. Victor, exasperated by this resolute answer of the Asiatic bishops, broke communion with them, pronounced them unworthy of the name of his brethren, and excluded them from all fellowship with the church of Rome." -- Mosheim. 18 {1898 ATJ, GEP 384.1}

32. In view of these things it will readily be seen that between paganism and this kind of Christianity it soon became difficult to distinguish, and the third century only went to make any distinction still more difficult to be discerned. {1898 ATJ, GEP 384.2}

33. In the latter part of the second century, there sprang up in Egypt a school of pagan philosophy called the "Eclectic." The patrons of this school called themselves "Eclectics," because they professed to be in search of truth alone, and to be ready to adopt any tenet of any system in existence which seemed to them to be agreeable to their ideas of truth. They regarded Plato as the one person above all others who had attained the nearest to truth in the greatest number of points. Hence they were also called "Platonists." {1898 ATJ, GEP 384.3}

34. "This philosophy was adopted by such of the learned at Alexandria as wished to be accounted Christians, and yet to retain the name, the garb, and the rank of philosophers. In particular, all those who in this century presided in the schools of the Christians at Alexandria, -- Athenagoras, Pantaenus, and Clemens Alexandrinus, -- are said to have approved of it. These men were persuaded that true philosophy, the great and most salutary gift of God, lay in scattered fragments among all the sects of philosophers, and therefore that it was the duty of every wise man, and especially of a Christian teacher, to collect those fragments from all quarters, and to use them for the defense of religion and the confutation of impiety. Yet this selection of opinions did not prevent them from regarding Plato as wiser than all the rest, and as especially remarkable for treating the Deity, the soul, and things remote from sense, so as to suit the Christian scheme." -- Mosheim. 19 {1898 ATJ, GEP 385.1}

35. In the end of the second century, and especially in the first forty-one years of the third, there flourished in Alexandria one of these would-be philosophers -- Ammonius Saccas by name -- who gave a turn to the philosophy of the Eclectics, which caused his sect to be called the New Platonists. The difference between the Eclectic and the system founded by Ammonius was this: The Eclectics held, as above stated, that in every system of thought in the world there was some truth, but mixed with error, their task being to select from all systems that portion of truth which was in each, and from all these to form one harmonious system. Ammonius held that when the truth was known, all sects had the same identical system of truth; that the differences among them were caused simply by the different ways of stating that truth; and that the proper task of the philosopher was to find such a means of stating the truth that all should be able to understand it, and so each one understand all the others. This was to be accomplished by a system of allegorizing and mystification, by which anybody could get whatever he wanted out of any writing that might come to his notice. {1898 ATJ, GEP 385.2}

36. "The grand object of Ammonius, to bring all sects and religions into harmony, required him to do much violence to the sentiments and opinions of all parties, -- philosophers, priests, and Christians, -- and particularly by allegorical interpretations to remove all impediments out of his way. . . . To make the arduous task more easy, he assumed that philosophy was first produced and nurtured among the people of the East; that it was inculcated among the Egyptians by Hermes, and thence passed to the Greeks; that it was a little obscured and deformed by the disputatious Greeks; but still that by Plato, the best interpreter of the principles of Hermes and of the ancient Oriental sages, it was preserved for the most part entire and unsullied. . . . {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.1}

37. "To these assumptions he added the common doctrines of the Egyptians (among whom he was born and educated) concerning the universe and the Deity, as constituting one great whole [Pantheism]; concerning the eternity of the world, the nature of the soul, providence, and the government of this world by demons, and other received doctrines; all of which he considered as true and not to be called in question. For it is most evident that the ancient philosophy of the Egyptians, which they pretended to have learned from Hermes, was the basis of the New Platonic, or Ammonian; and the book of Jamblichus, De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum, in particular, shows this to be the case. . . . {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.2}

38. "To this Aegyptiaco-Platonic philosophy, this ingenious man and fanatic joined a system of moral discipline apparently of high sanctity and austerity. . . . And these precepts Ammonius, like one born and educated among Christians, was accustomed to embellish and express by forms of expression borrowed from the sacred Scriptures, which has caused such language to occur abundantly in the writings of his followers." 20 {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.3}

39. One of the earliest to espouse this philosophy from among those who professed to be Christians, was Clement of Alexandria, who became the head of that kind of school at Alexandria. These philosophers "believed the language of Scripture to contain two meanings; the one obvious, and corresponding with the direct import of the words; the other recondite, and concealed under the words, like a nut by the shell. The former they neglected, as of little value, their study chiefly being to extract the latter; in other words, they were more intent on throwing obscurity over the sacred writings by the fictions of their own imaginations, than on searching out their true meanings. Some also, and this is stated especially of Clement, accommodated the divine oracles to the precepts of philosophy." -- Mosheim. 21 {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.4}

40. The close resemblance between the pagan philosophy and that of the New Platonists is illustrated by the fact that but one of the classes concerned could tell to which of them Ammonius Saccas belonged. The pagans generally regarded him as a pagan. His own kind of Christians counted him a good Christian all his life. The genuine Christians all knew that he was a pagan, and that the truth of the whole matter was that he was a pretended Christian "who adopted with such dexterity the doctrines of the pagan philosophy, as to appear a Christian to the Christians, and a pagan to the pagans." 22 He died A. D. 241. {1898 ATJ, GEP 387.1}

41. Clement is supposed to have died about A. D. 220, and the fame and influence which he had acquired -- and it was considerable -- was far outshone by Origen, who had been taught by both Clement and Ammonius. Origen imbibed all the allegorical and mystifying processes of both Ammonius and Clement, and multiplied upon them from his own wild imagination. He was not content with finding two meanings in the Scriptures as those before him, but took the secondary sense, the hidden meaning, and added to it four additional meanings of his own. His system then stood thus: (1) All Scripture contains two meanings, the literal and the hidden. (2) This hidden sense has within itself two meanings, the moral and the mystical. (3) The mystical has within it yet two other meanings, the allegorical and the anagogical. According to this method of mysticism, therefore, in every passage of Scripture there are at least three meanings, and there may be any number from three to six. {1898 ATJ, GEP 387.2}

42. His explanation of it is this: (1) Man is composed of three parts, -- a rational mind, a sensitive soul, and a visible body. The Scriptures resemble man, and therefore have a threefold sense: (a) a literal sense which corresponds to the body; (b) a moral sense corresponding to the soul; and (c) a mystical sense which corresponds to the mind. (2) As the body is the baser part of man, so the literal is the baser sense of Scripture; and as the body often betrays good men into sin, so the literal sense of Scripture often leads into error. Therefore, those who would see more in the Scripture than common people could see, must search out this hidden meaning, and yet further must search in that hidden meaning for the moral sense. And those who would be perfect must carry their search yet further, and beyond this moral sense which they found in the hidden meaning, they must find the mystical sense, with its additional train of allegorical and anagogical senses. {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.1}

43. As in this system of philosophy the body of man was a clog to the soul and hindered it in its heavenly aspirations, and was therefore to be despised, and by punishment and starvation was to be separated as far as possible from the soul, it followed that the literal sense of Scripture, which corresponded to man's body likewise, was a hindrance to the proper understanding of all the hidden meanings of the Scripture, and was to be despised and separated as far as possible from the hidden sense, and counted of the least possible worth. Accordingly, one of the first principles of this teaching was the following: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.2}

"The source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture. Those who do so will not attain to the kingdom of God. Let us therefore seek after the spirit and substantial fruit of the word, which are hidden and mysterious." -- Origen. 23 {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.3}

44. And the next step was but the logical result of this; namely: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.4}

"The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." -- Origen. 24 {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.5}

45. By such a system as this it is evident that any one could find whatever he pleased in any passage of Scripture, and that the Scripture could be made to support any doctrine that was ever invented by the

wildest fancy of the veriest fanatic. Even though the doctrine might be flatly contradictory to the Scripture, the Scripture could be made fully to agree with and teach the doctrine. {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.1}

46. Two of the chief disciples of Ammonius were Origen and Plotinus. Origen professed to be a Christian, and perpetuated the philosophy of Ammonius under the name of Christianity. Plotinus made no profession of anything but paganism, and perpetuated the philosophy of Ammonius under the name of Neoplatonism. Plotinus succeeded Ammonius in the Neoplatonic school; and Origen succeeded Clement in the so-called, but apostate, Christian school. There was great rivalry between these schools; and each became supreme in its respective sphere. {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.2}

47. Among the pagans, the school of Ammonius and of his successor Plotinus "gradually cast all others into the background. From Egypt it spread in a short time over the whole Roman Empire, and drew after it almost all persons who took any interest in things remote from sense." {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.3}

48. On the other hand, "the estimation in which human learning should be held was a question on which the Christians were about equally divided. Many recommended the study of philosophy, and an acquaintance with the Greek and Roman literature; while others maintained that these were pernicious to the interests of genuine Christianity and the progress of true piety. The cause of letters and philosophy triumphed, however, by degrees; and those who wished well to them continued to gain ground till at length the superiority was manifestly decided in their favor. This victory was principally due to the influence of Origen, who, having been early instructed in the new kind of Platonism already mentioned, blended it, though unhappily, with the purer and more sublime tenets of a celestial doctrine, and recommended it in the warmest manner to the youth who attended his public lessons. The fame of this philosopher increased daily among the Christians; and in proportion to his rising credit, his method of proposing and explaining the doctrines of Christianity gained authority till it became almost universal." {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.4}

49. The principles of these two schools were so evenly balanced that "some of the disciples of Plotinus embraced Christianity on condition that they should be allowed to retain such of the opinions of their master as they thought of superior excellence and merit. This must also have contributed, in some measure, to turn the balance in favor of the sciences. These Christian philosophers, preserving still a fervent zeal for the doctrines of their heathen chief, would naturally embrace every opportunity of spreading them abroad, and instilling them into the minds of the ignorant and the unwary. {1898 ATJ, GEP 390.1}

50. "This new species of philosophy, imprudently adopted by Origen and other Christians, did immense harm to Christianity. For it led the teachers of it to involve in philosophic obscurity many parts of our religion, which were in themselves plain and easy to be understood; and to add to the precepts of the Saviour no few things, of which not a word can be found in the Holy Scriptures. . . . It recommended to Christians various foolish and useless rites, suited only to nourish superstition, no small part of which we see religiously observed by many even to the present day. And finally it alienated the minds of many, in the following centuries, from Christianity itself, and produced a heterogeneous species of religion, consisting of Christian and Platonic principles combined. And who is able to enumerate all the evils and

injurious changes which arose from this new philosophy -- or, if you please, from this attempt to reconcile true and false religions with each other? {1898 ATJ, GEP 390.2}

51. "The same Origen, unquestionably, stands at the head of the interpreters of the Bible in this century. But with pain it must be added that he was the first among those who have found in the Scriptures a secure retreat for errors and idle fancies of all sorts. As this most ingenious man could see no feasible method of vindicating all that Scripture says, against the cavils of heretics and enemies of Christianity, if its language were interpreted literally, he concluded that he must expound the sacred volume upon the principles which the Platonists used in explaining the history of the gods. He therefore taught that the words in many parts of the Bible convey no meaning at all; and in places where he admitted certain ideas lie under the terms used, he contended for a hidden and recondite sense of them, altogether different from their natural import, but far preferable to it. . . . Innumerable expositors in this and the following centuries pursued the method of Origen, though with some diversity; nor could the few who pursued a better method make much head against them." -- Mosheim. 25 {1898 ATJ, GEP 390.3}

52. "The doctrine of the incarnation, the resurrection of the flesh, and the creation of the world in time, marked the boundary line between the church's dogmatic and Neoplatonism. In every other respect theologians and Neoplatonists drew so close together that many of them are completely at one. . . . If a book does not happen to touch on any of the above-mentioned doctrines, it may often be doubted whether the writer is a Christian or a Neoplatonist. In ethical principles, in directions for right living, the two systems approximate more and more closely. . . . It indoctrinated the church with all its mysticism." 26 {1898 ATJ, GEP 391.1}

53. While this effort was being made on the side of philosophy to unite all religions, there was at the same time a like effort on the side of politics. It was the ambition of Elagabalus (A. D. 218-222) to make the worship of the sun supersede all other worship in Rome. It is further related of him that a more ambitious scheme even than this was in the emperor's mind; which was nothing less than the blending of all religions into one, of which "the sun was to be the central object of adoration." -- Milman. 27 But the elements were not yet fully prepared for such a fusion. Also the shortness of the reign of Elagabalus prevented any decided advancement toward success. {1898 ATJ, GEP 391.2}

54. Alexander Severus (A. D. 222-225) held to the same idea, and carried it into effect so far as his individual practise was concerned. "The mother of Alexander Severus, the able, perhaps crafty and rapacious, Mamaea, had at least held intercourse with the Christians of Syria. She had conversed with the celebrated Origen, and listened to his exhortations, if without conversion, still not without respect. Alexander, though he had neither the religious education, the pontifical character, nor the dissolute manners of his predecessor, was a Syrian, with no hereditary attachment to the Roman form of paganism. He seems to have affected a kind of universalism: he paid decent respect to the gods of the Capitol; he held in honor the Egyptian worship, and enlarged the temples of Isis and Serapis. In his own palace, with respectful indifference, he enshrined, as it were, as his household deities, the representatives of the different religions or theo-philosophic systems which were prevalent in the Roman Empire, -- Orpheus, Abraham, Christ, and Apollonius of Tyana. . . . The homage of Alexander Severus may be a fair test of the general sentiment of the more intelligent heathen of his time." -- Milman. 28 His reign also was too short to accomplish anything beyond his own individual example. But the same tendency went rapidly forward. {1898 ATJ, GEP 391.3}

55. On the side of philosophy and the apostasy, the progress was continuous and rapid. "Heathenism, as interpreted by philosophy, almost found favor with some of the more moderate Christian apologists. . . .

The Christians endeavored to enlist the earlier philosophers in their cause; they were scarcely content with asserting that the nobler Grecian philosophy might be designed to prepare the human mind for the reception of Christianity; they were almost inclined to endow these sages with a kind of prophetic foreknowledge of its more mysterious doctrines. 'I have explained,' says the Christian in Minucius Felix, 'the opinions of almost all the philosophers, whose most illustrious glory it is that they have worshiped one God, though under various names; so that one might suppose either that the Christians of the present day are philosophers, or that the philosophers of old were already Christians.' {1898 ATJ, GEP 392.1}

56. "These advances on the part of Christianity were more than met by paganism. The heathen religion, which prevailed at least among the more enlightened pagans during this period, . . . was almost as different from that of the older Greeks and Romans, or even that which prevailed at the commencement of the empire, as it was from Christianity. . . . On the great elementary principle of Christianity, the unity of the supreme God, this approximation had long been silently made. Celsus, in his celebrated controversy with Origen, asserts that this philosophical notion of the Deity is perfectly reconcilable with paganism." -- Milman. 29 {1898 ATJ, GEP 392.2}

57. The emperor Decius, having no sympathy with any religion, philosophy, or morality, but that of the old original Roman, did his best to restore it throughout the empire. Hence the persecution raised by him. Valerian followed closely the course marked out by Decius; but in the forty years of peace to religion, from the edict of toleration by Gallienus to the edict of persecution by Diocletian, all these elements worked steadily forward in the same general direction. Of the progress of the apostasy during this time, we have a powerful illustration in the practise of Gregory Thaumaturgus, the "wonder-worker." {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.1}

58. Gregory was a pupil and a convert of Origen's. Origen strongly urged him "to devote his acquirements in heathen science and learning to the elucidation of the Scriptures." When he left Origen's school at Alexandria, he returned to Pontus, and became bishop of Neo Caesarea, A. D. 240-270, and how fully he followed the advice of Origen is shown by the following: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.2}

"When Gregory perceived that the ignorant multitude persisted in their idolatry, on account of the pleasures and sensual gratifications which they enjoyed at the pagan festivals, he granted them a permission to indulge themselves in the like pleasures, in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs, hoping that, in process of time, they would return of their own accord to a more virtuous and regular course of life.' There is no sort of doubt that, by this permission, Gregory allowed the Christians to dance, sport, and feast at the tombs of the martyrs, upon their respective festivals, and to do everything which the pagans were accustomed to in their temples, during the feasts celebrated in honor of their gods." -- Mosheim. 30 {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.3}

59. Neo Caesarea was one of the most important cities in Pontus. Yet so diligently did Gregory thus employ the talents committed to him by Origen, that it is related of him that whereas "there were said to be only seventeen Christians in the whole city when he first entered it as bishop, there were said to be only seventeen pagans in it at the time of his death." 31 It is manifest, however, that those who were by him brought to the Christian name were as much pagan as before except in the mere matter of the name. {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.4}

60. In the time of Diocletian, that which was known as paganism was so far different from the original paganism of Rome, that Milman plainly designates it as the "new paganism." This new paganism was so

little removed from the apostate form of Christianity which we have traced, as really to differ from it only in name. "In paganism itself, that silent but manifest change of which we have already noticed the commencement, had been creeping on. . . . This new paganism, as has been observed, arose out of the alliance of the philosophy and the religion of the old world. . . . From Christianity, the new paganism had adopted the unity of the Deity, and scrupled not to degrade all the gods of the older world into subordinate demons or ministers. The Christians had incautiously held the same language; both concurred in the name of demons; but the pagans used the term in the Platonic sense, as good but subordinate spirits, while the same term spoke to the Christian ear as expressive of malignant and diabolic agency. {1898 ATJ, GEP 394.1}

61. "But the Jupiter Optimus Maximus was not the great Supreme of the new system. The universal deity of the East, the sun, to the philosophic was the emblem or representative; to the vulgar, the Deity. Diocletian himself, though he paid so much deference to the older faith as to assume the title of Jovius, as belonging to the lord of the world, yet on his accession, when he would exculpate himself from all concern in the murder of his predecessor, Numerian, appealed in the face of the army to the all-seeing deity of the sun. It is the oracle of Apollo of Miletus, consulted by the hesitating emperor, which is to decide the fate of Christianity. The metaphorical language of Christianity had unconsciously lent strength to this new adversary; and in adoring the visible orb, some, no doubt, supposed that they were not departing far from the worship of the 'Sun of Righteousness,'" -- Milman. 32 {1898 ATJ, GEP 394.2}

62. Diocletian himself really contemplated the same fusion of all religions into one, with the sun as the one great universal deity, which Elagabalus had contemplated in his day; but by Galerius and the leading philosopher of the new paganism, he was persuaded to use all the power of the State in the effort to make paganism alone supreme over and against every form and every profession of the Christian name. The result, however, was that Galerius was compelled to issue a public edict confessing his failure. {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.1}

63. Then came Constantine, the best imperial representative of the new paganism, and the most devout worshiper of the sun as the supreme and universal deity, with the avowed purpose, as expressed in his own words, "First to bring the diverse judgments formed by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition, as it were, of settled uniformity." In Constantine the new paganism met its ideal, and the New Platonism -- the apostate, paganized, sun-worshipping form of Christianity -- met its long-wished-for instrument. In him the two streams met. In him the aspiration of Elagabalus, the hope of Ammonius Saccas and Clement, of Plotinus and Origen, and the ambition of the perverse-minded, self-exalted bishops, were all realized and accomplished -- a new, imperial, and universal religion was created. {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.2}

64. Therefore, "the reign of Constantine the Great forms one of the epochs in the history of the world. It is the era of the dissolution of the Roman Empire; the commencement, or rather consolidation, of a kind of Eastern despotism, with a new capital, a new patriciate, a new constitution, a new financial system, a new, though as yet imperfect, jurisprudence, and, finally, a new religion." -- Milman. 33 {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.3}

65. The epoch thus formed was the epoch of the papacy; and the new religion thus created was the PAPAL RELIGION. {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.4}