at became of the Church?

The Prediction: The Church would be established and then lost.

Mt. 13:24 but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat...39: the enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world. Mark 4:15 Satan cometh immediately. Mt. 21:38 "...and let us seize on his inheritance." (not destroy it, but seize it for themselves.) See also Mk. 12:7, Lk. 20:14.

(The field--not the individual ears, was to be completely ruined until a new ordering of things to take place at the end of the world.) Mt. 24:5, Mk. 13:21.

Lk. 13:25 After Christ has been rejected and left the world, then people will try to get into the Church, but it will be too late; The remark "thou hast taught in our streets, etc" shows that this was to happen in the Lord's own generation. Jn. 10:26 ff.

I. Cor. 7:29 But this I say brethren, the time is short...

What time is short? (Scholars have twisted this to mean the Apostles hurrying Christ's 2nd coming.)

I John 2:18 Even now there are many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time.

It is not the devil that is short: antichrists are just beginning, but that means that the time is up for the Church. II Cor. 11:13-15, False Apostles, transforming themselves unto Apostles of Christ.

I Pet. 4 & 7: the end of all things is at hand...12: Think it not strange...but rejoice: ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.

Like Christ and the Apostles, the Church is to suffer the same fate; Peter warns them to think it not strange "as though some awful thing were happening to you." I Jn. 3:13, Jn. 15:18-19; Rm. 12:2, I Cor. 13:8.

A much-quoted prophecy (both in the Didache and the Apostolic Const.)

Didache, c. 16: The sheep shall be turned to wolves, and love shall change to hate...Then shall appear he who leads the world astray as the Son of God; and he shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be given over into his hands..."

Note: The wolves do not simply attack the sheep; the sheep themselves turn into wolves, and the whole world comes under the control of the Antichrist. (Other generation: Romans 3:9-19 Are we better than they? No, in no wise.") Mt. 24:42 f. (Christ was expected suddenly, not soon.)

The Fulfillment

1. The Great Gap: The most significant contribution of recent NT and Church History studies is the "discovery" of a complete and baffling gap between the Primitive Church and the Christian Church of the 2nd Century.

QUESTIONS ON AUTHORITY AND PASSAGES FOR DISCUSSION (THE APOSTASY)

Hugh Nibley Ph. D.

I. How did the world receive Jesus Christ? Christ came into the world
was rejected
left the world

A. The Prediction: Lk. 17:22-23 As in other dispensations--Noah and Abraham were rejected
Mt. 16:17 Elias rejected: "Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."
Jn. 3:22, 3:11, etc. "and no man receiveth his testimony..."
So he leaves the world: "Ye shall seek me and shall not find me..." Jn. 7:34, 13:33, 14:12, etc.

B. The Fulfillment: In scripture and history (especially John)

II. What became of his servants? (Mk. 13:34)

A. The Prediction: They are to be as completely rejected as the Master.

Jn. 13:20 ff, 16:2, 17:14, etc.

And be put to death in the same manner:

Mt. 3:34...whoever follows Christ can expect such fate.

Lk. 21:16 f...Ye shall be hated by all men.

Their object is not to establish an institution, but to enter another kingdom:
Lk. 22:30 "I appoint unto you a kingdom..."
Acts 14:22 "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom..."

Their preaching is to be not to the ear of faith, but as a witness against those who shall not believe: (Acts 18:6)

as in all other dispensations (Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc.), after the witness comes the end, Mt. 24:14, not the church.

"God hath sent forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death..." ICor. 4:9

B. The Fulfillment:
The Pseudo-Gospels tell of the smashing success everywhere enjoyed by the Apostles, thanks to their spectacular miracles performed on the stages of crowded theaters. In view of the prophecies of Christ and the apostles, what is the significance of these stories?

This is the very period at which it is most important in the interest of the claims of Christian churches that no gap should exist.

So complete is the gap that "the radical school in Holland and Germany" could claim that Christ "could be shown never to have existed, because he did not explain the Christianity of the second century." Lake says the gap can be explained by the extreme rapidity of evolution in the Church. (Kinsopp & S. Lake, An Introduction to the New Testament (N. Y., Harpers, 1937), pp. 21-22).

But evolution is not a rapid thing. Abrupt and radical change comes not under the heading of evolution (Lake is trying to soften the blow) but of revolution. There was a complete revolution in the Church between the time of Christ and the 2nd century. Thus,

"The late organization of the Church, the fluidity of her standards, teaching, and observance for more than a century, the gap between the literature of the Apostolic and that of the post-Apostolic age--these things which are so unaccountable and so perplexing to us are the natural consequence of the attitude of intense expectation in which they lived." Alfred Fawkes, "The Development of Christian Institutions and Beliefs," Harvard Theol. Rev. X (1917), 114.

Discuss: What did they expect?
"The end of all things?"
The long rule of the anticerist?
The Millenium? (Then why the urgency and tears of Paul?)

"Such was primitive Christianity. It was short-lived: before the middle of the second century it had disappeared. And it had disappeared so completely that we cannot now even imagine it--a charismatic religion, for which tribal theology is an open question and the end of all things is imminent." Id. p. 115 (Fawkes is the foremost Anglican Church historian)

The present stand of NT textual criticism confirms and emphasizes the reality of the Great Gap:

The oldest Manuscripts of the NT which we now possess present "a welter of unassorted variants, out of which the families that we find at a later date were eventually formed... in the 1st and 2nd centuries this original text (of each book) disappeared under a mass of variants, created by errors, by conscious alterations, and by attempts to remedy the uncertainties thus created. Then, as further attempts to recover the lost truth were made, the families of texts that we now know took shape." (I Nephi 13:26 As left Apostles hands.)

Sir Frederic Kenyon.
p. 241
This is the latest verdict of the foremost authority on NT Mss. It shows that all the texts of the NT come from this side of the gap. Thur K. Lake, Intd. to the NT., p. 100: "The Christians of the 2nd and later centuries know no more about the Epistles of Paul than we do."

2. Does not the survival of the Christian name and tradition guarantee the genuine descent of the Church?

a. The Prediction: Christ and the Apostles predicted that many would come in his name

Antichrist comes out of the Church itself, I Jn. 2:18

b. The Fulfillment: Ignat. Trall. 6: "Where are some Christ-betrayers, bearing about the name of Christ in deceit, and corrupting the word of the Gospel."
Justin, Apol. 7 I All are called Christians, whether good or bad. (See Acts 19:1-6)

IV. What became of the Doctrine?

A. The Prediction: 2 Tim. 4:3: to suit themselves they shall take in the type of preacher that pleases them. "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables." I Cor. 15:12, II Cor. 3:3f.

In a very ancient letter attributed to Peter, the apostle is represented as complaining to James: "They make a hodge-podge of my teachings... They seem to think that they can interpret my own words better than I can. If they take such outrageous liberties while I am alive, what will they not do after I am gone!" (Clem. Ep. in PG II, 28) Rom. 16:16-17, I Cor. 1:10-15, 2 Jn. 1:9.

Foreknowing what would happen, and by express order from Christ, the apostles carefully limited and controlled the extent of their teachings to the world.

Mt. 28:19 literally translated: Having gone forth, therefore, instruct all the nations... teaching them to carry out those things I gave you directions about. And behold I am with you every day until the period is completed.

N.B.: 1) This is not an unlimited commission to anyone who wants preach; it was given to "the eleven disciples."

2) They are not to tell everybody all that they have heard from Jesus. They are to instruct people to do (herein) certain specific things, regarding which the Lord had given them orders; the word rendered "commanded" in King James is a very special term meaning "to give directions for a piece of work to be carried out." 3 Nep. 11:38-40.

3) "All the nations (or tribes)" is not the same as "all the people" in the world. When all the languages of the civilized world were heard on Pentecost, Peter announced that that was the fulfillment of the prophecy that God in the last days would "pour out my spirit upon all flesh." Acts 2:16f., Joel 2:28-32, see also P. of G. P.

4) "The end of the aeon" must be accepted in the same sense as Peter's "end of all things," etc. Jesus promises his presence only until the end, but at the end of the world Jesus is to return, not depart. On the other hand, the Scripture repeatedly predicts his departure at the end of the "aeon," or dispensation.

arliest Christian philosophers, Origen, Minucius Felix, Justin, etc., all held eory that there were in the church two totally different and distinct doctrines, r the ignorant masses (the exoteric teaching) and another for the intellectual the esoteric doctrine). Such an astonishing theory was an attempt to explain range inadequacy of the Scriptures, unless given a very special (esoteric) retation, to supply information about certain basic questions of doctrine. The nation was simply not there: It had never been divulged.

holars today all recognize as an indisputable fact that the teaching of Christ e Apostles was deliberately limited; they do not pretend to explain this strange

ake, Intd. to the NT, p. 233: "All interpreters agree on one point--in Galilee Jesus did not announce himself to the people as Messiah or as Son of Man..."

Id. p. 37: "It is however very noticeable that according to Mark, Jesus never made this claim in his public teaching...Until he reaches Jerusalem, he is not recognized by any except his disciples. He tells his disciples to be silent until after his Resurrection and teaches in parables in order to conceal his Messiahship."

he same reticence was preserved by the Apostles:

Id. p. 95: "If we trust Acts, the Apostles did little to perpetuate the teaching of Jesus as distinct from the teaching about Jesus. This, again, is corroborated by the G. of Mark, which gives us so little information about what Jesus said, as distinct from what he did."

This shows that the Apostles were acting on special instructions. The things people would most desire to hear were what Jesus said, especially what he said after the Resurrection. But on these very things the Scripture is silent.

From the ancient Gospel of Peter (long held to be canonical, and the last thing to be rejected by the makers of the NT) as contained in the Clementine *Recog.* 2, 33: Peter says to Clement: "Our Lord, when he sent us apostles out to preach, enjoined us to teach all nations certain things that were committed to us (mandata sunt nobis: Mandata refers to specific instructions to be carried out, not to a body of doctrine). Therefore, we cannot utter those things in the way in which he himself spoke them. For it is not our business to talk, but to teach these specific instructions (docere ea in mandatis) showing how each particular one of them rests on truth. Nor again are we allowed to present any of our own ideas. For we have been sent as emissaries, and an emissary must deliver the message he is sent to deliver, and explain the intentions of his who sent him."

ter refused to discuss work for the dead with Clement, saying that he was not ady to hear such mysteries at that time. Clem. Recog. 4, 35: "Meanwhile, he hrist) has commanded us to go forth to preach, and to invite you to the supper the heavenly king...and to give you the wedding garments, that is the gift of ptism...You are to regard this as the first step of three..."

The apostles had been ordered to teach only as far as baptism, which was not the whole Gospel but only the first step.

Cl. Recog. 1. 52: "You compel me O Clement, to touch upon things which it is forbidden to discuss. Still, so far as it is allowed to declare them, I shall not shrink from doing so."

Id. III, 74: Peter, "whatever be discoursed of in the presence of the people in the day-time, he explained more fully and perfectly in the night, in private, to us, as more faithful and completely approved by him."

According to this very old tradition, the apostles followed the identical method of the Lord, observing secrecy and discretion. They no more intended to divulge the secrets of the Kingdom to the world at large than he did.
Id. III, 1: "If we set forth pure truth to those who do not desire salvation, we do injury to Him who sent us...Wherefore I also, for the most part AVOID publishing the chief knowledge concerning the Supreme Godhead to unworthy ears."

Id. II, 4: "If a man remains wrapped up and polluted in obvious sins, it is not proper for me to speak to him at all of the more secret and sacred things ...but rather to call him to repentance."

5. After the Apostles, the so-called "Apostolic Fathers" preserved the same strict reticence.

Ignatius, Letter to the Trallians c. 5: "I would like to write you things more full of mystery; but I am afraid to do so, lest I should inflict injury on you who are but babes...Forgive me in this, but since you are not ready to receive the full force of the Gospel you would be strangled by it. ...Though I am acquainted with such things my knowledge is still far from perfect; not am I such a disciple as Paul and Peter. For many things are yet wanting in me."

Ignatius knows far less than the Apostles, but does not intend to reveal what he does know. Thus we see how the knowledge of the Gospel could be quickly lost, through being deliberately withheld by those who possessed it. Hence the sudden and complete gap.

B. The Fulfillment:

What actually happened immediately after the passing of the last apostle? A description of the appalling event has been preserved in a passage from a lost history by Clement, an eye-witness. No one disputes the authenticity of the passage as it has been preserved by Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. III, 32:

"...up until those times the church had remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin, while any that were inclined to pervert the sound doctrine were still sulking in dark corners. BUT when the holy society of the apostles had ended their lives in various ways and that generation passed away of those who had heard the divine wisdom with their own ears, at that moment the conspiracy of godless error took its rise through the deception of false teachers, who from the moment the last apostle was no more first came out openly and henceforth undertook to oppose the truth with what they falsely styled the Gnosis."

The passing of the last apostle is the signal for a new order. Where were the "successors" of the Apostles? The Apostolic Fathers, the leading bishops of the time, emphatically deny that they have apostolic authority. The upstarts who had been forced to "sulk in dark corners," by the presence of living witnesses and apostles, now felt no such restraint. They sprang up in vast numbers, like mushrooms, says Irenaeus.
It was Apostolic authority that restrained them; with the passing of the last apostle they came forth unchallenged:

Euseb. E. H. V, 28: "With perfect impunity and the greatest of ease they proceeded to do violence to the scripture, blithely disregarding the original teachings..." see below.

In doctrinal matters the Apostolic Fathers are helpless:

Polycarp, in his famous letter to the Philippians when they ask him for advice can only refer them to a letter of Paul to them: "Neither I nor such an one can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul. He when among you...taught the word of truth...and when absent from you, he wrote you a letter...which will build you up in that faith which has been given you.

By all counts the letter to the Philippians is the Least instructive book in the entire Bible, yet Polycarp deems it worth more than all the living teachings he could give them. So far were these men removed from apostolic authority.

Thus the great Ignatius, bishop of the largest and (next to Jerusalem) the oldest branch of the Church and a most learned Bishop alive writes: "Shall I reach such a pitch of presumption...as to issue commands to you as if I were an Apostle!?" Ep. ad Trall, c. 3, 5. For him any claim to apostolic authority is utterly unthinkable: "Neither am I such an one as Peter and Paul; they were apostles, I am but a man..(Ad. Rom. 4)

Clement, Bishop of Rome, watched events in Corinth that caused him the most intense alarm and distress, for four years without intervening, and when he excuses himself for doing so only because the Corinthians themselves had invited him to write them.

Completely was the Church left without any central authority with the passing of the Apostles that Socrates, the second great Church historian, can write in 5th century: (Hist Eccl. V, 22 (640):

"It would be hard to find two churches anywhere that observe the same ordinances and rites. The reason for this, I believe, is the great difference of opinion that prevailed among the leaders of the churches ...The Apostles had many differences to deal with in their own times, and since they knew these would be the cause of great disturbances among the gentiles, they all came together and formulated the holy law, which they wrote down in the form of a letter...But the teachings of this letter were distorted and the injunctions of the Apostles were held as a thing of nought." Why resort to such a letter if apostolic authority was going to remain? Socrates himself says the letter was not a success: It would have been tried in lieu of a more vital transmission of authority. Instead the authority was withdrawn.

3. After the "Apostolic Fathers" who guides the Church in doctrine?

Answer: Any man with a reputation for knowledge, regardless of his office or position in the Church. Layman, priest, bishop, monk--nothing counted except the ability to furnish some kind of an answer.

The first great doctrinal guide of the Church and the founder of orthodox theology was Origen. All serious questions of doctrine came to him for solution; he kept seven secretaries busy night and day turning out his instructions to the Church. Yet he was only a presbyter whose ordination was not recognized by his own bishop. The significant thing is that he himself claims no authority beside his mother wit and learning.

Typical statements of Origen, de Princip. vi, 7: "The above are the thoughts which have occurred to us while treating of subjects of such difficulty as the incarnation and godhood of Christ. If there be anyone indeed, who can discover something better, and who can establish his assertions by clearer proofs from the holy Scriptures, let his opinion be received in preference to mine."

Id. viii, 4: "Our statement, however, that the understanding is converted into a soul, or whatever else seems to have such a meaning, the reader must carefully consider for himself, as these views are NOT to be regarded as advanced by us in a dogmatic manner, but simply as opinions...If it is allowable for us to venture to say anything more on the subject, the soul of God may perhaps be understood to mean the only-begotten Son of God." 2. In whatever way, however, it is to be understood, it seems, meanwhile, to be named the soul of God." etc.

Thus the man who is quoted by later Church writers more than any other when speaking of First Principles always hedges and qualifies, is always very cautious and very uncertain. What makes this attitude so significant is that he is not speaking on abstruse and minor details but of the very First Principles of the Gospel. The introduction to his work of the title makes the clear and unequivocal statement that an understanding of the First Principles was not to be had in the Church in his day, since neither the scriptures nor the tradition contained the necessary plain and adequate explanations. Some examples:

De Princip. I, 4: "As to the Holy Ghost, it is not clearly discerned whether he is begotten or unbegotten or is to be regarded as the Son of God. But these things must be investigated by us according to the best of our ability through sagacious examination of the holy Scriptures."

I, 6: "Concerning the devil and his angels, the teaching of the Church is that they exist...but what they are or how they exist is not explained with sufficient clarity."

I, 7: "As to what existed before this earth or what shall come after... there is no clear statement in the teaching of the Church."

I, 10: "The Church teaches that there are angels...but when they were created, or what sort of creatures they are, or how they exist, is not stated with sufficient clearness."

I, 9: "Even the problem of how God is to be thought of much be inquired into; whether he is corporeal, or what his proper form is, or whether he is corporeal in another sense from other bodies is NOT clearly set forth in our teachings. And the same questions must be answered regarding Christ and the Holy Ghost, and likewise the nature of every spirit and rational nature must be investigated.

Note that these are all in Origen's opinion basic first principles. And yet NO clear teaching on these fundamental matters is available in the Church!

Therefore to the best of his ability he takes it upon himself to search out plausible answers, which he does NOT present as certitudes but only opinions, for which he constantly apologizes.

What does Origen take as his guide? Scripture and philosophy. And when the two clash? Scripture must give way--you simply cancel any contrary passage by giving it an allegorical, (Origen says "proper" or "mystical") interpretation. This method is followed by all subsequent theologians. An example.

> Origen's favorite word for describing God is "incorporeal" (asomaton)... This word was a fetich with the philosophers of Alexandria among whom Origen was raised, but, he observes (Id. I, 8) "in our scriptures the word is both unemployed and unknown: "on the contrary, there are many passages in the scripture that say God does have a body (Id. I, i, 1); against this, however, "reason itself demonstrates that God cannot be thought of as corpus."

his shows that the passing of the Apostles was followed by a complete doctrinal um.

This is clearly seen

I. In the sudden rise and prosperity of the Gnostics.

What was the Gnosis? Everywhere one can find vague and airy definitions of it, reflecting the vague and airy teachings of the false Gnostics. Church histories fight shy of the clear definition given by Clement as cited by Eusebius H. E. II, 1:

> "To James the Just and to John and Peter after the resurrection the Lord committed the Gnosis. They handed it on to the rest of the apostles, and the rest of the apostles to the seventy."

It was this that the "self-styled Gnostics," "Gnostics so-called," "False Gnostics," etc, claimed to have. The main Church opposed them.

a) By adopting most of their stuff (for everyone flocked to them).
b) By categorically denying that anything had ever been lost.

> This is the only alternative to admitting that important things were lost. Forced to take this alternative, Irenaeus must support the absurd corollaries which show how empty the claim is:

1) That the Scriptures contain all the Apostles ever knew!

> "Even if the Apostles had possessed hidden mysteries... They would certainly have transmitted them to those to whom they committed the churches." Contra Haeres. III, iii, 1.(PG VII, 848)

2) That of this complete depository of all knowledge, every word is perfectly plain and clear to anybody!

> "All these things lie before us, clearly and unequivocally set forth and read in the words of the holy Scriptures. Even the parables present not the slightest ambiguity... The entire scriptures, both the prophets and the Gospels can be comprehended by all alike, being plain and open and devoid of any ambiguity, even though all do not believe.." (Contra Haeres. II, xxvii, 1-2)

II. In the adoption of obvious substitutes for the Gospel.

From the 2nd century on the Church Fathers (Origen, Justin, Irenaeus, etc.) are to be man loyal to Philosophy.

But for obvious reasons the earlier Church had always condemned Philosophy:

Tertull. de Anima 3: The Philosophers "may indeed by a lucky chance sometimes stumble on the truth, as men groping in the dark may accidentally hit upon the right path; but for the Christian who enjoys the benefit on revelation from heaven it is inexcusable to commit himself to such blind and treacherous guidance."

Tertull. de Praescr. Heret c. 7: "All false doctrines of the Church may be traced to heathen philosophy.., There are some who would bring forth a Christian dialectic.

The oldest description of a missionary in action describes the preaching of Barnabas: Clem Recog. I, 7: "There was nothing of dialectic artifice in the man, I noticed, but that he expounded with simplicity and without any craft of speech such things as he had heard from the Son of God, or had seen. For he did not confirm his assertions by force of arguments, but produced witnesses of the sayings and marvels of which he spoke." When members of the audience (It was a street-meeting) threw out philosophical questions to catch him, he resolutely refused to discuss them, saying that though he could talk on such things as well as the next man, that was not his business.

Justin, Cohort. ad Graec. VI, 256: The Philosophers have been able to produce nothing certain about God; They give themselves away by their mutual disagreements. "For neither by nature nor by human intellect is it possible for men to know great and divine matters, but only by the gift that descends from above upon holy men who do not need training of the schools, neither skill in controversy

and debate, but rather to be sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost, which like a plectrum descending from heaven to play upon them as upon an instrument, makes use of righteous men and reveals to them the divine and heavenly Gnosis."

It was immediately after the passing of the Apostles that this philosophizing began in the Church: Euseb. CH V, 28:

> "With perfect impunity and the greatest of ease they proceeded to do violence to the Scriptures, blithely disregarding the original teachings... They never consulted the Scriptures, but busily worked out elaborate structures of syllogism... They deserted the Holy Scripture for Euclid, Aristotle, and Theophrastus... They cultivated the arts of the unbelievers and took to hairsplitting discussions about the one simple faith of the Holy Writ... Thereby they brazenly undertook to lay hands on the scriptures, saying that they should be corrected and re-interpreted."

By the 4th century the once-despised teachings of the pagan schools are essential to Christian theology. The Abbe Combes, in an authoritative examination of the learning of St. Augustine, the "Founder of Medieval Christianity," explains why this was so:

> G. Combes, Sain: Augustin et la Culture Classique (1927) p. 127: Augustine "makes use of the ancient theodicy, metaphysics, ethics, and politics. At times he sees to reproach himself for this, but the protests of his heart are silenced in view of the imperious need of his mind. He wanted to endow the Church with a doctrine so solidly constructed that she would never again have anything to fear from her enemies."

> Question: Did not Christ give the Church such a "solidly constructed doctrine," resting on a rock?
>
> Where was that doctrine, if Augustine must
> 1) take it upon himself to produce one?
> 2) go to pagan theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. for his materials?

How painful it was for the Church to have to adjust itself to philosophy, and what a fundamental weakness in the Church such a step betrayed (it was a straight declaration of bankruptcy) is apparent from all accounts of the first great Synod, the Council of Nice, in 325.

> One day at a local conference in Alexandria, the Bishop, "by way of showing off his knowledge of philosophy on the subject of the Holy Trinity, remarked 'that the triad was a monad.' "To this technical and purely philosophical remark one Arius objected with heat, he being a "man of no small experience in dialectic." This Arius, "constructing his syllogisms in this novel and sensational manner, revived the general interest in the question, and from a tiny spark kindled a mighty blaze." (Socrates, Church History I, 5)

> Note that the famous Arian controversy is a purely philosophical affair.

> "Shortly before the general session of the bishops was to take place, a number of dialecticians were on the spot delivering preliminary discourses to the multitude. While everyone was enjoying the intellectual treat a certain layman, who had been one of the martyrs being a literal and straightforward turn of mind, rebuked the dialecticians, saying to them: "Christ and the Apostles, you know, did not hand down to us any arts of dialectic but straightforward knowledge, preserved by faith and good works." At these words all were astonished and agreed to them." The dialecticians were temporarily silenced. Id. I, 8 (20)

> The council settled its argument by adopting the word "homoousios" to describe the relationship of the Son to the Father. "It was the Emperor himself who first brought forward the word homoousios and urged all others to accept it, saying that it represented his personal conviction. When it was unanimously adopted, the Emperor himself gave a speech, explaining its meaning, saying that it was NOT to be thought of in any physical sense... neither in terms of division or as a cutting or separation. He said it was impossible for any immaterial intellectual bodiless nature to admit of any corporeal affects, but that it was necessary to recognize that such things could only be known by divine and unutterable words. And thus the most wise Emperor philosophized."

> Soc. Hist. I, 8 (26): "There remained the problem of defining homoousious. Consubstantial means simply that Christ has absolutely NOTHING in common with the creatures he created. We accept this interpretation because it was arrived at in the presence of the Emperor himself after long and ripe deliberation and on the basis of adequate arguments (Logismoi)" of. II Cor. 10:4 ("The Gnosis invalidates all logismoi", Gnosis being here used in its true sense as revealed truth)

The leaders of this conference were perfectly aware that there was something very suspicious about their innovations. They plead necessity in their general letter:

> "The terms 'non-being,' 'out of nothing,' 'Consubstantial,' etc., are not found in the Scripture. Why not? Because it has not seemed proper to speak and teach in such terms. Therefore it has been found necessary for us to legalize their use, since up until that time we had not thought it proper to employ such terms. We now take the necessary step of apprizing you of these results of our inquiry and discussions." Soc. Hist. I, 8 (25)

> Why had that all-important word been until 325 A.D. found unnecessary and improper? Had God changed his nature in that year? The word "Consubstantial" had been condemned by a synod at Antioch in 268 as an importation from pagan philosophy. Now it was adopted as the best possible word to describe the nature of God and Christ! A smashing victory for heathen metaphysics.

This is a plain declaration that the knowledge of God that obtained in the Early Church had been totally lost.

o statements of St. Hilary bring this out:

ilary, Ep. to Constantine I, 4-5: "It is a thing equally deplorable and dangerous, that there are as many creeds as opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, and as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us; because we make creeds arbitrarily, and explain them just as arbitrarily. The Homoousion is rejected, then received, then explained away by successive synods. The partial or total resemblance of the Father and of the Son is a subject of dispute for these unhappy times. Every year, nay, every month, we make new creeds to describe invisible mysteries. Then we change our mind, defend those who have changed theirs, and damn those whom we lately defended. We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves, or our own in that of others; and, reciprocally tearing one another to pieces, we have been the cause of each other's ruin."

lary, De Synodis c. 63: "With the exception of Bishop Eluesius and a few others, the greater part of the Asian provinces where I now stay (he had been banished from Gaul) are ignorant of the true God. Would that their ignorance were even greater! For it is more pardonable to be ignorant than deliberately cynical."

id not the Scriptures remain as a doctrinal guide?

vas a "must" for the later churches to maintain that through the Scripture could always know the secret mind of God (Salvian, Gub. Dei III, 41).

in the early days they took a different view:

Euseb. Ch. Hist. III, 24, 3 (quoting a very early writer): "The Apostles ... speaking the common tongue... were wholly in the power of the revealing holy Spirit that worked in them... as they preached the kingdom of heaven to all the world, and they gave almost no thought to having their speeches written down... Even Paul, the most skillful and gifted of the lot in thought and expression allowed only a few exceedingly short notes to be written down, though it was given him to speak inexpressible, things without number."

Clem. Recog. I, 21: Peter: "The Things of our faith... were indeed plainly spoken by him (Christ), but are not plainly written; so much so, that when they are read, they cannot be understood without an expounder ..."

Clem. Homil. III, 43 (PG 11, 137, 144f) Simon: How were you taught to interpret the Scriptures? Peter: The Scriptures are a mixture of truth and (unintentional) falsehood... wherefore it is impossible to know the saving truth without his teachings, even though one should search until doomsday he could never find it..."

The Scriptures are all but silent without an inspired interpreter. But when such an inspired person is present, the written word itself becomes a very secondary thing (Euseb. above); lacking such a person, barnsfull of scripture are not enough.

Scriptures can be and were forged and falsified:

No single unaltered Ms is known today.

Apost. Const. VI, 16: "We Apostles send you this so that you may know how we really think about these things, and not receive those books that are falsely circulated by the unrighteous in our name. For it is not enough that you adhere to the names of the apostles, you should adhere as well to truth itself with an unshaken mind. For we know that both Simon and Cleobis published books in the name of Christ and of the Apostles." He goes on to describe numerous forgeries circulating in the names of the prophets and patriarchs.

V. What became of General Authority in the Church?

A. Prediction: The "successors" to the Apostles were to be, not more Apostles, but "wolves, not sparing the flock..."

B. Fulfillment: Passages cited above argue a complete lack of central authority in the Church. All the other evidence supports this.

1. The letters of the Apostolic Fathers are all expressive of a strong sense of loss, confusion, and alarm. Various Churches have appealed to these men to advice and instruction--if there had been any general authorities they would have appealed to them.

Ignatius Bp. of Antioch writes to churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, Smyrna, rebuking and advising them.

Polycarp Bp. of Smyrna, writes to Philippi, and personally takes a trip to Rome to settle a very serious controversy there. They appealed to him "because he had known an Apostle," (Iren, Contra Haeres. To that fact they attributed his authority: He having a closer tie than others with dead and distant things.

Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians--at their request.

In a very strong letter Ireneaus, Bishop of Lyons, lays down the law to Victor, Bp. of Rome.

The disappearance of the Apostles was thus followed by a period of diffuse letter-writing, without any directing head, everyone giving advice to everyone else. By the fourth century this had become a brisk game of power-politics--all carried on by mail.

2. Earliest accounts of the Council of Nice all point out that it was the first general conference of the Church to be held since the days of the Apostles.

Discuss the significance of 300 years (1) without a general conference.

There had been numerous local conferences, called by Bishops, but why no general conference? Because, according to contemporaries, no one had the authority to call one!

The leading Roman Catholic Church Historian of the present time thus sums up the situation in the 4th century:

> "If there had been, in the Church of the 4th century, a central authority recognized and active, it would have offered a means of solution. But it was not so... Athanasius, when deposed by the Council of Tyre, does not seem to have had any idea that an appeal to Rome might restore his fortunes... There was not a guiding power, an effective expression of Christian unity. The Papacy, such as the West knew it later on, was still to be born. If the place which it did not yet occupy, the State installed itself without hesitation." L. Duchesne, History of the Early Christian Church, (London, John, Murray, 1931)

A contemporary and important actor in the events at Nicea was the famous Bishop Eusebius. In his Life of Constantine he explains where the central authority of the Church lies:

> Vit. Const. I, 51: "It is not possible to settle controversies on matters of major import except throught synods."
>
> Id. III, 17: "It was not possible to establish anything firmly and stably unless all or at least the greater part of the Bishops came together."
>
> Id. III, 20: "All that is done in the holy synods of Bishops is to be regarded as according to the will of God."

But who is to call and direct such synods? The Emperor and the Emperor alone:

> Duchesnes, op. cit. II, 522: "...it is always to the emperor that meeting owes its formation, it is to him that it looks for its programme, for its general direction, and above all for the sanction of its decisions... And upon what grounds does his decision rest? Upon his own personal estimate of the situation ..." (Italics ours)
>
> Each Bishop had his own sphere of action, but, says Eusebius, "When Bishops disagreed among themselves, each representing his particular region, he (the Emperor) as the common Bishop of them all appointed by God, would summon synode of God's servants, and sitting in the midst of these bishops as one of their number (lit. being one among the overseers) would act as the common arbiter of their affairs." (Vit. Const. I, 44)
>
> Id. IV, 24: "Wherefore it was not absurd for him, once at a dinner to which he had invited the bishops, to say that he himself was a bishop. ... 'While you are bishops of things within the Church,' he said, 'God has appointed me Bishop of external affairs.

> Id. III, 5: On the Easter Controversy: "No mortal man could discover a remedy to the ill, the resources of the contestants being equally matched. Almighty God alone could cure this... and in all the world but one man, Constantine alone, appeared fitting to be His agent. Who, when he had considered the whole case...himself bestirring his own mind, concluded that it would be necessary to make war on the adversary who disturbed the peace of the Church."
>
> "From the time the emperors began to champion Christianity the affairs of the church were directed by them, and the great synods were held and directed in accordance with their mind and will." Socrat. Hist. Eccl. V, Intd.

There is much more in this vein, making it perfectly clear that in the 4th century there was no General Authority to appeal to within the Church in case of controversy. Constantine was an unbaptized heathen and as Pontifex Maximus was official head of the pagan state church of Rome, yet he, perforce, must be as the "common Bishop appointed by God," there being no hierarchy among the Bishops themselves:

> Constantine's closing speech at the Council of Nicea: (Vit. Const. III, 21): "Among the Bishops it is for God alone to judge who are the greater and who are the lesser. Let them not quarrel or have rivalries among themselves. (60) It is wrong to envy another's episcopacy, since none should be beneath another. You must yield gracefully to one another and avoid all this terrible dissention."

(Note in all this the entire absence of scriptural provision, the sense of make-shift and expediency, the very loose and general concept of episcopal power, etc.)

The Roman Theory is that "The Apostles established the apostolic seat...so that the more important and more difficult questions might always be referred to the apostolic seat." (A letter attributed to Anacletus, in PG II, 800, the same in PG V, 1047).

> Are we to believe that all that authority which Christ himself divided among twelve men, each of whom was an Apostle, was one day to be poured into a single vessel? Every Catholic will admit that there have been bad Popes, but hasten to point out that there was also a bad Apostle. If one strand of a 12-strand rope is rotten the rope is still strong, but if one link of a chain is bad the entire chain is worthless. Only one man, Jesus Christ, was able to tread the wine-press alone. To regard the fullness of his power and authority as concentrated in the single person of a Borgia is simply blasphemous.

This theory is completely discredited by the fact that the great teachers of the Church--Origen, Justin, Tertullian, Augustine, etc. ---were universally appealed to, instead of the Bishop of Rome, to settle "the more important and difficult questions," and they in turn do not refer their questioners to Rome as the proper place to

seek an answer. Even the official councils of the Church base their decisions on the writings of these "doctors of the Church" who were almost never (and then only incidentally) bishops of Rome.

The nearest thing to a general officer in the Church was "the Lord James" at Jerusalem. "He kept the books and records" to him all the missionaries sent in yearly reports, and he presided at the annual conferences in Jerusalem where, at his request each Apostle would give public account of his labors for the year. (Clem. Recog. I, 17; there are many passages on this."

Eusebius Eccl. Hist. II, I (Citing Clement): "Peter, James, and John did not dispute for first place, but made James the Just Bishop of Jerusalem without debate."

But James is a contemporary of the Apostles, and in no sense a "successor."

Euseb. E.H. I, i, 5, says of "the lines of succession of the holy Apostles"." "Until now I have not found a single writer on ecclesiastical affairs who has concerned himself with this question." Was this because they took it for granted? No, for Euseb. says, (id. 2) that the beginning of these lines of succession is a complete mystery.

Eusebius says that until his time the Church had not made any attempt to establish lines of episcopal succession, and therefore no record of such has survived. The doctrine that apostolic authority survived in the bishops, and that its descent can be traced is a fiction of the 4th century.

The Petrine Question.

To prove that Christ gave keys to Peter is easy, but that is not the issue. We know that the Apostles had the keys: There is no problem of succession there. The succession question is, who comes after the Apostles? To that problem Mat. 16:24 ff gives no answer, but other Scripture, cited above ( ) (do, in the emphatic declaration that there were to be no successors.)

This is borne out by the oldest reference to the problem, Tertullian, De Pudicitia c. 21: "...I distinguish between the teaching (doctrinam) of the apostles and their authority (Postestatem)...Show me, therefore, in the apostolic manner, your prophetic powers, and I will grant that you have the authority to forgive sins. But if you are chosen purely for an administrative office (disciplinae solius officia), simply to perform set functions rather than to exercise power, who are you to forgive sins? Can you who cannot show any prophetic or apostolic gifts pretend to the power of such to grant forgiveness? 'But, you say, the chosen Church has that power to give. That I absolutely reject and deny: The Church may overlook sins committed, but not grant the indulgence to commit more... Now I would like to know on what grounds you usurp such legal

rights for the Church? If it is because the Lord said to Peter "Upon this rock, etc... can you presume enough grounds to claim for yourself the power of loosing and binding, that is, to claim it for the whole contemporary Church? To do that is to pervert and alter the manifest intention of the Lord in conferring the power personally on Peter: "Upon thee," he says, "I will build my Church," and "I will give the keys to thee" not "to the Church;" and "whatsoever thou loosest or bindest," not "Whatsoever they loose or bind." And the actual event bears this out... Peter's own case proves that spiritual power is necessary to an apostle or prophet." The Church itself, so far as it represents authority "is the Spirit working through an inspired man, it is not a mere collection of bishops; power and judgement remain with the Master, not with the servant, with God himself, not with the priest." Such power and judgement is not at the discretion of any man, but must always come through inspiration. On Mt. ix) ("If the Lord himself took such pains to put his power to the proof, not presuming to forgive sins without a power great enough to heal the sick, certainly I may not claim power to forgive sins without at least an equivalent demonstration of divine power."

The most serious attempt to explain how the keys got from Peter to somebody else, a thing for which no provision is made in the scripture or anywhere else, is the famous Liber Pontificalis, produced after 600 A.D. (ed. Duchesne) I, 118:

"The blessed Peter...first sat on the throne of the bishopric of Antioch for 7 years. This Peter having gone to Rome when Nero was Emperor there sat on the throne of the bishopric for 25 years 2 months and 3 days...He ordained two bishops, Linus and Clitus, who in his lifetime performed all the tasks of the ministry in the City of Rome...leaving Peter free to pray and preach and teach the people...He consecrated the blessed Clement as Bishop and committed to him the throne or the rule of all the Church, saying: "As the power to govern was given me by my Lord Jesus Christ, so I commit it to you...do not be concerned with the things of this world: seek to devote all your time to prayer and preaching."

Note: 1) Peter is Bishop of Antioch before being Bishop of Rome.
2) When Peter lives in a city he must be Bishop of that city, for the highest office in the Church must be that of Bishop. This leads to serious trouble, however, for the office of an Apostle is not like that of a Bishop at all: so it is necessary to have Peter transfer his proper duties to others, who function as bishops, while he goes about the work of an Apostle!
3) We have the picture of four bishops active in Rome at once - all during the lifetime of Peter!

The vital link in the chain of succession is provided by the words that Peter is supposed to have spoken in transferring his authority to Clement. Everything depends on the actual act of transfer, and this is described in a spurious "Letter of Clement to James the Just at Jerusalem," of which many versions exist.

All versions agree that Clement was "the Third after Peter to sit on the great throne of Rome." (PG II, 580)

> "Peter, feeling the approach of death, called all the Roman brethern together and appointed Clement their head: 'I transmit to him the power to bind and loose, etc.'..."Until that time Peter had reserved these powers to himself," (PG II, 36), naturally, since he was still alive. But what about Cletus and Linus who had already "sat on the great throne of Rome," did they not have that authority? The leadership of the Church was something extra and apart from merely being Bishop of Rome. On what do claims to this extra power rest? (see below)

In all versions Clement is installed by Peter alone.

> It has always been the rule that a Bishop should be ordained by at least three other bishops, for "We know that the most blessed James, who was called the Just, who was held even after the manner of the flesh to be the brother of the Lord, was ordained Bishop of Jerusalem by Peter, James, and John;" therefore no bishop should claim ordination by less than three. (J. Mansi, Sacr. Concil. Collectio I, 683)

After 382, the Roman Church, to claim superiority to other churches whose bishops had also been ordained by Peter, put forth the theory of the double Apostolato, i.e. that its bishops had been installed not by Peter alone but jointly by Peter and Paul.

> This invalidates all the earlier accounts.
> It makes Rome definitely subordinate to the Church of Jerusalem, which was still intact, and whose first bishop had been installed by no less than three apostles--including Peter!

In all versions of the "Letter" Clement does refer to the Bishop of Jerusalem.

> In every case Peter makes Clement promise "that when I die you write a letter to James, the Lord's brother, telling him how close you have been to me... Let James be assured that after my death the seat will be occupied by a man not uninstructed nor ignorant of the teachings and canons of the church." (PG II, 56)
>
> The fact that the letter is to James is significant. James must be satisfied that there is a good bishop in Rome. This cannont possibly serve notice that the Church has a new head. If Clement were to be made head of the whole church, why did not Peter personally consult with, or at least inform, James and John, both of whom were alive?

> He wants James to "be assured." Why doesn't he write James himself? Why wait until after he is dead to notify the other apostles and make explanations?
> Clement is to explain by letter after Peter is dead that he, as a close personal friend of the Apostles, has now taken over the rule of the Church. The entire future of the Church was in the balance. Peter was alive and vigorous (he died a martyr, not of sickness), and yet rested the whole problem of succession on a letter which not he put the new claimant himself was to write after his death!

The ordination of Clement as described in the only records is highly irregular, what with the phoney letter and Clitus and Linus making everything confused. The fact that such a poor case is made out in the 4th century and after is enough evidence that no better case was to be had.

But there is one fact that entirely invalidates the Clement letters even if they are genuine, as evidence for any claims to special and unique authority by Clement's successors. That is the fact that the story in every detail duplicates the older and much better attested account in the Clementine Recognitions of how Peter ordained one Zaccheus Bishop of Caesarea:

III Clem. Homil. c. 63: Peter laid his hands on Zacceus "and forced him to sit upon his (Peter's) throne." Zaccheus demures (exactly as Clement does at Rome) but Peter insists, Peter: "If you fear the name of ruler (archon) take that of president." He then gives Zacceus the identical speech which he later gives to Clement.

IV Clem. Homil. c. 70: Peter presents Zacceus to the people of Caesarea, whom he commands to "honor the throne of Christ, as in the past ye have been commanded to honor the throne of Moses, even though those who formerly sat upon it were sinful men." (PG II, 156)

Clem. Recog. 3.66: Peter commands the people to honor Zaccheus "as holding the place of Christ."

IV Clem. Homil. c. 72: in ordaining Zaccheus Peter says: "I give him power to bind and loose."

Even if this were not the source of the later Clement stories (as it obviously is), it must be noted that all the points on which the Roman Church later based its monopolistic claims to Peter's authority are here attributed to another "see", which is also a "see of Peter."

The Bishop of Caesarea
1) Is ordained by Peter.
2) Mounts the throne of Peter.
3) Is hailed by Peter as vicar of Christ.
4) Sits on the throne of Christ, according to Peter.
5) Receives the power to bind and loose.

Peter ordained the Bishops of Tripoli, and Antioch in the same way.

All the first bishops were ordained by Apostles.

But that does not make them apostolic. In every instance priests and deacons were installed by the same apostles. The fact that one is ordained to an office by an apostle does not mean that one has the power of an apostle.

VI. Would God Allow His Church to be destroyed?

It is objected that though the world rejected the prophets of other dispensations the mission of his Only Begotten Son could not possibly fail. This seems logical, but the word of God bears more weight than the logic of men:

Mt. 21:33-40): "...But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son...But...they cast him out of the vineyard and slew him..." i.e. Christ was treated exactly as the other prophets had been.

The Christian world appeals to the promise of the Paraclete as precluding the possibility of a complete defection from the truth.

In so doing they produce the strongest evidence that wherever the Paraclete may have descended, it was not upon them, for they do not even pretend to have the peculiar gifts which accompany the Paraclete.

The Apostles warned the saints of their day that they enjoyed no greater immunity than the people of any other dispensation: Gal. 3:4, 4:9, 4:11.

2 Peter 2.4: "For if God spared not the angles...and spared not the old world...so too these...shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

Jude 5:1: "The Lord, after he had saved the people...afterwards destroyed them that believed not. 6. And the angels which kept not their first estate...he hath reserved in chains...Even as Sodom and Gomorrah."

The principal teaching of the Apostolic Fathers, is that God will allow the sinful to be destroyed no matter what promises and miracles they have had or how much they have suffered. The mission of Christ is no guarantee of final security but the very opposite!

I Clem. Ep. 21: "Take heed, beloved, lest his many kindnesses lead to the condemnation of us all."

(N.B. In this, the oldest of the post-apostolic writings, we are told that it is quite possible for the whole Church to fall, and that God's past bounty to the Church, far from being a cause for reassurance is actually a source of alarm.)

Id. c. 41: "Bear in mind, brethren, that the greater the knowledge that has been vouchsafed us, the greater also is the danger to which we are exposed." It is not danger from the outside, however, but one that is already very present in the Church. Thus Clement continues.

c. 46: "Why do we divide and tear in pieces the members of Chirst, and raise up strife against our own body, and have reached such a pitch of madness as to forget we are members of one another?"

c. 3: "Everyone abandons the fear of God, and is become blind in his faith, neither walks any more in his ordinances...but walks after his own wicked lusts, resuming the practice of an unrighteous and ungodly envy."

The so-called Second Epistle of Clement is in the same vein:

II Clem. Ep. c. 4: "Even though we be called Christians, if we should do wicked things the Lord hath said, 'Even though ye were gathered together to me in my very bosom, yet if ye would not keep my commandments I would cast you off." etc.

The so-called Epistle of Barnabas to the whole Church, is just as emphatic. It treats the doctrine that God cannot allow his Church to be destroyed as the main cause of its destruction:

Ep. Barnab. c. 4: "Take heed, and be not like some who go right on sinning, and say, "The Covenant is both ours and theirs." They lost it just that way, you will remember, after Moses had already received it...We had better take earnest heed in these last days; for the whole past time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now, in this wicked time we also withstand the coming sources of danger, as becometh sons of God...Take heed lest, resting at our ease, secure in having been called of God, we should fall asleep in our sins, and the wicked prince, getting power over us, should lead us astray from the kingdom of the Lord. This is a real danger, brethren, for consider that after so great signs and wonders were wrought in Israel, they were actually abandoned. Let us beware lest we be...' called but not chosen' ...c. 5 That men perished justly who, having a knowledge of the way of righteousness, rushed off into the way of darkness...14. Did the Lord really give that covenant which he swore to the fathers that he would give? He did indeed give it; but they were not worthy to receive it, on account of their sins...Next the Father, about to redeem us from darkness declares, 'the Lord thy God, have called thee in righteousness...

Didache, xvi: "The whole time of your faith will profit you nothing if you are not perfect in the final test. For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall swarm, etc."

Apostol. Constitutions VII, 31: "Take care lest you fall into the sleep of death. For your whole past righteousness will avail you nothing if in your final trials you wander away from the true faith...

All insist that past virtues count as nothing as against present vices, and unite in condemning what must have been a popular doctrine in the Church of the end. This is the doctrine of the "Blood of the Martyrs," that the Church has already suffered so greatly and the Saints have already given so much proof of virtue that a reserve store of merit is on hand for the Church to draw on; the Blood of the Martyrs guarantees the integrity of the Church. The Apostolic Fathers unanimously condemn this appeal to "part righteousness" as utterly vicious and a deadly danger to the true Church.

The earliest Christian documents after the New Testament repeatedly refer to the doctrine of the Two Ways (Thus Barnabas Ep. c. 18, Apost. Const., Didache, etc.) This is the teaching the two ways, not one, lie open to the Church, which is just as free to choose the wrong one as the right one. In every case the people are rebuked for showing a tendency to prefer the Way of Darkness to the Way of Light:

Ignat. Ep. to Ephes. c. 16: "Everyone who has received from God the power of distinguishing, and yet follows an unskill(u)l shepherd and receives false opinion for the truth shall be punished...16. Let no one be anointed with the bad odor of this world. Why do we not, as gifted with reason, act wisely? When we had received from Christ, and had grafted in us the faculty of judging concerning God, why do we fall headlong into ignorance? And why, through a careless neglect of acknowledging the gift which we have received, do we foolishly perish?" etc.

Note the repeated emphasis on the fact that it is the Church that has had everything which is losing everything; that the revelations God has given are no guarantee to the Church.

In the 5th Century, Salvian, viewing the awful state of the Church, and nothing that immorality and degeneracy were much greater than they had been in pagan days, explains what has happened as follows (we paraphrase in part his long account in the Government of God I, 6-12)

"It is true that God has given man his law, taught man his precepts, and given instructions for his development. And what has happened after that? Man has transgressed the precepts, incurred the penalty, lost paradise, and been duly punished and damned." Such has been the course of history and such it remains. In Eden man received laws, precepts, and institutions from God. What happened? He lost everything. When a lower law was given, Cain transgressed that, and tried in vain to avoid the penalty by making a "deal" with God. Next came Noah in whose day the world rejected God's offer and all perished together. Abraham was rejected by the Cities of the Plain and they were destroyed. The world, represented by Egypt, next rejected Moses and his preaching--and perished. Next to be deserted were the Jews themselves, who were not merely punished, but punished sub testimonio, a witness having been given them. Miriam and Aaron transgressed against the limited light that was given them, and were likewise punished. "And now it comes to you," says Salvian, "You, the people of the Lord, are being wiped out. Well, why not? Since all the multitude of the people have sinned, why should not vengeance be wreaked on all? We ourselves, by our own confession, now declare that God has deserted us." It has all happened before, why should we think that this generation should be different from others--is it any less a sin to reject the Master than it was of old to reject the servants?

Id. IV, I: "The people of Israel who were once God's own children today are nothing. (61) In view of this, we are certainly deceiving ourselves if we think that because we are called Christians we cannot lose, and that a good name alone can guarantee our safety while we go about doing evil."