

giving a sketch of the Apostle's life and character. The writings ascribed to John are the chief source of information. He assumes their authenticity which he afterwards proceeds to establish. This, though not the logical order of procedure, does not affect the accuracy of the portrait he has drawn. That the materials he uses are reliable he satisfactorily shows. A few facts are derived from the Acts of the Apostles. Tradition, and the writings of Iræneus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, supply all that is known of his later life. Born in Galilee he received the education of an ordinary Jewish peasant boy. His mother, Salome, a woman of strong personality and devout spirit, powerfully influenced his religious nature. He possessed an ardent temperament, and yet his disposition was so sweet and affectionate that he was called the beloved disciple. Love was the master passion of his soul, as it became the key-note of his teaching. During his boyhood, Palestine was passing through a great political and religious crisis which must have profoundly stirred his ardent temperament. Rome, in its march of conquest, reduced the country to a state of subjection, but at the same time permitted it to enjoy a quasi independence. The representatives of the Cæsar oppressed the people and offended their religious pride. They chafed under the Gentile domination. The spirit of rebellion burst forth again and again only to be quickly repressed. It was not until the Roman legions overthrew Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple that the aspirations and efforts of the Jews for deliverance from the galling yoke ceased. Their antagonistic attitude begat a fiery zeal, which must have intensified John's ardent temperament. Dr. Gloag graphically pictures the political and religious state of the people. "The purity and integrity of the priesthood were gone. The appointment to the high priesthood was entirely in the hands of the Romans, and the office was bestowed upon their tools and partisans. The great priestly families belonged for the most part to the Sadducean faction, and were materialists and unbelievers. Caiaphas, who then occupied the office of High Priest, was suspected, like Pope Leo X., of infidelity. Their opponents, the Pharisees, were for the most part hypocrites, making great profession of religion, and belying their profession by their conduct. Religion had become petrified; the morning and evening sacrifices were daily offered in the temple: but there was no religious life—there was the mere body