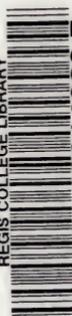


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HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN THE
APOSTOLIC AGE.

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HISTORY
OF
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
IN THE
APOSTOLIC AGE.

BY
EDWARD REUSS,
*PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY, AND IN THE PROTESTANT SEMINARY
OF STRASBOURG.*

TRANSLATED BY ANNIE HARWOOD,
FROM THE THIRD EDITION.

WITH A PREFACE AND NOTES BY
R. W. DALE, M.A.

VOLUME I.

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P R E F A C E.

M. ÉDOUARD REUSS, the author of the "Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne au Siècle Apostolique," has been for a long series of years one of the Professors of the Theological Faculty at Strasbourg. He formerly lectured on the Criticism and Exegesis of the New Testament, but he is now lecturing on the Criticism and Exegesis of the Old Testament, and has the reputation of being a profound Hebrew scholar. He has published, besides the work which is now translated for the English reader, a "History of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament," and a "History of the Canon,"—the former in German, the latter in French. He is also the author of a considerable number of articles in Herzog's Encyclopædia. His intellectual sympathies have always been with Germany rather than with France, and he is one of several Strasbourg professors who, as the result of the recent annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, have renounced their French citizenship and become Germans.

The contents of this volume will sufficiently show that M. Reuss belongs to the more moderate section of the liberal party in the Lutheran Church. His interest, however, in modern theological controversies has never been very vivid. His intellectual habits are historical rather than dogmatic, and

he is regarded by French theologians of all parties, not only as a man of real learning and of considerable [intellectual vigour, but as a discriminating and impartial historian. His very indifference to the conflicts between rival theological schools, though not without its disadvantages, assists his impartiality. He is not anxious to make it appear that the authority of St. Paul can be alleged for any modern theory of the doctrine of Justification; his only concern is to show what St. Paul himself believed. He writes the history of the theology of the early Church just as he would write the history of Greek philosophy from the age of Plato to the age of Plotinus.

Three years ago, when I suggested to Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton the translation of this work, there was, I believe, no treatise on the same subject accessible to English readers. Since then, Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh, have published a translation of Schmid's "Biblical Theology of the New Testament," and Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton a translation of Oosterzee's "Theology of the New Testament." Both Schmid and Oosterzee have their characteristic merits, but on the whole I am inclined to think that the theological student will find Reuss more useful than either.

The province of Biblical Theology is defined by M. Reuss with sufficient clearness in his Introduction. It may be expedient, however, to point out in two or three sentences the precise distinction between the function of the dogmatic theologian and the function of the writer who professes simply to give an account of the Christian theology of the apostolic age. The dogmatic theologian has to construct a system of Christian doctrine which shall include a solution of innumerable questions which have been originated by the protracted controversies of the Church. He may rest the whole structure upon the basis of the supernatural revelations contained in

the Old Testament and the New; but he is also at liberty to appeal to the conclusions of philosophy, to the spiritual intuitions of Christian men, and to the spiritual experience accumulated during the eighteen centuries of Christian history. He may use, not only the teaching of Christ, but the inferences which may be legitimately drawn from it. He may show what was implied in the great principles maintained by the apostles, though the implication may not have been present to the minds of the apostles themselves. The historian has a very different task. He has not to construct a system of Christian doctrine for *himself*, and he has nothing to do with theological questions which were never raised in the first century. He has only to discover what our Lord and His apostles actually taught. The work of the dogmatic theologian who accepts the authority of the New Testament begins when the work of the historian of New Testament doctrine is finished.

There is one source of information concerning the theology of the apostles to which, I think, neither Reuss, nor Schmid, nor Oosterzee has given sufficient attention. We may learn what St. Paul taught, not only from his own epistles, but from the misconceptions of his converts and the slanders of his enemies. That it should have been necessary for him to discuss the question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" and to repel the charge of teaching men to "do evil that good may come," throws very much light on the Pauline doctrine of Justification. The excesses of his Corinthian converts in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, excesses which drew from him the sharp and stern words contained in 1 Cor. xi., illustrate the kind of conception of that ordinance which his teaching must have given them. The existence, even in the

first century, of teachers who denied that Jesus Christ had "come in the flesh," and the energy with which St. John thought it necessary to condemn them, constitute an almost irresistible proof that the early Church did not believe in the simple humanity of our Lord. The heresies and even the vices of the Church of the apostolic age afford incidental and invaluable evidence concerning its faith, just as weeds indicate the nature of the soil in which they grow.

For the translation of this volume Miss Annie Harwood is responsible. Her task was a difficult one;—M. Reuss does not write very good French.

R. W. DALE.

October 31, 1872.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Second Edition of this work has been exhausted much more rapidly than the first. I attribute this success not at all so much to its own merit as to the fact that it was the first book of its kind in France, and thus filled up a gap, the existence of which, however, had not been realized till this attempt was made to bridge it over. In any case, the work is not indebted to the voice of the public press as preparing the way for its acceptance, or lending to it the keener interest of controversy. If the favourable appreciation accorded to it has not been universal, the critics have at least abstained from expressing disapproval, and have affected hitherto a contemptuous silence, into the causes of which I may be excused from inquiring. The thoughtful and careful consideration which an author is always proud to receive, and by which he is bound to profit, I have met with only from the wider public. I have no expectation that this will still be the case with regard to this third edition; but if I should now meet with readers less easily satisfied, or with sterner judges, so far from being surprised or offended, I should regard such a result as a real and important success. It would prove that my work had awakened the taste for this class of studies in a sphere in which it had not been previously developed; that it had

stimulated many minds to enter on new trains of thought, and to pursue them in an independent manner.

I must advert, however, to one remark of general criticism which has been frequently made: namely, that in my exposition the variety of form in the apostolic teaching is made to predominate too much over the unity of the spirit and substance. Regret has been expressed that I had not concluded my work with a comparative summary, designed to give prominence to this unity. I think that a more attentive reading will remove this objection. The unity which has been thus sought at the end of the work, I have dwelt upon where the history itself points to it, namely, at the beginning. It is in the primitive Gospel, in the teaching of the Lord Himself, that we find the focus of those various rays which the prism of analysis places before us separately in their differing shades of colour. As it has not been my design to produce a critical or theoretical, but a historical work, I have necessarily followed the natural evolution of the ideas, nor did it come within my province to violate this order, to subserve any practical purpose however lawful.

I have been much more impressed with the justness of another objection urged against the course of my exposition in its original form. That form did not seem to correspond with sufficient exactness to the title of the work which promised a history, while that which I gave was rather a series of systematic representations without any apparent outward connection. I recognized in this a defect to be corrected, and I have attempted to answer that end by introducing an entirely new book between the second and third books of the earlier edition. This book, by presenting a systematic narrative of the causes which stimulated and directed the theological labours of the first generation of Christians, links

together at the outset all the theories which form the main subject of the work, and connects all with their common source.

Lastly,—to speak here only of the most important points,—attention has been directed by some to a much-deplored omission in this history, which it was hoped a new edition would not fail to supply. The history of the destinies of primitive Christian teaching should, it has been said, have commenced with the record of the life of Christ. For, in the absence of any clear and exact idea of the person of the Founder of the Church, His doctrine can be but imperfectly apprehended; it remains, as it were, suspended in the air, severed from the concrete reality which is its true basis; and the absence of the historical element in this part of the great picture, will be so much the more felt since the author has been so careful to give prominence to it in the other parts, and to show everywhere else the close alliance existing between ideas and facts. This reproach was cast upon my book from its first appearance, and will necessarily be repeated still more emphatically now, when the attention of the whole of France has been concentrated upon a subject of such mighty moment, in consequence of the feeling awakened by a book which is in all hands, which has become the subject of the most various criticisms, and which has at least succeeded in popularizing—I had almost said in rendering fashionable—a question until now timidly and religiously revolved in the silent meditations of a few theologians. Already a number of writers have taken up this question: divines and scholars, Catholics and Protestants, believers and sceptics, have felt themselves impelled to lay before the public their respective impressions and convictions; and it would seem that we are as yet only on the threshold of a progressive movement, the very continuity of which is a fresh security given to the cause of

truth. How, under these circumstances, can a work in which this question of the day may claim so clear a place, keep silence on a subject attracting universal attention ?

We admit at once that the reproach is not unfounded ; nay, we would even add that an incomplete history is unworthy of the name. But it is also more easy now than formerly to explain the omission, since the majority of readers are better qualified to appreciate the nature of the problem and the difficulties of its solution. Very few words will, I hope, suffice to convince them, that while the theoretical philosopher, and the pastor who has practical aims in view, are both alike under the necessity of arriving as quickly as possible at something definite, or rather of giving the greatest prominence to results, the historian, who has another object before him, recognizes other duties, works after another method, and makes it his great concern not so much to *finish* as to *begin* well.

Those of my readers who have followed with interest the recent discussions relating to the Life of Christ, will permit me to take this opportunity to aid in familiarizing them with a field of thought only just opening before the French mind, and in which there has been hitherto much more of what might be called capricious and hasty exploration, than patient and truly fruitful labour.

What, in fact, is the idea we form of what is, or rather what would be, a Life of Jesus Christ ? Those assuredly have not grasped the question in all its bearing, who understand by such a term an epitome more or less exact of our four gospels, accompanied with critical notes, or with a vindication of the miracles, and calculated either for the edification of those who seek to foster pious emotions, or for the satisfaction of those who have no such desire, but would at least justify their callousness. The former class will seek in vain anything more

adapted to their need than the simplicity of the apostolic texts ; and the latter may as well rest content with that oblivious indifference which is the natural result of an education at once profane and irrational, and which obstinately confounds religion with superstition. If the necessities of our day demand more than this, if a Life of Jesus is welcomed as promising a response to questions newly arisen, if thousands of readers who would not have paused a moment yesterday over a book designed to solve these questions, will to-day open it with eager curiosity, the reason is that the present generation, casting off more and more its Voltairean prejudices, understands that Christianity is the most momentous fact in the history of mankind, that which for more than fifteen centuries has determined the religious, moral, social, and intellectual development of our race, and which will still determine it in an ever-widening future. But the science of our day is no longer satisfied with theories and abstractions, such as were accepted in the past century ; and while it continues to cultivate with ardour the philosophy of history, it seeks to place it upon the solid basis of facts studied in detail and verified by the light of criticism. Ascending the stream of time in order to reach the beginning of modern civilization, it has been compelled to pause before the sublime figure of Jesus Christ, with which are connected, beyond a question, the first commencements of a series of evolutions, which so far from being exhausted are still revealing boundless wealth of motive powers and salutary effects. Science has also become convinced that this whole movement will never be perfectly understood, so long as there remains confusion and uncertainty in the ideas entertained of the person of the Founder of Christianity, or so long as theoretic conceptions of Him are dissociated from the positive facts supplied by the history.

Wherever the attempt is made in our day to verify the great achievements of heroic men, the individuality of the men themselves becomes the first subject of inquiry. Biography is perhaps the most assiduously cultivated of all the departments of serious literature in our age. But what is a biography? Is it simply the chronological recapitulation of a series of events?—the enumeration of the triumphs of a conqueror, of the writings of an author, of the discoveries of a man of science, the principles of a thinker, the miracles of a saint? Nay; is it not rather primarily the progressive picture of the inner life of a man?—the history of the education which he first received, as well as of that which he subsequently gave himself, ere he became, in fine, the educator of his generation? It is the story of the way in which he grew into that which he ultimately was; it is the discovery of the true nature of his originality, of the tendencies of his mind, the aim of his efforts, the modes of his working; it is, in a word, the great drama of the contest of a heroic will, whether with the force of inertia or with the active resistance of traditional authority.

Now if there is in all history one personage whose biography it were well to study thus, that personage is assuredly Jesus of Nazareth. But never during the first seventeen centuries of the Christian era, did our fathers speak of a life of Jesus in this sense; never did they conceive such an idea. For that life belonged exclusively to the theology of the Church, and that theology had treated the life of Jesus, from the very first, less as a memory than as a dogma. The very details recorded by the evangelists,—details so instructive in many aspects, and of which no one questioned the reality,—were from this point of view reduced to the minimum of importance, since the disciple who created the science of

the Church had declared his desire to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ crucified.* For him, as for his successors, Jesus had lived only to die. Christian theology developed itself in a direction which tended to alienate it more and more from studies such as those we have just indicated. The conviction in relation to the absolute divinity of Christ excluded, and must still exclude, the very idea of a biography

* It is quite true that the conception of such a biography of our Lord as M. Reuss describes in the preceding paragraph did not enter into the mind of the apostles, and was not attempted by the early Church. But it cannot be said that in the apostolic age our Lord's life was "less a remembrance than a doctrine." There can be very little doubt that the facts of our Lord's life constituted a very important part of the earliest Christian preaching. The most probable theory of the origin of the synoptical gospels is that they were formed from those oral accounts of our Lord's miracles, parables, discourses, and sufferings, which had most deeply impressed the intellect and heart of the Church, and had been repeated so often that they had assumed a definite form before they were committed to writing. Nor is it quite clear that M. Reuss has rightly apprehended the meaning and spirit of St. Paul's declaration, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2). St. Paul is not describing the contents of his theology, in which, perhaps, the risen Christ occupied a position at least as prominent as the crucified Christ; nor is he describing the general character of his preaching. What he says is, that when he came to Corinth he saw reason for dwelling constantly and almost exclusively—not on a system of doctrine—but on Christ; and that in speaking of Christ he insisted strongly on the crucifixion. *Elsewhere* his preaching travelled into provinces of Truth of which he "determined to know nothing" at Corinth. At Athens he had reasoned with the philosophers—not, perhaps, to much purpose—on their own ground; his want of success there, and the intellectual and moral condition of his hearers at Corinth, may together have led him to adopt another line in preaching to them. Even the translation of St. Paul's words which M. Reuss follows, and which is represented by our own authorized version, is not quite rigorous. Paul does not really say, "I determined to know nothing," etc., but, "I did not resolve to know anything among you, except," etc.,—i.e., *the only thing I made it my business to know was Christ* (Alford)—the personal Christ,—not the theories with which some of your teachers are captivating you,—the crucified Christ, of whose humiliation and shame and death those teachers say nothing.—ED.

in the true sense of that word. God has no history; God does not make progress or develop, unless it be according to Hegel's conception; and any one who undertakes seriously, and without playing upon words, to write a life of Jesus, by that very fact, and whatever may be the result of his labours, steps out of the strict enclosure of orthodoxy.*

Now it is this very point which brings out the variance between the ideas of our time and traditional errors. Rightly or wrongly, modern science does not occupy itself exclusively with the sufferings of Christ, but also, and even mainly, with His teaching and the manifestation of His will. It seeks to understand how He was led thus to speak and thus to will; it endeavours to draw a clear distinction between those elements which were truly introduced by Him, and those which may have been present before His coming, or may have been

* It may be quite impossible for us to trace the development of our Lord's moral and spiritual nature, and of His conception of His mission; the materials may not be under our hand; but to say that the orthodox conception of the divinity of Christ excludes and ought to exclude the very idea of a biography in which that development should be traced, is to ignore the fact that orthodoxy insists upon the true humanity of our Lord not less earnestly than on His divinity. The divine was present in Christ, and revealed in Christ, under human conditions and limitations. He grew in wisdom as well as in stature; in Him, as in us, there was a gradual development of the spiritual affections and of spiritual power. When and how He came to know the true dignity and the nature of the work He had come to accomplish we may be unable to determine. Of the years during which His human intellect gradually became possessed with His characteristic ideas of God and man, and of his own relation to both, those who knew Him when He was on earth have told us nothing. But all that M. Reuss says about God having no history is beside the mark.

M. Reuss speaks in the next paragraph of contemporary philosophical orthodoxy as having the idea of a God who gradually came to the full consciousness of Himself at the age of thirty. This is a sneer which is hardly worthy of him. Modern philosophical orthodoxy, perpetuating and perhaps developing what has been an essential element of Christian theology from the beginning, believes that the man Christ Jesus gradually became conscious that He was the Incarnation of the Eternal Word.—Ed.

added since. Finding it equally difficult to familiarize itself with the idea of a God who only arrived at the full consciousness of Himself at the age of thirty years, according to the conception of contemporary orthodox philosophy; or with the idea of a God who in His very infant prattle gave to His mother lessons in metaphysics, (according to the very naïve but very logical representation of the middle ages,) modern science seeks rather to edify itself by the contemplation of the spiritual development of Him of whom it is said, in the orthodox tradition of primitive Christianity, that He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and with man.

Lawful or not, this tendency exists; and this point of view is a natural consequence of the direction taken by the studies of our own generation. This tendency has indeed gained so powerful an ascendant, that even those who are called orthodox believers, finding themselves no longer able to remain strangers to all scientific inquiry, or completely to evade its influence, often make to it, unconsciously, concessions incompatible with the theories of other days. The historical method is applied now to all that belongs to religion. We have a history of doctrines, a history of apostolic literature, why should we not have also a history of Jesus? or, rather, why should we be astonished that the attempt has already so often been made to write it? The very weakness and imperfection of these attempts invites to their repetition; the difficulties of the subject form one of its chief attractions; the sometimes strange aberrations of criticism are salutary warnings which may lead to progress, by stimulating true science to examine its methods before formulating its results.

I can well understand, then, how attentive readers should be struck by that omission in my work to which allusion

has been made, and that it should seem to them to present an anomaly in relation to that which is in our day a sort of rule. They may be the more astonished at it, inasmuch as I was myself the first in France to apply the historical method to more than one branch of theology, and that what has been called the Strasbourg school is based essentially upon the principle of making a more rational and a more logical use of this method, in studies which were formerly governed by a subjectivity more or less dependent on preconceived ideas. My reply is, that it is because I am a historian, and a historian simply, that I have not included within the plan of my work that element the absence of which is thus regretted.

In order to become acquainted with the life of Jesus, the gospels are our only source of information. Now, without pausing to show that the preliminary inquiry into the origin, nature, and mutual relations of these books is far from being completed, (and yet is a work indispensable if only to rectify early errors,) I may confine myself to observing that the gospels speak of a comparatively very short period in the life of Christ, and a period during which I have failed to discover any change whatever in His views or His teachings, whether in the direction of necessary progress, or, as has been lately asserted, in that of retrogression and decadence. At the commencement of this period, on His first appearance as a prophet and teacher, He shows Himself in full possession of all the truths which He afterwards develops in His doctrines; He proclaims at once His most elevated, most fruitful, most positive principles; or, rather, His preaching, His teaching, His life, is itself the application, the concrete and practical form of a fully matured conception, certain of itself, of its power, of its influence, and of its future. That gospel, which was probably the last

written, proclaims this fact as a theoretical truth, and the others—still more instructive in this respect, because they are the reflex of an earlier impression—also confirm it by the first discourses which they record, and which, while they differ in the various versions of them, all alike bear the impress of that ideal grandeur which has excited the admiration of every age. Let us carefully bear in mind, moreover, that unless we allow ourselves to be carried away by strange illusions, not one of these books enables us to construct a chronology of the details of the short transit of Jesus across the scene of history—a transit the very duration of which is only conventionally determined. We are bound then to admit, that if in order to reach the point at which we find Him in the gospels, He must needs have passed through a progressive stage, a period of subjective development, we know absolutely nothing of this transition, and it will be more prudent to confess this ignorance than to attempt to conceal it under a veil of conjectures which, taken separately, have little value, and which combined, so as to form a complete picture, are in danger of substituting romance for history. But we have not only here a blank page which superficial levity alone can hope to fill, we have also an enigma in view of which a theorizing theology itself, so bold often in solving questions, pauses baffled and confused. Why does this life only begin at thirty years of age? The mere statement of the problem in this bold and positive form, renders evident the impossibility of attaining the end which modern thought has set before theological science. And if the old conception of the life of Jesus presents unconquerable difficulties to the reason, assuredly all the attempts made in our days to grasp some conception more in harmony with the tendency of modern ideas and studies, have only issued in the building up of very frail edifices on a basis of affirma-

tions more or less arbitrary, or have encumbered the ground with chaotic ruins heaped up by the negations of despair.

Is it possible ever to bridge over this gulf, to steer between these rocks on either hand, to find the connecting link between the new methods of a science, which will not waive its rights and the ancient authority of the traditional faith? or must we abandon all hope of a reconciliation so desirable, and hasten to proclaim a divorce by which no one would be the gainer? I believe that there is a path by which we can still advance in the direction of this end, without compromising anything that has a claim to our respect. I believe that there is a preliminary work to be done, which is at once the most urgent and will be the most productive. This is that very work which I have here undertaken, but which I am far from regarding as completed. Instead of pausing to discuss the arguments for or against miracles; instead of substituting so-called natural explanations for so-called myths; in a word, instead of forming theories more or less disguised, let there be a steady application to the study of that which is unquestionably fundamental in this history, of that which has been, and still is, the sap of the new life of humanity, of that which belongs positively and exclusively to Jesus Himself, and in no degree to the opinion which the world may have formed about Him. Let us study His ideas, His precepts, His promises, His normal teaching, that final charter of our race whose destiny it is to be transformed according to the law which it sanctions, and to toil for the realization of an ideal conceived at a period when neither the actual nor the prospective horizon of humanity offered any such image, or awoke any such prophetic yearning. Let this teaching be contemplated in its relations to the religious doctrines and contemporary morals, which formed the common stock of the philosophers and

scribes; let us measure the distance which separates it from the most sublime of earlier aspirations; and disentangle it, lastly, from that which succeeding generations have added to it under the form of commentaries, often darkening and discolouring it; and if all this does not suffice to reconstruct that Life of the Master, from which pious devotion derives its sustenance, and which science now accepts as its grandest problem, let the ground be dug still deeper to discover the foundations, and it will but disclose treasures the accumulating wealth of which will amply compensate the most laborious search.*

In presenting to the public the first edition of the Theology of the Apostles, I designed it for theologians, and especially for those young students who had first suggested its publication. I was gratified to learn that it found numerous readers and a favourable reception in a much wider circle. I have therefore endeavoured to eliminate from later editions all that was addressed exclusively to scholars, and which might be a hindrance to readers less familiar with erudite forms. I have omitted entirely the biographical portion, and transferred to notes all the quotations from Greek authors and all the figures which were before incorporated with the text.

* It is necessary, however, to remember that the teaching of our Lord cannot be separated from Himself and His history. "Christianity, although a system of doctrine, is never confined to mere doctrine. . . . The word is, from beginning to end, the explanation of a fact,—of the fact that the kingdom of God is come near, and that the Saviour has appeared,—that He has perfected His work, and poured out His spirit upon all who believe in Him. Nothing, therefore, could be further from the truth than the rationalistic distinction between the religion of Jesus and His religious teaching. Jesus Himself teaches, but His whole rich store of precepts is nothing else than the announcement of Himself as the manifested Christ."—*Schmid's Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Clark's Translation), pp. 10, 11.—ED.

I do not repeat here that which it seemed necessary to say when first introducing to the French public, a work so new to it in many respects. The fact that it needs no such explanation to-day, is to me a gratifying testimony in its favour. If it is still faulty, it at least points out to the reader the means of correcting its own defects; and if it is yet honoured to be of some service, it will owe its usefulness to the truth to which it seeks to bear testimony.

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CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

IN THE

APOSTOLIC AGE.



CHAPTER I.

SCHOLASTIC AND BIBLICAL THEOLOGY.

THE term theology, as it frequently occurs in this work, is not used in the common and vague acceptance, which includes under it the whole circle of knowledge supposed to be requisite for those who desire to take any competent part in the spiritual direction of the Church. Theology, in that sense, has, as we know, very distinct branches, some theoretical, some practical, and more or less numerous according to the views of those by whom it is systematized. It comprehends the interpretation of the Bible, Dogmatics, Ethics, History, Homiletics, the theory of worship, Ecclesiastical Law, and other subjects, all connected by their common relation to the object and needs of the Church.

We shall here use the term in a sense more restricted, but at the same time more ancient, and more closely in accordance with its etymology. Theology, in our present acceptance of it, is the science of God and of things divine; the science of the relations of man to God; in a word, the science of religion. It has for its subject those convictions which are the essence of the spiritual life in the individual, as that life aspires to the supreme source of truth, of virtue, and of happiness. Its methods are reflection, contemplation, dialectics. In comparing this use of the term with that before given, it is at once obvious that it corresponds very nearly with that which our

fathers called *thetical* theology, or that which in our day is commonly known as *systematic* theology—that is to say, with that part of the great body of learning required of a thoroughly equipped divine, which states the series of religious truths, and shows their mutual relation and evidence.

Thus far, however, there is nothing in this science by which we may distinguish it from philosophy. One of the objects, in fact, which among others philosophy proposes to itself is to rise to the knowledge of God, to comprehend the destiny of man, and to trace out for man the path by which that destiny may be most surely fulfilled. We are all familiar with the terms philosophy of religion, moral philosophy, rational or natural theology. The distinction between these various branches of speculative science and theology, properly so called, consists in this: that theology derives its materials from a source, and measures them by a standard, which they ignore or neglect; or rather, philosophy intentionally confounds this source of knowledge with all the others of which it avails itself, while theology as carefully distinguishes it from all beside. This special source is revelation. Leaving out of consideration the subject-matter of either, the radical distinction between theology as a science and philosophy is this, that the basis of all theology is revelation—that is, positive information upon religious truths, derived directly from God, acknowledged to be beyond the range of human reason, and attested to be divine, both by the intrinsic value of the truth taught, and yet more emphatically by the exceptional and miraculous methods used for its promulgation.* Theology is thus pecu-

* This is not a very exact account of Revelation. Reuss appears to imply that God communicated a series of theological propositions—"religious truths"—by supernatural revelation. Is it not more accurate to say that the inspiration granted to prophets and apostles enabled them to apprehend the truth which was contained in the great *facts* in which God revealed Himself, and that the teaching of inspired men was the result of many and various factors? Our Lord Jesus Christ was "revealed" to St. Paul as the Son of God and Saviour of the world; but St. Paul's profound and vivid apprehension of the truth of justification by faith came to him partly through the agony of his personal experience of guilt and the discovery of his inability to keep the law of God. Speaking popularly,

liarily the science of revealed religion. Theologians exist only among people who believe in a revelation, whether exceptional and national, or common and universal. Paganism and natural religion produce philosophers only, not theologians.

It would be very erroneous to conclude from what we have just said, that human reason in its craving to rise above the sphere of the material life, and to occupy itself with things spiritual and abstract, finds a more fruitful field of labour, and one more appropriate to its nature, when it remains, so to speak, independent, and mistress of all its movements. History is at hand to prove the contrary. Revealed religions are those which have done most to sustain intellectual effort among men. So far from laying a check upon the spring of thought, as though they had by their very nature exhausted the truth, which forms the object of the instinctive quest of the reason, they have had an incalculable effect in stimulating activity of mind, in developing the speculative faculties, in guiding the intellect into the path of discovery, along which it has moved all the more easily and happily for the higher light thus lent. The more explicit the revelation given, the more complete and rich in thought and facts, the more it might seem to say to man: "Behold, at last, thou art in possession of all that it concerns thee to know!" the less has reflection

we may say that the doctrine was revealed to the apostle, for he had irresistible proof that it represented the very thought of God; but he learnt it through his penitence, and through his own personal reliance on Christ for justification. It did not come to him as a formal proposition, but through the supernatural illumination of the Spirit resting on his own spiritual history. Even the words of our Lord do but partially explain what He is in Himself, and what He is to those whom He redeems. In the fact of the Incarnation and in the history of Christ there is a revelation of God which the religious truths contained in our Lord's teaching and in the teaching of the apostles do not exhaust any more than treatises on Astronomy exhaust the phenomena of the solar system. Every Christian soul discovers in its own relation to Christ what no theological propositions have ever expressed. It is not so much "positive information upon religious truths" that is given to us in Revelation, as direct contact with God. Christ Himself is the revealed Truth of God.

On the whole subject of Revelation, see Rothe's remarkable essay in his *Zur Dogmatik* (Gotha, 1863).—ED.

been arrested, and reason lulled into slumberous contentment with the rich inheritance thus received without effort, and so inexhaustible in treasure, that it might appear to spare the necessity, and perhaps even remove the inclination, for personal exertion.

So far from this, the Gospel revelation, bringing blessing in so many other ways, has also given the most powerful impetus to the science of religion. That science, previously confined within very narrow limits, and expending itself often on investigations very unfruitful of great results, suddenly found a vast field opened before it for cultivation. It was the discovery of a new world.

A superficial glance discerned abundant attractions for the fascinated eyes of the observer; careful exploration soon disclosed hidden treasures which required the diligent hand of the workman to bring them to the light, and to augment the common wealth. For eighteen centuries now this mine has been worked, and it is unexhausted still; it might even be said that the metal which it yields becomes more pure, the further the vein is followed. Christian theology, so unwearying in its researches, so exact in its definitions, so jealous of passing by anything, which might contain the minutest grain of truth, is not yet prepared to declare its needs satisfied, to close its inventory, to say, in short, that it has now nothing left to learn.

But it is not our purpose here to panegyricize the Gospel as a gift of God which has sufficed until this day, and will still suffice, to meet not only all the needs of the religious soul and of the moral conscience, but also all the requirements of the most boldly speculative minds. There is another fact which it is of moment for us to establish. We said that theology is always built upon revelation as its basis. We hasten to add that this work of building is effected through the ordinary appliances of intellectual labour—that is to say, by means of speculation and contemplation taking logical and dialectic forms. Theology, which in relation to the special source we have indicated, is positive and historical, is in all other aspects

a philosophical science. Reason is its principal, we might even say, its *sole* instrument in all its operations. It would be easy to adduce irrefragable proofs of this fact; we shall bring forward only one, which may stand for all the rest—namely, the extreme divergence of the systems, which for so many centuries have been founded upon the same historical basis. New systems have arisen with each generation. Every thinker has added some formulas to those previously existing; every theologian has found something erroneous or incomplete in the statements of truth given by his predecessors. And let it be observed that we are not now contrasting theories which profess to be incompatible, each excluding the other, as heretical or impious, from any inheritance in the truth; the fact we assert is true of theories, maintained successively by the same party. We affirm that within the bosom of one and the same Church, and without any violent shock or sensible transformation, theology has undergone development, theories have become more positive, definitions more exact, applications more various, additions more numerous, formulas more exclusive; philosophical subjectivity, in a word, has taken a growing and widening part in the work. From age to age there has been the striving to arrive at something definite, whether in relation to a particular point to which special attention had been drawn, or to the system as a whole; and no sooner has a church, or sect, or school, or individual pronounced the final decision of an interminable controversy, either by solemn decree or by the authoritative voice of genius, than the whole dispute recommences, and subordinate questions, arising out of those just settled, call back theologians into the arena, add to the number of rival schools, multiply the causes of difference, and break anew the peace so hardly made. It is one of the most singular errors of modern divines, to suppose that their theology is identical with that of the first Christians, while in truth there is not a line or letter of it, which has not been a hundred times altered in place, character, form, as to its sense or the consequences drawn from it, or as to its relative position, and the influence attached to it in the

doctrinal series. Catholicism has been able to some extent to escape this difficulty, since theological labour is regarded in that Church as a sort of continuous revelation, or at least as an organic and legitimate process of development. Protestantism, on the contrary, which has accepted a large part of the results of this development, without according to it the same character, has voluntarily closed its eyes to the distance which separates the two ends of the chain. A century ago men ignored, or pretended to ignore, the fact that there is such a thing as the history of doctrines. Now, men are familiar, so to speak, with the genealogy of every article of faith, and know the birthday of every formula. It is doubtless true that these can all be traced back by a succession of steps to some saying in the Gospels, that in the final analysis they show a primary element of apostolic teaching; but it is also an acknowledged fact, that in the long transit from apostolic days to ours, they have become so changed as to be scarcely recognizable. The New Testament proclaims indeed the redemption of man by the Son of God; but the world had to learn from Anselm of Canterbury how that redemption could be effected.* The apostles more than once united in one common symbol of thought,—God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit,—but it was only after a laborious travail, that the Trinitarian doctrine was brought forth and consecrated in a creed, which is of much more recent date than Athanasius, to whom it is erroneously ascribed. The Christians observed the Lord's Supper after the death of the Saviour, and did so, no doubt, with as much profit as piety; but Paschasius Radbertus was the first to define the opinion of theologians on that sacrament. And in spite of all these decisions, which claimed to be final, differences of opinion arose again. Luther and Calvin could not agree; Arminius and Gomar were opposed to each other; Halle and Wittenberg declared open hostility. Orthodoxy, ever jealous to prevent

* A rhetorical exaggeration. The Church had speculated upon the relations of the death of Christ to human redemption long before Anselm wrote his *Cur Deus homo?* nor can the particular theory of that famous book be called absolutely new.—ED.

even the possibility of error, could not devise any method more efficacious than that which had always produced precisely the contrary result of endless division—the method, that is, of more and more minute definition of dogma. Wherever men have reflected and speculated upon the facts of the religious consciousness, there has been difference of opinion, the gradual or conflicting development of ideas. The primary source of these ideas, whether they be received by revelation or discovered by the simple power of human reason, in no way affects this state of things, which arises out of the very constitution of our mind.

From the remark just made it will be seen, that in establishing the fact of this subjective development of religious ideas, it is not our intention to throw down the gauntlet to any one system of theology in the name of any other. We accede unreservedly to reason, the right and even the duty of occupying itself with all the problems presented to it by the world around, and this right and duty are nowhere more clear than in a province to which Providence itself, by a remarkable intervention, has called the attention of men, and which it has, so to speak, thus marked out as a special field for thought. In spite of all its contradictions, its errors and extravagances, theology has as clear a right to exist as a science as physics or geology, both which, though founded on facts most palpable and altogether independent of man, have led their devotees by long winding paths, which have been patiently followed through much darkness and many errors, in the hope of ultimately finding the truth. So far from challenging a contest of systems, it has been our aim only to establish a fact which few of our readers would deny, but which many have perhaps never heard so fully and strongly stated. The theology which we possess, we Christians of all denominations, with our more or less exclusive pretensions to orthodoxy—the theology which was taught us in our youth, or which we have formed for ourselves in the course of our academical and later studies—the theology which we preach to the generation which is to come after us,—this theology is essentially the product of the

reflection of the human mind upon the primitive teaching of the Gospel.* It is a scholastic theology, in which it is sometimes difficult for the learned, and almost impossible for the unlearned, to distinguish the two constituent elements. It may with the more reason be thus described, inasmuch as we ourselves are accustomed to designate it as Catholic or Protestant, Lutheran or Reformed, as Helvetian or Anglican, as that of the disciples of Spencer or of Wesley. Where is the Church, calling itself orthodox, which would be satisfied, in our day, if a professor or minister offered it his services with this simple and conscientious declaration, that he was a Christian theologian? More than this is required; he must profess the theology of a school. The case is the same in spheres where the name of orthodoxy has lost its potent prestige. In the auditories of Schleiermacher, of Wegscheider, of Marheineke, the theology of a school was taught, no less than in those of Chamier, of Voëtius, and of Hutter—of all those men, in short, who are most jealous of a name once indispensable, and which is still held by the unscientific to be the guarantee of truth. Universally, the Christian idea, in order to reach the ear and heart of the disciple, has needed, and still needs, to pass through the medium of the mind of the master.

The theology of the school, or what is generally known as *scholastic theology*, is then the theology imparted by a teacher as the expression of his particular convictions, whether those convictions be peculiar to himself or be shared by a numerous community. This term *scholastic* ought not to frighten any one. It expresses no blame; it need not imply any special reference to the theologians of the twelfth century; it simply marks the presence of the rational or subjective element in the

* It is something more than this, as Reuss has already acknowledged. Theology is not the result of the mere application of the lexicon and the grammar to the New Testament; nor does it consist of a series of propositions which have been deduced from the New Testament by purely logical processes. It is the scientific product of reflection on the religious consciousness as quickened and developed by the Christian Revelation. A man must be a Christian to be a true Christian theologian.—Ed.

scientific labour by which the teaching has necessarily been preceded.

From this scholastic theology, however, we distinguish another science, not less important, possibly more so, having in part the same basis as the former, but differing from it in relation to its object, its substance, its means and methods; and this we designate the theology of the Bible, or Biblical theology.

This name, not invented and only provisionally adopted by us, needs no explanation. It is not designed to mark the opposition which must exist between a system conformable with, and one contrary, to the letter of Scripture; nor is it intended to represent popular teaching in distinction from learned exposition. We admit that among the various systems of the schools, there may be some in perfect harmony with the principles of a pure Gospel. We affirm that the writings of the apostles contain, by the express avowal of their authors, many things passing the scope of the common understanding, and that the writers make use sometimes of technical terms and of erudite methods. This term, Biblical theology, simply signifies that the science, for which we claim it, derives its statements from the Bible alone; that it addresses itself directly and exclusively to the Bible for the construction of its doctrinal system, and not only refuses to avail itself in this labour of the aid of any philosophical speculations, but proscribes and interdicts to itself the use of any formula or term whatsoever, which, though sanctioned by tradition or by high ecclesiastical authority, is foreign to the sacred text.* If scholastic theology

* It is not at all clear that the science which Reuss is describing is under any obligation to refuse technical terms not contained in the Holy Scriptures themselves. Such terms may be absolutely necessary in order to express in a scientific form what the writers of Holy Scripture have expressed popularly. If it be objected that in employing terms which are not contained in Scripture there is danger of introducing ideas which are not contained in Scripture, the answer is obvious: For the scientific statement of the contents of apostolic thought it is necessary to give definitions of the terms in which that thought is expressed by apostles themselves, and the new definition is just as likely as the new "term" to

represents the complete result of that which an individual or an association of men believes to be true, and as such recommends or prescribes to others, Biblical theology is the statement of a historic fact, which touches us closely by its consequences, by its effects, and by its always desirable and possible application, but which is not here described with a view to that immediate application. The author of scholastic theology will be careful to omit nothing which can satisfy present needs, obviate practical difficulties, and meet the requirements of the dominant ideas of his Church or of his own principles. The author of Biblical theology will be especially on his guard against introducing anything which is not in the documents, against confounding the ideas of another age or party, or ideas peculiar to himself, with those which he proposes to reproduce in their pure and pristine form. Professional theologians may complain of gaps in his writings; philosophers may express doubts as to the tendency of the teaching he retraces; many questions, agitated or resolved in our day, may be passed by unnoticed;—with all this the writer of Biblical theology has no concern. So long as no material errors can be charged against him in the reproduction of the thought of the sacred authors, his duty is discharged, his end attained.

As to methods, Biblical theology has nothing to do with subjective reasoning or with traditional authority. Its sole instrument is the conscientious study of the texts according to the soundest and simplest rules; it is pure exegesis, that science so much neglected, or so scandalously made to subserve the ends of scholastic theology.

Biblical theology is then essentially a historical science. It does not demonstrate, it narrates. It is the first chapter in the history of Christian doctrine.

contain new matter. It is true that all the great words of scientific theology are the growth of controversies of which the first ages knew nothing; but it is equally true that the very words used by the original teachers of the Christian Faith have been coloured, and their meaning enlarged or contracted by subsequent controversy. For the exact reproduction of the original thought it may sometimes be necessary to construct a new formula. “New wine” is sometimes poured into “old bottles.”—ED.

But it has also another characteristic which we wish to point out. It is an eminently Protestant science. What, in truth, did Protestantism in its very origin demand in point of science? What principle did it proclaim as the very basis of theology? Theology must be built upon the Bible, not upon the tradition of the schools; Protestantism would follow back the stream of the ages, to draw directly from the pure fountain of truth, the primitive documents of revelation. The one thing it sought was the theology of the Bible. In setting before ourselves the same end, we shall pursue the same path, a course not only sanctioned but enjoined by the principles of our Church. We are prompted in our endeavour by motives and impulses of which we have no need to be ashamed. We are following in the track of the Reformers. We are carrying on their work, though in only one little corner of the vast field which they began to clear for cultivation—in the department, namely, of historic science.

And it is especially in this corner of the field that they needed successors in their work. Historical studies were not very flourishing in the middle ages; the sixteenth century would have had to create them; but we must not look to a single generation to complete the work it was called to begin. The spirit of that glorious epoch tended not to history, but to action. It did not enjoy the calm which is the first essential for studies of a historic nature. Two centuries had to pass away before it was even perceived that the task, which that age had instinctively taken upon itself, yet remained to be done, and now, after another century, we are but at the commencement of the work. Nevertheless, and even if for a lengthened period yet, science shall fail to be satisfied with its own efforts, it is now fairly known and understood that Biblical theology, in the ideal conception of it—that is to say, as the pure and simple statement of the religious ideas conveyed in Scripture, without any scholastic alloy borrowed from later times and more modern conceptions—that this Biblical theology is in the Protestant point of view the one theology, the basis of all other theological forms, the only true confession of

faith, which can have—we will not say the right to be proposed to any community or any age—but the only one which can have the chance of continuing always, and of finally reconciling all to itself.

In all that we have just said on the subject of Biblical theology, we have had especial reference to the New Testament. For this we need make no apology. The Old Testament forms an integral part of Holy Scripture, in the apostolic as in the Protestant point of view, but it is acknowledged to have a special character and to occupy a place distinct from the New, in consideration of its immediate and national object, which separates it from the Christian sphere. We do not mean to say that Biblical theology has therefore no concern with it; on the contrary, that theology, following a strictly historical method, would find it easy to include the Old Testament within its range, and through it to trace the progression of providential revelations made to the chosen people, up to the moment when the last and most glorious manifestation came to crown the whole. But it is evident that it is also open to the Biblical theologian to confine himself to the text of the New Testament, and to take his stand where the apostles took theirs, comprehending in the summary of apostolic doctrine, that which they say and teach with regard to earlier revelations. We have preferred for the work now given to the public this more simple and restricted plan. We did not wish to widen unnecessarily the circle of a science, which to a great number of our readers presents itself for the first time. If this work finds acceptance in France, a higher range can afterwards be taken. Perhaps the time is not distant when fellow-labourers in greater or less numbers, dividing the work among them, helping and correcting one another, will fill up the gaps in this book, and efface its blemishes by a more perfect production.

We do not, on the other hand, in publishing this work make any vain assumption of opening a new path in the desert. On the contrary, we freely admit that we have had many forerunners, in Germany especially, and we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to their labours. But it seems

to us that their books generally leave something still to be desired, since they sacrifice, some in one way, some in another, purely historical investigation to the necessity for certain combinations, dictated sometimes by routine, sometimes by a vague antipathy to analysis, sometimes by theological prejudices, venerable no doubt, but scarcely justifiable. We venture to hope to be more successful in our task, and to advance science one step further towards its ideal, by being more passive on-lookers, more scrupulous and impartial narrators. The progress which we aspire to make will be achieved by a strictly historical method.

CHAPTER II.

METHOD AND PLAN OF THIS WORK.

CHRISTIAN theology is, we repeat, a historic fact. It is so in its present condition, still more emphatically was it so in the period before us for study; it was so in its origin. By that very origin it is connected with antecedent facts of the same kind. Its primitive form, that which we are about now to consider, belongs primarily and essentially to history. A thorough acquaintance with and comprehension of theology in this its original form, is needful before we venture to teach it, still more before we endeavour to modify it to meet any new exigency that may arise. How can such a knowledge be acquired? Can it be by clinging blindly to any formulas with which the accidents of our birth and education may have made us familiar? or by adhering tenaciously to some arbitrary form, moulded consciously or unconsciously by our own reason and philosophy, or it may be by our prepossessions or secret antipathies? Assuredly not; and yet this is the course pursued by all parties alike, whether they choose to be called orthodox, or rationalist, or by any other name. Far be it from us to deny to any one the right to construct his own theology according to his own judgment; but we are not speaking here of the theology of any individual man, or school, sect, or church. The subject exclusively before us for consideration is primitive Christian theology—that is to say, the form in which the first disciples of Jesus clothed the word of life received from the lips of their Master. Our object is to contemplate the first effort of human thought upon that word addressed to the

heart and designed to regenerate it. We seek, in a word, to go back to the first links of that long chain of systems which traverse the last eighteen centuries, and which have all drawn from the sacred source the element of truth that gave them life, while they have all blended with it the element of error which has made them one after another cease to live.

We maintain, then, that the theology of primitive Christianity can only be arrived at by an absolutely and exclusively historic method; by which we mean, that we shall endeavour to trace it back to its starting-points, to estimate the extent of its resources, to follow the phases of its development,—in fine, to track it to the end of the century which gave it birth, to the threshold of the new generation which received the heritage of apostolic tradition, but upon which new demands and new currents of ideas imposed the necessity for new studies and new systems. This aim being clearly understood and faithfully pursued, will manifestly forbid our adopting any process of synthesis—that is, tracing beforehand one definite outline, within which all the materials, gathered indiscriminately from the apostolic documents, must be made to find place. We shall be carefully on our guard against casting into any one mould, which must necessarily be our own purely subjective point of view, the principles, doctrines, and formulas which come before us. On the contrary, we shall seek to find in analysis the light to lighten our path;—that same analysis, which teaches the historian to place himself out of sight lest he should darken his subject, which makes him respect the peculiar character of every event or form of thought which presents itself, and recognize the right of every age, and party, and individuality, how insignificant soever, to find in the mirror of history the true reflection of the form it bore in life. This fidelity to fact is regarded as the first duty of the historian, whatever be his theme: how much more incumbent must it be upon those who undertake a subject of such vast importance as ours; who venture to deal with questions on the solution of which a vast number of our fellow-men rest their most cherished interests; to treat of

theories, in short, which bear the seal of immortality, and well deserve that that original impress should never be effaced.

Every true history should also take account of the relations of cause and effect in the series of events. To this end, there must be a careful regard, first, to the chronological succession, and then to the affinities and natural evolutions of thought, to the various influences brought into exercise, to the caprices of passion, to sudden changes of opinion, to the ascendancy of genius, and the despotism of prejudice,—in short, to all those springs of secret and complicated action which render the progress of the human mind a study at once so difficult and so instructive. It is readily admitted that there has been progression in the divine revelations, and can there be any hesitation in admitting that there must have been progression also on man's part in the comprehension of those revelations? The purely mechanical theology of our fathers, however, if it allowed this in principle, denied it in fact. We regard this progress as a truth testified by history. We discern it not only in the transition from the Old Testament to the New, from the synagogue to the church, but also within the limits of each of these two spheres. We trace it not only in the series of Hebrew writers who enriched ten centuries with their literary monuments, but also in the spiritual representatives of those few decades known as the apostolic age. How can it be otherwise? Shall progress—the characteristic of universal history—be lacking only in a matter which affects on the one hand the masses of a people or community, and on the other their highest religious thinkers? Is not the expectation of progress warranted by the words of Jesus Christ Himself? and do not the theologians of the Church practically assert the presence of such a law, when they successively claim to give us in their canons, and formulas, and writings, a clearer, more complete and adequate exposition of the Gospel than that which was presented to the faithful by the first disciples?

We shall endeavour, therefore, not to confound that which belongs to different spheres of thought; we shall leave intact the individuality of all the writers whom we call in evidence;

we shall carefully seek out the germinal principle of every train of thought, and separate system; we shall impose on none a method foreign to themselves—our own method, for example. We repudiate utterly, as injurious to the fundamental law of history, that false principle, underlying so much of the exegesis of other days, which assumes, *à priori*, an exact accord among all thinkers who are associated by common hopes and aims, and are the disciples of a common Master. This agreement is never found as the result of fair, objective inquiry, but invariably follows a preconceived system. Every theologian brings to the task his own fixed convictions, and then never fails to find in the texts which he compares, precisely that which he desires to find.

The analytical and disjunctive method which we recommend, on the contrary, gives a shock to routine and preconceived opinion. Is Christ divided? we hear on all hands. Were the apostles heads of rival schools? Was their preaching the source of all the dissensions which have torn the Church?

Were it so, we should be powerless in the face of fact; for once again, we say, we are not forming theories, but writing history. We consult authentic and contemporary documents, documents which are in the hands of all, so that each of our readers may at once verify our assertions. History is as inexorable as it is impartial. Passion and prejudice have no power to prevail against it; should it err, it holds in its own possession the means of correcting such errors.

But the fears entertained are exaggerated, and arise in fact from the false notion commonly entertained of the nature of inspiration. According to traditional theology, prophets and apostles can have been nothing but the passive instruments of the revealing will, which for the secure fulfilment of its purposes is supposed to have neutralized and arrested, either temporarily or permanently, all intellectual action in the organs of its choice. We hold, on the contrary, that these were the noblest spirits of their age, the leaders of their generation, who were honoured by God to act as His interpreters, and that they were all the more fitted to fulfil the divine designs, by

the aptitude of their natural faculties to enter into and execute them. They were not vessels formed of inert matter, in which the water containing the germ of life would have become stagnant; their mind was a workshop in which the living, organizing powers were fully used, and the divine impulse which called forth all this activity, so far from weakening the springs of natural intelligence, gave them redoubled energy. The Holy Spirit prepared these men to receive the truth of God, purified their desire for the ministry of the word, and thus prevented errors of thought and action, which might have compromised the cause they were called to serve; they, on their part, placed at the service of this same cause their natural faculties, and the peculiar powers of their mind, their understanding, learning, eloquence.

Hence one among them became an apostle, while another occupied a more limited sphere of usefulness; one became a writer, while another confined himself to oral ministrations. Even among the writers, one possessed a more practised pen than another, and there were among them marked differences of style. One rose into the region of speculation, while another found his sphere in popular and practical exhortation. The various phases under which the inexhaustible treasure of the Gospel presented itself, were not all discovered at once, nor were all appropriated with equal readiness. The pole which attracted the magnet of the conscience or the reason, did not occupy, in relation to all, the same point in the circle of revelation.

All these influences give a distinct individuality to each of the sacred writers. Systematic theology may be under the necessity, and may have the right, of seeking above all these shades of difference, the unity of the ray of divine light of which they show the various hues as in a prism; but historic theology has quite another task; it is bound faithfully to note and to record every varying shade that characterizes the apostles as men, as writers, and as thinkers. By such a course, unity will suffer no loss of anything that is really its due; for if it is the first duty of the historian not to change authenticated facts, his highest

office is to bring out the spirit of such facts, to show their connection and their place in what may be called the great plan of the providential government of mankind.

These reflections are suggested, we confess, by the rational point of view from which we are accustomed to regard all that belongs to history. It would be easy, however, to show that they are warranted no less by the positive declarations of the first disciples of Christ. Their history, which we shall relate, attests the existence among them of different views upon particular points, and indeed on some general relations, the relation for example of the Gospel to the Mosaic institutions. They make no attempt to cloak or conceal these differences.* Shall we say that the divergences are merely apparent, and have no real existence? or shall we not rather, without ignoring these diversities of form, seek beyond them all a true unity of spirit and of heart? We gather further from these first disciples, that evangelical teaching must be regulated by those to whom it is addressed, and that there are some points of doctrine more generally and immediately necessary, others which may and perhaps ought to be reserved for the more cultivated hearers.† Have we not a direct interest in inquiring into the nature and purpose of this various estimate of Christian doctrines? The inspired writers confess, in all humility, that they are but feeble instruments in the hands of God, ever conscious of the need of Divine illumination and support, for the worthy fulfilment of their mission.‡ They make a distinction between that which they have received of their Master, and what they have themselves added.§ They speak of themselves as still in a state of tutelage, their reason seeing as yet only obscurely and as in a mirror, not face to face; and of their preaching as only grasping and presenting broken portions of the absolute truth.|| May we not study with much edification to ourselves

* Gal ii. 1, foll., and 11, foll.

† 1 Cor. ii. 6, and foll.; iii. 1; Heb. vi. 1.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6, and foll.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 25—40. 1 Cor vii 25—40

|| 1 Cor. xiii. 9, and foll.

the travail of their spirit, the struggle they carried on courageously and perseveringly, to lessen from day to day the distance which must ever separate man's conceptions of truth from the very truth of God? Lastly, they recognize the difference there is between faith and intuition,* between the prospect, dim and distant as it is, which meets the immediate needs of the spirit, and the direct vision which is one day fully to satisfy its thirst. May we not rejoice in a community of such hopes with them, as it is our duty and our happiness now to become sharers of their convictions? †

But the apostles are not only conscious that their respective teaching embodies particular aspects of Christian truth; they give prominence to the fact, insist on the significance, and boldly advocate the claims of the types of doctrine they represent. Paul, at least, has it much at heart that the Gospel should be preserved and propagated in the form in which he understood and preached it; he opposes his statement of truth to every other not exactly corresponding with it. What right then have we to amalgamate it with that which grew up side by side with it?

Lastly, we must not lose sight of the fact that, both in their writings and oral teachings, the apostles were independent of one another. Their first hearers and disciples must have been able to understand them and the Gospel received from them, and had a right to account themselves members of the great Christian community, without having had the advantage of hearing all the apostles one after the other. This advantage only fell to the lot of succeeding generations, who were enabled by reading to hold communion with several apostles at once; but in their case it was balanced by a corresponding disadvantage. The letter of the apostolic writings—so few in number—had to stand

* 2 Cor. v. 7.

† The general proposition is perfectly true; there are distinct types of apostolic doctrine. But the alleged differences between St. Paul and the other apostles on the relations of the new faith to the ancient institutions is not sustained by the passages to which Reuss refers in this note. See pp. 334 and 338, in Lightfoot's Essay on "St. Paul and the Three" in his Epistle to the Galatians.—See edition 1866.—Ed.

them in stead of the living, oral teaching of the first disciples—that inexhaustible commentary of a text which ever needs such a commentary, that ever overflowing fountain of helpful memories, healthful lessons, and sentiments adapted to win hearts with a constraining power. As Christians eager to grasp every hand that can lead us to Christ, as theologians interested in making use of every ray which can lighten us in our search after truth, we are bound to make the whole of the New Testament the subject of our studies, and to meditate upon and appropriate the thoughts and convictions of all the apostles indiscriminately. But as historians, watching with keen attention the most remarkable and plainly providential revolution, that ever made an era in the progress of the human mind, and as members of a particular community, seeking in the far past, the first traces of the divisions which separate the various churches, it is as directly our interest not to confound systems and men, but to keep each in a distinct sphere, so as the better to appreciate the character and influence of each. We shall be none the less ready to recognize above all the same inspiring spirit, and in view of all the same final goal.*

We have but a few words to say as to the sources from which we derive the materials for our history. These sources are essentially, we might say exclusively, the books of the New Testament. The few Christian writings still in existence that may be referred to the first century, and are not comprised in the sacred canon, are so unimportant that we may pass them over here in silence, though we purpose to notice them in their own time and place. The Jewish and pagan literature of this period contributes absolutely nothing to the subject before us. In exhibiting presently, however, the religious aspect of contemporary Judaism, we shall have recourse to the documents proper to the subject. Lastly, the Christian literature of the second century can no longer be taken as the faithful and authentic exponent of the thoughts of the first, and it is only with much caution and extreme

* 1 Cor. xii. 4—7..

reserve that we may, as occasion requires, refer to it for some light on obscure points.

With reference to the writings of the apostles themselves, we have still two preliminary remarks to make. It is well known that several of these writings were not received by the early Church with entire confidence, and that modern criticism has raised doubts, more or less serious, as to their authenticity. In our capacity as historians, we are bound to pronounce an opinion on these points; indeed it is necessary that, before commencing our work, we should have formed a decided judgment upon the historical value of the sources of our history. We declare therefore at once, that we consider all the books now unanimously placed in the canon of the New Testament, to belong to the first century, with one exception only.* In reference to this one, we have found it impossible not to endorse the judgment of the most ancient of the Fathers and the most illustrious of our Reformers. The critical grounds on which these convictions have been formed are given in another work, and we need not advert to them here. We may observe further that for our present purpose it is of much greater importance to decide the precise date of an apostolic work, than the proper name of its author. We are not writing now a history of literature, but a history of theology; it is not persons but thoughts we are in search of, that we may classify and compare them, and show their mutual relation and sequence. In the chronological circle within which we confine ourselves, the ideas and principles expressed, decide the place to be assigned to each particular writing; and even were the writings anonymous, they would give us a much truer and surer knowledge of their authors than can be gathered from traditions, always variable and doubtful, or from purely literary criticism groping its way in the darkness.

There is another point in connection with our sources of

* The exception is, of course, our Second Epistle of St. Peter. This is not the place to discuss Reuss' confident denial of the genuineness of this document; the reader is referred to the usual Introductions to the New Testament.—ED.

information to which we would direct the reader's attention. Those sources will doubtless give to the historian, as they have given to the Church, the whole of the beliefs propagated by the apostles, and forming the basis and starting-point of the theology of all Christian communions. For the historian as for the theologian, the main and essential part of his work will be to disengage these beliefs and this teaching from the purely accidental forms under which they are presented, whether in narrative or epistle, and, without altering their essence, to cast them into the mould of theory and system. But the historian will also gather other facts of singular interest to him, though valueless to the theologian, as no longer influencing the Church. He thus becomes familiar with the opinions, the hopes, the errors permeating the first Christian society, which the preaching of the apostles had to combat and subdue, or which have yielded gradually to that spirit of light and progress which, according to the distinct promise of the Saviour, has so manifestly guided the Church along its perilous path. It is evident that all these opinions, whatever may be their intrinsic importance, belong to the history of religious thought, and that such a history would be incomplete if they were passed by. It would further run the risk of falling into the fault, so common among theologians, of drawing a purely ideal picture of the spirit of the infant Church, giving all the lights, and none of the shadows.

We propose then to pursue in this work the following course. We shall first examine the religious condition of Judaism at the time of Christ's appearing. The importance of this preliminary examination arises not so much from the relation which the Gospel, regarded as a theory, bears to contemporary theology, as from the influence exerted by that theology upon the masses, and consequently upon the thoughts and dispositions of the first Christians.

Our second book will be devoted to the study of the teaching of Jesus Christ. That teaching is unquestionably not of a nature to be readily reduced to a system; it presents, however, some leading features, which need to be considered in due

order, and it at least formed the basis of all the various expositions of doctrine given by the apostles. These two representations will set before us the double starting-point, or the twofold source of Christian theology. It is the blending of these two elements in unequal and various proportions, which has produced the successive evolutions of Christian theology, and which in truth still operates in the same way.

Our third book will carry us into the midst of that primitive Christian society, the beliefs and teachings of which form the principal subject of our investigations. We do not propose to ourselves in this connection, to trace in all their details the destinies of the apostolic Church, but rather to recall its principal phases, and mark its most salient facts, as these bear most directly upon the development of religious thought, to the picture of which this narrative will form the framework.

The last four books, corresponding more closely with the title of this work, and forming its essential part, will contain a thorough investigation of the various documents in which the apostolic teaching comes down to us. Our study of these documents is designed, we admit, to reproduce apostolic teaching in a form more or less systematic, as the nature of the sources may allow, but we hope never to forget that we stand in relation to our subject, in the attitude of historians only. We shall have to treat of three leading theological conceptions entertained by the primitive Church, the first of which, connecting itself with previously received ideas, married the Gospel to the law; the second, perceiving the fundamental difference between these two dispensations, strove for the freedom of the Gospel; while, finally, the third, completely emancipated from the trammels of this contest, claimed for the Gospel an independent position in the sphere of theological speculation and religious mysticism.

Before entering on this last phase, however, we shall have to consider, in a less extensive series of documents, the chances of success and failure through which the most active and powerful of these schools had at this time to pass. That very type of thought which was to gain in the future so mighty a preponderance over every other, was in the first century rather

an element of controversy, an agent of dissolution, and, like all that is great here below, had to win with a sore struggle the right of citizenship in the very realm in which it was one day to rule and reign.

This method, and the plan of our work naturally arising out of it, explain the title by which we have chosen to describe it. We have rejected the title of *Biblical Theology*, adopted by all who have gone before us, though essentially our object is the same as theirs. We wished to avoid the slightest suggestion of a subjective exposition, and to bring prominently forward the historical stand-point which we occupy. The nature of our first and third books, moreover, made our choice a matter of necessity. But throughout we have endeavoured, as far as the subject would allow, to adhere to the narrative form. We have sought to present to our readers the Christian doctrines intact and pure, under the full conviction that they will make a far deeper impression by themselves, than by any efforts of ours to establish and commend them. On the other hand, a "History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age" has permitted us to introduce into our book, one most instructive element. We have been able to illustrate the normal teaching of the apostles, which forms the exclusive subject of Biblical theology, by the picture of the immediate effects which it produced, and which have gone on perpetually acting and re-acting upon its forms and developments. In this way only does the primordial fact of the grand and interesting history of Christian, or Biblical theology, cease to remain suspended in the air, as is the case in a purely theoretical exposition, and link itself at once to the long series of subsequent evolutions, through which we, in our turn, have received the Gospel, and which are destined never to have an end.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

MOSAISM BEFORE THE EXILE.

JESUS CHRIST, in presenting Himself to mankind as the Mediator of an entirely new relation, to be established between man and his Creator, must needs connect the revelations He brought with those previously given, and with the ideas current among the people to whom He immediately addressed Himself. The former of these two facts, the providential or doctrinal connection between the old and the new covenant, is one of the most important points in every theory of Christianity, and we shall see presently in what manner it was regarded and expressed by the Lord Himself, and by His disciples after Him. But the latter fact also—the influence exerted by traditional opinions upon the teaching of the Gospel, and the convictions founded upon it—is one which the historian must not fail to observe. This is indeed a province belonging to history exclusively, since theoretic theology—the exposition of positive doctrine—has nothing to do with it. The form of the teaching of Jesus, the measure of His communications, the obstacles which He encountered, the manner in which He had to meet them, His chances of immediate or ultimate success,—all these depended more or less on the condition of men's minds at the time of His appearing. His disciples, in their turn, were subject in a far greater degree to the same influences. They had been Jews before they became Christians; it was through the

synagogue they had come to Christ. The growth of the grain which the sower sowed in their hearts, was determined by the nature of the soil into which it fell.

The historian then is bound, first of all, to make himself familiar with the scenes and circumstances, amidst which the Christian Church had its origin. The necessity for this preliminary study will be amply shown by the numerous points of contact it will discover to us, between the ancient schools and modern systems. Everywhere we shall meet with manifold and often striking confirmation of the great law which governs the human mind in its progress along the path of truth; it never shakes off completely the influence of ideas implanted in its early education, and never appropriates without some modification, those which it receives from external sources. But the ground which we purpose now to survey, does not include the whole religious and moral teaching contained in the books of the Old Testament. For, first, it would be erroneous to suppose that the mass of the Jewish people had a very pure and direct knowledge of the principles thus inculcated; and, secondly, it must be remembered that the greater part of those books are separated from the period now under our consideration by the lapse of centuries, during which other more powerful influences had asserted themselves over the life of the nation, and impressed upon it a character different from that of its ancestors.

It is this peculiar character of the Jewish nation at the time of Christ and His apostles, which will form the special subject of the following pages. We shall have to consider the civil and political constitution of the people—a singular blending of self-government and vassalage—no less than their religious and ecclesiastical condition, which embodied the purest and most exalted ideas in forms lifeless and valueless. The conception of Judaism, therefore, in its relation to these different spheres of social life, is one of considerable complexity, and presents itself to the historian under very various aspects. But it is essentially a concrete conception, inasmuch as it is formed on external, material, palpable facts. It represents the

life of a long series of generations, not only in its principles, but still more in the application made of those principles to the beliefs, the government, the science, and even to the inner domestic life of the nation. That life as we witness it to-day, with its peculiar tenets and forms, bearing a character that seems indelible, was produced in the course of ages, and is not normal to the people of Israel. Judaism is preceded in history by another phase of development, which it is impossible to confound with it. There was a time when the ideas which form its basis and essence lived as yet only in the mind of a few individuals, charged by Providence with the task of preserving and propagating them. They took root perhaps in the hearts of a little band of docile disciples formed in their school, but they had not as yet become incarnate in the whole nation, so as to fashion it to their image, to permeate the civil government, and to create all the social institutions required to consolidate and diffuse them. They existed then rather in the abstract condition of laws, of principles; their application was wanting, their influence limited, often scarcely apparent; but, on the other hand, they were in less danger of deteriorating by contact with common life, or of becoming impoverished by more intimate association with rude, and as yet undisciplined masses.

This older, and we are tempted to say, more ideal phase of the life of the Israelitish people, may be designated by the name of *Mosaism*. It perpetuates the memory of the remarkable man to whom the gratitude of thirty centuries refers the commencement of the world's civilization, inasmuch as, under the more immediate conduct of God, that civilization was to be brought about by the medium of the divine law. Moses was the first to enunciate that law, to make it the principle of a national movement, and by it he undertook to form a nation of men worthy of the name, out of the barbarous hordes which he led across the desert. Such a task, though boldly essayed, and pursued with that faith which overturns mountains, was beyond the powers of a single man; humanity never progresses by giant strides. But success, pledged by a

power more invincible than human strength, was not compromised by delay. Others arose in the place of Moses. The election of the people of Israel was marked especially in this, that they never lacked spiritual leaders, preaching and acting after the example of the first and greatest of the prophets, and enforcing alike by persuasion, counsel, and promise, and by the sterner arguments of threatening and punishment, the preservation—ever becoming more easy,—and the authority—perpetually widening—of the sacred deposit they held. It is with regret we refuse ourselves the pleasure of tracing the history of the Mosaic dispensation from its first solemn promulgation, through all the vicissitudes of political revolutions impeding its progress, to the moment when it seemed about to be buried beneath the ruins of the temple, which it had reared as its living symbol. Such a narration would lead us too far away from our proper theme. It is of less moment to us to-day, to know by what means Mosaism was able to maintain and to diffuse itself, in spite of innumerable obstacles, than it is to epitomize in a few words that which constituted its essence, and must needs be the starting-point of its restoration. We shall not then here follow the gradual development of its principle and its forms, as these may be traced from Moses to Samuel, from David to Jeremiah. We shall rather regard the prophets as made one by the grand bond of solidarity; and the burden of prophecy which was transmitted from hand to hand under the safe guardianship of the divine Spirit, we shall consider under the complete form it had assumed in the day of its final trial, and in the mouth of the most courageous, and at the same time the most unhappy of its interpreters.

The fundamental and formative idea of the prophetic teaching was that of the theocracy, or of the city of God. Mosaism therefore was or became an eminently social religion, under the influence of which the civil and political life of the nation might and was designed to be governed, and even gradually absorbed by principles of a higher order. The prophets set forth as the end or the law of the national life, a state of society in which all the citizens should be brought into a

direct relation with Jehovah, accepting His will as the sole rule of their actions, whether collective or individual, and receiving in return for this unbounded obedience, the promise of peculiar divine protection. Israel, according to this ideal conception of it, was to be a people of saints and priests. This was not, on the part of the prophets, the subject of simple exhortation, or of eloquent appeal to the conscience, dictated by noble and earnest moral feeling; it was a deep conviction with them; it was their faith, that which might be called the speculative part of their theology. It rested upon several premises, of the utmost simplicity, but of great practical power, and remarkable especially as being unknown to any other nation of antiquity.

The first of these premises was monotheism, the belief in one only God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. This belief was opposed first to the ancient Sabaism of the Semitic peoples, who, incapable of rising to the conception of a creative deity exalted above nature, rested in the recognition of a plurality of gods, governing a world of which they formed an integral part. Monotheism was in opposition also to the belief, cherished both on political and religious grounds by all the peoples of antiquity, that each nation had its own god, whose special worship was the pledge of a reciprocity of duty and benefit. We know that this sentiment often asserted itself among the Hebrews, and led them into those frequent lapses into idolatry which would else be inexplicable. The idea of the theocracy itself, imperfectly understood or detached from its needful complements, may have lent it some support, and certainly never availed altogether to counteract and dispel it. The attributes ascribed to the one God, reveal further the purity and elevation of the religious conception of the prophets. In the sphere of morals, His holiness and justice, while exalting the authority of the law, lent aid to the fulfilment of duty, and in the region of metaphysics, one fact alone, the peculiar name of the Deity, Jehovah, or rather Yahwèh (*i. e.*, HE IS), bears striking testimony in favour of those who adopted this in preference to any other name.

We need only draw attention further to the stern prohibition of any representation of the Deity, as incompatible with the majesty of His person, a prohibition put into effect wherever prophecy was able to give to its principles the force of law.

The theocracy, in another aspect, was based upon the idea of a covenant made by God with the people of Israel. This covenant, proposed to the patriarchs, and sealed by their pious submission to the will of the Most High, became at Sinai a solemn contract, accepted by Moses in the name of the tribes, and perpetually kept in the memory of the nation, both in its good and evil days, by the words of the prophets. Attached to this covenant were promises of national prosperity, the prospect of a life of peace, assured possession of a fruitful land, and strong and effectual protection against enemies without. The word of Jehovah was pledged by this contract, and that word would never have failed if the people, faithful to their part of the covenant, had walked in the ways of God. But one generation after another erred from this straight path, and thus lost, by its own fault, the benefit of the covenant. Nevertheless God did not break it, but continued by the ministry of the prophets to carry on the education of Israel, exhorting, chastising, purifying the people by trials more or less severe. He reserved for a better generation, one devoted to Him in heart and soul, and not in outward appearance only, the full and happy realization of His promises. It was still upon the children of Abraham that Jehovah bestowed the privileges of His revelations and His peculiar benefits; the other nations, aliens to His covenant, and without direct promises, were to prove His anger so long as they remained hostile to Israel, although from time to time He used them as His instruments to punish His rebellious people. When once, however, the ideal theocracy should have been established in Zion, they also were to bring their offerings, and as humble converts to be grafted on to the chosen stock.

This the prophets proclaimed in all their oral utterances; this is the burden of every page of their writings. It is im-

portant to note here two very remarkable facts which give a unique character to their preaching and to their theology. They never address themselves to individuals, but always to the people collectively as a nation. The apparent exceptions, if we examine them closely, will be found only to confirm this rule. It is the nation which is to suffer for its misdeeds, the nation which is to be recompensed for its turning to God. If there is occasion to distinguish two classes of men, the one subject to the will of God, the other rebellious against it, the decrees of divine justice are pronounced in both cases, not on individuals, but on bodies of men. This general observation explains in part, but only in part, the next fact to which we draw attention here, namely, that the predictions and hopes of the prophets are invariably associated with the earthly and political existence of the nation, and that they never, in their most ideal representations of the future, break through the circle of conditions belonging to that existence. That which is most remarkable is that this limitation of the religious horizon—closer than even that of contemporary paganism—in no way diminished the force and moral influence of the teaching. There was indeed a common belief in the dwelling of the dead in a place of solemn and eternal silence, joyless and painless; but as this idea contained no ethical or religious element, we can well understand how prophecy should have passed it by unnoted.

There is one more characteristic to be observed in this short sketch of the Mosaism of the prophets; they had an immovable faith in the future. While the philosophers and poets among other nations could discover goodness and happiness only in the cradle of humanity, and were consumed with vain regrets over an irreparable loss, the prophets saw before them the realization of their hopes. The momentary empire of evil, the seeming triumph of strange gods, the persecutions which they themselves endured,—none of these things could daunt their boldness in proclaiming the ultimate victory of Jehovah and His kingdom. The very defeats which impaired the power of Judah, were in their eyes pledges of the providential direction

of its destinies ; and in the ruins which lay around them, they saw the possible foundations of a new social edifice. Even were the whole nation to be engulfed in one tremendous convulsion, from its tomb there would assuredly spring the germ of a new people, warned into wisdom by the wanderings and woes of its fathers. In order to attain so high an end, the prophets never ceased, indeed, to employ the gradual and natural means of educating the people. They allowed no difficulty to discourage them ; but their hope rested the more confidently on the miraculous power of the God of Israel, who was to bring about a better order of things by a change more direct, more rapid and radical. The nation was at length to be purified by one final chastisement, more terrible than any recorded in history ; the innocent were to pass with the guilty through this sea of blood and sorrow, and thus a remnant would be redeemed to whom pardon would be offered. After these terrible woes, a new era opened before the illuminated eyes of the prophets. They looked for and foretold the coming of a king, the representative of Jehovah, and anointed with His Spirit, who would set up again the throne of David, and take into his own hands the reins of a model theocratic government. Under him, righteousness and law were to maintain a perfect rule ; the glory of his name was to be the safeguard of the realm, and a lasting peace, founded upon holiness and piety such as the world had never yet seen, was to secure the happiness of all his subjects. This fair prospect, held before the eyes now of a corrupt court, now of a people decimated by war and famine, was depicted, in more and more ideal colours, till it ceased to have any direct relation to the experimental and the real.

We shall not carry further this theological analysis of the prophetic utterances, lest we should lose ourselves in details, and thus weaken the impression which we desire to produce upon the reader. We are anxious especially to give prominence to the ideas which subsequently exercised a marked influence upon that society which took the place of the ancient Hebrew people. There is, however, one closing remark to

make on the subject of the prophetic teaching. History gives us abundant evidence that the Jewish nation in these remote ages was inferior to the task assigned to them by Providence, and proved itself anything but docile under the Divine guidance. It is indeed astonishing that Mosaism should not have suffered more seriously from the incessant conflict with hostile and degrading influences. Its preservation was aided by the material and palpable form with which it was invested, which made a strong impression upon the minds of the people, and thus familiarized them with ideas which would otherwise have escaped them. This form was their worship, which consisted, as all know, primarily in a series of rites common to most ancient peoples. The priesthood, sacrifices, feasts, purifications, are institutions generally anterior to prophecy, and therefore independent of it; but they are not inimical to it. On the contrary, the prophet could adopt them as forms and symbols fitted to represent religious ideas. The sacrifices might keep alive the consciousness of sin, deepen the desire for reconciliation, and foster the feeling of pious gratitude; the feasts, rural and homely as they were in their origin, might be used to perpetuate memorable epochs in the history of the theocracy; the priesthood took charge of the worship, kept it true to its spiritual principle, and represented before the eyes of the people the superior dignity of the servant of Jehovah. But the prophets never attached any virtue to these things as means of sanctification; they repudiated them even with scorn whenever they were not sanctified by purity of heart. Their only value was as the expression of an inward disposition; their purpose was to serve as outward bonds to the theocratic society. For it must not be lost sight of that the Levitical worship is, in almost every aspect, rather the symbol of national relations than of individual feelings, and it cannot be too often repeated that Mosaism, in all the phases of its development, fails adequately to meet the needs and claims of the individual in the sphere of religion. So long as the idea which gave life to the worship was grasped by the conscience, the service could not degenerate into a mere

elaborate mechanical performance. The symbol need not stifle the spirit; and the prophets—whose interests were never confounded with those of the priestly caste, often hostile to them—laboured incessantly to guard the people against any mistake as to the relative value of these two elements.

It cannot then be said that Mosaism, regarded in its ideal essence, was the actual national religion of the ancient Jewish people. In speaking of it as such, too much honour is done to that people, or Mosaism itself is in danger of being too much degraded. It was the religion of some few, of a certain number of men, drawn together not only by community of ideas, but also by social relations, and chosen by Providence to commend it, and to instil into their countrymen those principles of faith and morals, the value of which they had been the first to recognize, and which they regarded as a sacred trust to be held by them through all the vicissitudes of the nation's fortune. The characteristics of prophecy and prophetic teaching were briefly these: a purer knowledge of God than was possessed by any people of antiquity; a truer appreciation of the duties of man towards his Creator; a right understanding of the real relation between the outward observance and the inward spirit of religion; just and exalted views as to that in which consists the happiness of a people; finally, a firm belief in the realization of a great ideal, unflinching courage, and a sublime perseverance in seeking perfection in the future. These are, at the same time, the characteristics which were to impress a peculiar stamp upon the nationality to be formed by the prophets.*

* To have discussed the doubtful positions explicitly maintained or clearly implied in this chapter would have extended the notes beyond reasonable limits. The real contents of Mosaism, and the extent to which it was the actual and living faith of the Jewish people in the time of our Lord, is a subject for a treatise rather than a chapter.—ED.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESTORATION.

JERUSALEM was destroyed, the Jewish nation dissolved. Through the cruel prudence of the conqueror, this was accomplished by means more effectual than fetters or the sword, namely, by the exile of all those who might have kept alive the feeling of nationality, and lent to it the support of intellect or fortune. Happily, there were among the exiles many who not merely deplored this terrible catastrophe as an accident, but regarded it as a merited chastisement. These men found hearers whom misfortune had prepared to listen, and zealous disciples, who carried on after them the regenerative work of the ancient prophets. Thus favoured by circumstances, apparently so unpropitious, ideas took root and bore fruit, on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris, which had found in Zion a barren and ungrateful soil. While in the mother-country, the bulk of the nation, deprived of its leaders, lived only to repair the material ravages of war, and were in danger of becoming confounded with the strange colonies newly introduced, a little band of chosen men were preparing in exile for a second conquest of Canaan, more sure and more glorious than the first, since it was to be won by spiritual weapons.

This restoration, destined to preserve the double patrimony of Israel, its soil and its faith, and thus to give new life to its hopes, is especially remarkable for the deep and complete revolution it wrought in the mind of the nation, and the conditions of its existence. It is obvious that the Jews, as we know them in our day, and as we see them in the pictures drawn by

the contemporaries of Jesus Christ, are a people altogether different from that to which the old prophets addressed themselves. The very name they bear is new, and represents a political and ecclesiastical nationality other than that of the comrades in arms of Joshua and David. The ancient people of Israel, composed of a large number of rival tribes, impatient of a central and organized government, had no bond of unity but the memory of a common origin—which could not restrain them from fratricidal wars—and the heritage of a remote revelation, against the laws of which they were in a state of permanent rebellion, and which was enforced only by the voice of preachers who could rarely gain attention. The principles of religion and morality promulgated by these teachers could only slowly and painfully permeate the masses. The imprudently warlike temper of the princes, and the exercise of a despotic government so much the more ill-judged that it was weak in self-defence, constantly counterbalanced civilizing influences, and long prevented the nation from casting off the rude manners of the desert, and rising above a religious syncretism bordering on polytheism.

All this was changed. A new nationality, religious rather than political in its origin and mode of existence, planted itself in Judah after the exile, and from that centre extended, insensibly and in a widening circle, the influence of its peculiar genius. No history is more remarkable than that of this nationality. Born amid the ruined heaps of a city visited with the curse of heaven; passing its childhood in the narrow limits of a colony where it had to wrestle for bare life with famine, with brigands, and the wild beasts of the desert; in its manhood, founding model institutions, cultivating successfully science and the sacred arts, and even planting again for a moment within its walls the tree of liberty, watered with the blood of its children; finally dragging out a decrepit existence, in exile for generation after generation. The psychological interest attaching to this history is very great. It gives us the key to more than one phenomenon which we witness in our own day; without it, the books of the apostles and the

facts which they relate remain in great part incomprehensible. Nevertheless, it is a history not yet written. The difficulties attending its early stages are not easily surmounted. It is not to be found complete and ready for use in any contemporary narratives. More than common acuteness is required in discovering the scattered materials, much patient labour in putting them together, more still in following out the organic evolutions of the nation's life. At the time when historical information is again full,—the time of the Romans and of the apostles,—we find among the Jews a number of institutions, relations, parties, ideas, customs, of the origin of which we have no record, and which belong indubitably to that obscure period which we might call the middle ages of sacred history. The task of the historian is to trace these institutions back to the germs, deposited in former times in the nation, which, developed into life during the painful travail of its new birth, have been fostered and strengthened under Divine protection, by the indefatigable labour of ten generations.

This is not the place to narrate that history in all its details. It lies too remote from the principal subject of our work to permit of our devoting to it any extended space. We shall do no more than describe the general phases of the revolution to which we have alluded, especially in their more direct relation to the facts which we shall have presently to study. It is not the outward framework of events which we purpose to trace in this rapid sketch. We may suppose our readers to be familiar with the facts relating to the successive return of an increasing number of Judæans, with their position among their brethren in Palestine, both well and ill disposed towards them, with the names of their chief legislators, with their social and political condition, their hopes, their failures and successes, and other cognate details to be found in books accessible to all. Our aim will be to bring out the spirit of these facts, to show their bearing and effects, and thus to connect them with the events and ideas which will claim our particular attention in the sequel of this narrative.

It is the more important to form a just idea of the causes

and of the nature of the change indicated, because a superficial estimate of its most striking phenomena has given currency to an unfounded prejudice, by which the observer is very likely to be misled. We read in many books, some of them very estimable, that the Jews during the exile underwent a complete metamorphosis through the influence of Babylonian and Persian civilization, that they adopted the ideas of the foreigner, even in religious matters, and lost the very language of their fathers in a new idiom. Such an explanation of the characteristic traits of Judaism after the exile is utterly false and inexact. The ruling feature of that Judaism was, on the contrary, strong and steady attachment to its national traditions, a religious patriotism ever tending to greater exclusiveness. This is, in brief, the true key to the spirit of restored Israel.

In their enforced exile, the men whose hearts still clung to their country, and who, no doubt, belonged for the most part to the theocratic party, had leisure to reflect upon the causes of the catastrophe which they had vainly striven to avert. Freed for the time from all active concern about public matters, they could meditate, and calculate the means of existence for a small nation like theirs, independently of all outward and local considerations. This they were the more likely to do, because the prospect of a return of fortune formed part of their deepest and firmest faith. Drawn together by a common calamity, and by a fellowship of hopes and regrets, these men formed the nucleus of a patriotic party, full of energy and noble feeling. With some, this patriotism, which was essentially religious in its origin and tendency, rose to prophetic enthusiasm, and fostered the hope of a glorious restoration, which their ardent imagination delighted to invest with ideal colours. Others, not less earnest, but with minds of a different mould, calmly studied the forms which the future society must assume, to assure its peace and independence. Their faith was the same as that which had been preached to their fathers; but they had learned their methods of government in that school of misfortune to which

their successors were subsequently indebted for so many salutary lessons.

The signal of return was given for the first time fifty years after the destruction of the temple. A small and poor colony established itself upon the ruins. Its means were so limited, and the obstacles it encountered so powerful, that a whole century passed before the new society gained any permanent hold, or could exert any spiritual influence around. But it had some decided advantages which the tenacious and vigorous spirit of its leaders turned to marvellous account. The nucleus of the colony was composed, in a very remarkable proportion, of families of priests, among whom the spirit of caste and hierarchical discipline had already a strong hold, or was easily established. The civil authorities did not interfere at all with the affairs of the colonists, whose poverty made them inoffensive. This very poverty, the absence of any affluent, privileged, or military class which would have given predominance to material interests, favoured the progress of thought and of theocratic institutions. It must not be forgotten that the new order of things was designed provisionally for a city still in great part in ruins; that the laws framed at first for a territory of a few square leagues, were easily put in force. The leaders, with prudent reserve, made no attempt to extend too rapidly the circle of their influence, lest it should be compromised, on ground not yet prepared to receive it; they preferred to consolidate their legislation in a sphere less brilliant but more readily moulded. The exile corresponds in the history of the Israelitish people, with that epoch in the life of man when, after many storms, and tumults, and sorrowful wanderings, he passes from the glowing illusions of youth to the calm maturity of manhood; he loses some of his enthusiasm for a noble cause, and the fire of passion, but he gains in the transition strength of moral nature and perseverance of will—a gain far outweighing the loss.

It is not difficult to recognize the spirit which animated the young republic, and inspired the laws by which it was to be governed. The Mosaic ideas, so constantly urged and so coldly

received during the whole prophetic era, were henceforward accepted in their entirety. Absolute monotheism, with all its results, was now a fact established in the religious conscience of the nation. The theocracy was the more readily accepted as the natural form of government, that there was now no other national power to dispute its rights, and that the narrowness of the territory and the small number of inhabitants rendered its application simple and easy. It was consistent with that species of autonomy which the Persian administration established or tolerated in the provinces of its vast empire. Nor were the maxims of the prophets forgotten in other relations no less important. In reviving the old beliefs, and surrounding them with a social organization such as they had never before been able to create, men were not likely to forget the promises assured to them. The very fulfilment of the terrible menaces of Jehovah had given so strong a pledge of His faithfulness, that the new Israel would cling the more closely to the promise of good. The more heavily His hand had weighed upon Israel in the past, the more brilliant seemed the aureola of future blessedness and glory.

A wide field of activity was thus opened to the intelligent leaders, who directed the republic of the Jews during the first century after the exile. Political society was to them almost a *tabula rasa* ready to receive their creative fiats. Profiting by existing laws and traditions, and still more by the lessons of their own experience, they sought first to form the people they governed into a perfectly homogeneous body, allowing no access to any element which might disturb the legal order, and the social and religious rule they designed to establish. They began by pursuing a system of exclusion towards those of their own nation who had remained in the country, and whose monotheism had become doubtful, or who had formed alliances of blood with the foreign settlers. Mixed marriages—so common in the East—were strictly forbidden or forcibly broken. The centralization of worship, vainly attempted before, was easily established now that the whole State consisted of one city and its suburbs. For

the future, whoever would be an Israelite indeed, and share in the blessings promised to the children of Abraham, must worship and offer sacrifices at Jerusalem. That which had been at first a desperate expedient of monotheism fighting for existence, became the most effective governmental maxim of a policy which believed itself eternal, and knew no temporizing. The one sanctuary was placed in the charge of a priesthood interested in its preservation and glory. From the Levitical caste, a small number of privileged families were chosen for the most honourable offices of the priesthood, so that the interests of the hierarchy might be made the more secure. The whole caste had beside a monarchical organization, so much the more powerful that it was the only authority of the kind in the little state. A fixed revenue raised the priest above want. The worship, regulated in its minute details, attested subsequently by its growing splendour the progressive extension of its influence, and the augmentation of the number of the faithful.

Wise laws regulated also the civil relations. These were calculated, not for a great nation spread over a wide territory, but for a concentrated and small population. Regard for landed property was the basis of this legislation; the rights of hereditary possession and of transfer were determined with a view to preserve the patrimony of the family, the intention being to provide against pauperism. In theory, these laws were ably conceived, but experience in this as in other cases soon showed the impossibility of regulating the fortune of individuals by agrarian systems. It is scarcely necessary to say that these laws, which we need not now enumerate, were adapted for a society possessing communal self-government, but not political independence; they did not comprehend the higher administration. The legislator laboured, not for a body politic, but for an ecclesiastical community. All he had to do was to assure to this community its peculiar character, for in this lay the pledge of the future. The execution of this idea, which was perceived with the eye of genius, and pursued with the energy of heroism, renders striking testimony to these

men, most of them unknown, who succeeded at length in realizing the thought of Moses, and crowning the work of the prophets. They did their work, no doubt, according to the spirit of their time, and the measure of their circumstances; their efforts were not consecrated by the sacred and sublime inspiration of their great models; but, on the other hand, they had the habit of acting, practical aptitude, and the privilege of a more immediate success.

The result achieved is no less admirable than the efforts which led to it. The struggle with poverty, the deplorable scarcity of all material resources, was very exhausting to the young state, and often threatened its infant life. But the moral force of its leaders and people triumphed over all obstacles. From time to time succours arrived, especially new colonies of Israelites emigrating from the interior of the empire. The new comers were never numerous enough to supersede their predecessors, but were, on the contrary, easily absorbed by them, and readily imbibed the national spirit and religion, which it was of such moment to preserve intact. This amalgamation was accomplished with the less difficulty since the members of the little community, whatever the date of their settlement in Palestine, belonged almost exclusively to the ancient tribe or kingdom of Judah—that is to say, to a population among whom the family traditions had been chiefly formed under the influence of the prophetic teaching. This circumstance led finally to the adoption of the names Judah, Judaism, Jews, to designate the Israelitish nationality, as it was constituted at Jerusalem after the return from the exile.

This nationality, however, with the broad views of the future peculiar to it, was not to restrict its beneficial influence within so narrow a sphere. The sphere widened, but the name was retained, as a monument destined to preserve the memory of those who had laid a second time the foundations of the nation and of its sanctuary. Neighbouring countries soon turned their eyes to that sanctuary. All who had belonged to the ancient kingdom of Judah rallied to the metropolis; the numerous Israelites scattered to the east of the Jordan, on the

borders of the desert, or in the valleys of Lebanon, hastened thither, so soon as the fame of the restored temple reached their ears. Only the population of the ancient kingdom of Ephraim kept apart, whether repelled by the suspicion with which they had been at first treated, or still retaining the old antagonism which had separated that tribe from Judah through so many centuries, and the rancour of which outlived every revolution. The Samaritans—for thus they will be henceforward called—formed a separate religious community, never able to hold its own against its neighbours, but maintaining until this day a miserable existence, and ever cherishing the memory of its ancient heroes, and its faith in the blessing of Joseph. In all other directions, the torch kindled at the altar in Jerusalem flung a widening radiance, and the law which reigned undisputed within the walls of the holy city, had soon nothing to fear but that the growing number of its disciples, or their removal from the centre of government, should enfeeble its power.

CHAPTER III.

THE SYNAGOGUE.

THE best and most salutary result of this new order of things was the national education of the people. This arose gradually out of the public and periodical reading of the law appointed by the heads of the little colony at Jerusalem; but it soon took the form of regular religious assemblies. The institution of the synagogues was the complement, or we should rather say the indispensable counterpoise, of the centralization of worship, strictly so called, or of the restriction of the sacrifices to one locality. By this institution, the religious wants of the people found frequent and suitable satisfaction. The weekly holiday was thus employed nobly and usefully, and the hours of edification common to the whole people, strengthened in them the feeling of national unity, no less than did the great days of pilgrimage and sacrifice, which assembled them from time to time in one place. The instruction was given methodically; it was based upon the law, the whole of which was read in the hearing of the people during the course of the year. In connection with the reading, homiletic exhortations were delivered, derived in part, no doubt, from the writings of the ancient prophets. Subsequently, portions of these writings were also read. But the most abundant source of teaching and edification was history. The pious traditions concerning the patriarchs, which had come down from earlier ages, soon became familiar to the people, and formed the common bond of all. The early history thus passing from mouth to mouth would very naturally receive additions, which, in their turn,

might be handed down from generation to generation before assuming a written form. The story of the patriarchs was followed by that of the bondage in Egypt, of the deliverance by Moses, the miracles in the desert, and finally of the conquest of the promised land, with which closed the cycle of that glorious and sacred epopeia, which the whole world knew by heart. The history appeared always closely associated with the legislation, as may still be seen from the simple reading of the books which bear the name of Moses and Joshua. History was thus raised to the level of legal authority, and the law, in its turn, linked to such histories, was brought closer home to the people. The later periods of the life of Israel were not made so prominently the subject of popular teaching. Still a series of names and of facts was handed down, connected by a method as simple as instructive, and calculated to make an impression on the mind by its monotony, without overburdening the memory.

With such an organization, the Israelitish people could accept and acquiesce in that centralization of the priestly worship, which had been so repugnant to its forefathers, and which legislators had in vain attempted to enforce. On this system, the mass of the Neo-Judaic population soon reached a degree of religious civilization and of purity in spiritual and moral ideas, to which the prophets had failed to lead their ancestors, and by which they left far behind all contemporary nations. This same organization was moreover so elastic, and cast its roots so deeply into the life of the nation, that wherever Jews were gathered in any number, the synagogue soon became their centre, and at the same time a fresh pledge of the continuance of the new institution. Every branch of the great family, however insignificant, was thus provided with the means of receiving nourishment from the same sap which sustained and strengthened the life of the whole. In every part of the world, however remote from the centre, the men who felt themselves called to such a work, found the opportunity to do their part in supplying the great needs of public education.

We are thus brought to notice a fact equally curious and

important in its influence on the ulterior development of Judaism. As this activity in teaching gained favour, and the disposition to form the minds and conduct of the people by preaching and the study of the law became preponderant, a result manifested itself not at all contemplated by the restorers of the Jewish community, and of which we should vainly seek any trace in the letter of the law which served them as a guide. In proportion as Judaism, thus organized, became consolidated, the sacerdotal hierarchy declined. The dignity and influence of the priesthood were confined to Jerusalem, since its functions were performed there alone. If its members settled in any other spot, it must be for some end apart from their proper office. The place of the priest was by the altar. In the synagogue, every man of talent sufficiently well informed was on a par with him. It even appears that the priests were not for the most part men of calibre to bear favourably this competition. Theology and jurisprudence—twin sciences among the Jews, or more properly forming only one science—were not restricted to the Levitical caste. In the capital, and in the daily exercise of their office, the position of the priests might be materially very good, but they sank into comparative insignificance in the presence and under the spiritual influence of a number of men highly endowed, full of ardour for sacred studies, and finding abundant scope for their talents in the numerous synagogues of a large city. The written law, sufficing for all needs—at least after its definitive promulgation in the age of Ezra and Nehemiah—did away with the necessity for oracles, or mysterious revelations communicated through the priests. The sphere of public life was still very limited, and no great questions were likely to arise, for the solution of which recourse must be had to expedients of this nature. The letter, rigid and inflexible as it always is, since it met the spirit of the age, took the place of every other power. Even the genius of the individual leader, which had occupied so distinguished a part in the preceding period, gave place to the regular order of law. History itself came to a pause, congealed between the high banks of its

narrow bed ; for a people without political importance, living in quiet obedience to its own laws, has no history. It was inevitable that the priestly power should fade insensibly in presence of this ideal and impalpable power of the letter. The important personages in the community, after a little while, were no longer the priests, whose business was simply to slay animals, and preside over ceremonies which by their repetition lost significance and interest. The leading spirits were the teachers of the law, or, as we should call them in our day, the theologians and jurisconsults, the representatives of learning and study. These rose insensibly to the first rank. Their decisions, constantly multiplying, were transmitted orally in the schools from one generation to another, and passed from theory into practice, by the application which the judges made of them in their decrees. The class of doctors soon outweighed in the social scale the priestly caste. Many of the laws passed in favour of the latter remained inoperative, or soon fell into desuetude. Other laws, framed with a view to a very limited geographical sphere, lost their force as the horizon of the nation widened. The Jewish people, with its cosmopolitan tendencies, could not fail to outgrow a legislation which had imposed upon every Israelite, as a duty, to present himself three times in the year before the altar of the temple at Jerusalem. Thus the priestly caste, which at the time of the restoration had organized with a firm and strong hand the foundations of a nationality never thenceforth to be destroyed, was fain to retire from the direction of its own glorious work, and to surrender it to other powers, less fettered by an inflexible form. The synagogue was destined to supersede the temple. The Levitical priesthood finally disappeared without a trace, and still Judaism stood firm, having lost nothing of its vital energy.

We shall not here enter upon other details to account for the remarkable historical phenomenon, sufficiently explained by that which has been already said, of the Jewish remnant retaining its nationality in spite of all foreign influences tending to destroy it—influences which in other cases had most

completely answered their end. Whatever judgment may be formed of the fact itself, there can be no doubt that to the synagogue more than to any other cause, it owes its origin. For all the other causes which we may cite as concurring to produce this phenomenon, are closely connected with those on which we have already dwelt. We may point to circumcision, a custom of the utmost importance in this aspect, both on account of the ridicule which was entailed on the Jews by its observance, and of the religious convictions and superstitious prejudices associated with it. We may mention the cosmopolitanism of the Jewish people, by which they were so strikingly distinguished from all other nations; the ancient world shows no other instance in which an ideal and religious fatherland met the needs of a numerous nation, and stood in instead of an actual and civic patrimony. We may mention the state of dependence and oppression under which the capital groaned, and which kept awake the hatred to the foreigner. This galling and often intolerable yoke constantly had the effect of dispersing the inhabitants of Palestine, and driving them—sometimes by force, sometimes by their own choice—to a distance from the land cultivated by their fathers. Losing by degrees the taste for agriculture, they finally threw themselves heart and soul into purely commercial operations, which procured them more personal wealth, and fostered energy of action and independence of character, but which at the same time excited against them the prejudices of the lower classes. Time does not allow us to pursue the practical operation of all these causes. We have sufficiently established the main fact, that of the birth and development of Judaism—that is, of a religion and a nationality, widely differing from the religious and political spirit of the ancient Israelites, as this is embodied in their sacred books; we have seen the religious polity striking home to the conscience of the people, and giving it strength and stability; we have now to see to what new evolutions of the national spirit it ultimately led.

We have observed that Judaism was formed in an extremely limited sphere and on the simplest premises. Its special and

peculiar features it had acquired by its isolation from the rest of the world; it intended to preserve them by the same means. But such an isolation became impossible as a continuance; political conditions did not permit it, and the cosmopolitanism, which was the natural result of those conditions, finally broke down the barriers raised with so much care. Influences from without began to make themselves felt in that society, long forgotten by the world and forgetful of it. New ideas arose antagonistic to the old. Philosophical principles, social theories, habits of life—all were, if not called in question, at least brought face to face with new principles, theories, habits, and thus became the subject of inquiry and conflicting opinion. This process rarely ended in apostasy; on the contrary, it often resulted in a more determined clinging to old traditions, but sometimes it also led to various modifications more important than they at first appeared. For in every conflict, moral as well as physical, there is expenditure of force as well as increase by its exercise, and if the opposition became stronger in one portion of the nation, another yielded to the ascendancy of the new principle.

There was yet another germ of change in the religious beliefs which formed the basis and the strength of Judaism. During ten centuries, those beliefs, defended, preached, cherished by a succession of noble spirits, but little relished by the masses, had been compelled to maintain a constant struggle for their own existence, against all human weaknesses, mental and moral. Now that they had prevailed so as to gain a durable and decisive hold over the minds of men, they could not at once abjure the vital power which had secured their final triumph; they could not cease to supply food for reflection and study, which had so successfully developed them hitherto. Their intrinsic value and unexhausted wealth could not fail still to attract, and stimulate to exercise, minds peculiarly disposed to analysis. But such a process of thought ever contains, as we know, the germ of divisions; it gives birth to opinions, and these bear the stamp of certain individualities, determined by a thousand circumstances which elude the law of uniformity.

From all these elements there were developed by degrees the various tendencies, in the origin and conflict of which consists the interest of the history of Judaism. Theoretically, no doubt, there is no such thing as a period of pause and stagnation in the history of a nation, especially when it has not yet reached the stage of decrepitude ; nevertheless we think we may fairly designate the period between the restoration of the Jewish community under the laws promulgated by Ezra and Nehemiah, and the more general dispersion of the people,—that is, between Xerxes and the first Ptolemies,—as an age, not without life, but without any apparent or convulsive movement; a period of repose, during which the religious nationality of the Jews had the leisure necessary to fortify itself within its natural limits, and the time to organize itself upon a basis sufficiently broad to admit of its extending itself yet more widely, as it awoke to a fuller comprehension of its own nature and mission.

CHAPTER IV.

P H A R I S A I S M.

WE have, unhappily, no written record of this transition period. But by the first faint light that falls upon the history after an age of darkness, the traces of incipient division are already visible. We at once discover unmistakable indications of opposing tendencies, which in their operation will either exaggerate, modify, or undermine the principles out of which they arose.

There is no great difficulty in comprehending these various tendencies in their leading features and mutual relations, provided they are traced at the outset to their true origin, and are not regarded from a false point of view. Unhappily, many of them have often been so regarded, especially some, the name of which has become very familiar from its frequent recurrence in the New Testament, and which, by that very fact, have been peculiarly exposed to the misrepresentations of tradition and prejudice. For example, frequent mention is made in our contemporary literature of Jewish *sects*, though no designation could be more ill chosen, to characterize the principal parties which we shall have to pass in review. For the very term *sect* implies schism, and supposes the existence of some social organization or religious theory which the sectary abandons, but which continues to exist none the less after his secession.* This definition is absolutely inapplicable to most of the relations which will come under our notice. We shall not pause here

* They were not "sects," but "parties," as we speak of the Evangelical "party," and the Ritualistic "party," in the English Church.—ED.

to refute erroneous opinions; we shall leave our representation of men and things in their true order, to correct by implication current errors.

We shall first turn our attention to that party which devoted itself especially to the continuance of the national work, by consolidating it and carrying out all its legitimate consequences. Among the principles of Judaism, the relative and practical value of which might become matter of question, it guarded jealously that of the separateness of Israel from all pagan nations. This principle was based upon and upheld by the same idea of the theocracy, which had formed the basis of prophetic teaching. This isolation, once the most powerful instrument in creating the nationality, seemed now the surest means of preserving it intact, and became the goal of all the efforts made by men among whom the old traditions had lost nothing of their prestige. But this same principle led them into exaggeration in yet another direction. They affected extraordinary rigour in the performance of the rites designed to ensure Levitical purity, and in the end went so far as to consider themselves defiled by contact even with other Jews, who, while faithful to the law, were not as rigorous as themselves in ritual observances. Hence, doubtless, arose the name by which they were known—Pharisees, or the “Separated.” It is easy to understand how, being once thus distinguished from the mass, whether in public opinion or in their own, they would naturally draw closer and closer together, form a more compact and united body, and soon extend the same solidarity to principles on which they had not at first held any distinctive views. Thus the elders tell us that they preached the doctrine of determinism, or of the dependence of the human will in relation to that of God, and that they recognized the existence of angels and spirits, and their connection with the destinies of men. It would be erroneous, however, to regard details of this nature as exhibiting the true characteristics of the party.* We shall do more wisely to lay

* But there is a vital relation between these details and the fundamental idea of the party.—ED.

stress only on that which was essential and fundamental in its tenets and practice.

Politically, the Pharisees were champions of the national independence, and were ever ready to strike a blow for liberty when a favourable occasion offered. As religious men, they were firmly attached to the faith of their fathers, and in especial to the hopes of the theocracy. They devoted themselves assiduously to give effect to the means of national education created by their predecessors, and laboured especially to annex to the popular teaching given in the synagogue, the scientific instruction of the school, by which the masses might be rendered more pliant to control, more thoughtful, and better prepared to meet and co-operate in the great crises of the future.* By the discipline of the schools, a bond of solidarity was established among them as to their traditionary principles, and they gained in influence without losing the means of keeping pace with the requirements of the age. For while they held the letter of the law as inviolably sacred, and invariably made it the basis of all their decisions, they understood how, by the arts of exegesis which they assiduously studied, to derive from it such rules and applications as might be called for, whether in the social relations of life, or in the theoretical studies of the school.

In politics they were therefore what we should call patriots, while in religious matters we should class them as orthodox. In these two relations they manifested very commendable qualities, with the corresponding defects. Far from being mere theorists, satisfied with the possession of a system more or less complete, they formed a very active party, and took a deep interest in every phase of the national life. Nothing can be more incorrect, therefore, than to describe them as a sect. If their theories did not always immediately assume a practical form, the fault certainly was not with them.

In the political struggles of their nation they were ever ready to sacrifice fortune and life, when an insurrection presented any chance of success. From their ranks came forth

* On Jewish Schools see a very interesting article on *Education* by Dr. Ginsburg, in Kitto's *Biblic. Cyclo.* (Alexander's edition).—ED.

the heroic phalanx of the Maccabees and their adherents, who struck at the heart of the power of the Seleucides, and once more unfurled the banner of freedom from the walls of Zion. Subsequently, when their former leaders had become kings, and when dynastic interests prevailed over those of the republican theocracy, it was the Pharisees who offered so determined and desperate a resistance to these descendants of the liberators. Then once again they lent them their support, when their name might serve as a centre around which to rally the people in opposition to the foreign oppressor. They were the cause of perpetual embarrassment and difficulty to the government and policy of Herod; it was they who had the audacity constantly to harass the Roman Colossus, and who never recoiled when he raised his mailed hand to crush them. Everywhere and always, they held that the first condition of realizing the brilliant hopes based upon their religious faith, was the securing and assuring the national independence. The sincerity of their convictions is attested by the unwavering constancy with which they were held; and results, lasting through more than twenty centuries even to the present day, prove the power and persistency of their efforts. But the inadequacy of their material and political resources to cope with those of the pagan powers, at length changed their opposition into the resistance of desperation, and filled the hearts of the people with bitterness and blind passions. These passions deepened the gulf dividing the Jews from all other nations, and without bringing any advantage to the good cause, raised difficulties and dangers in its way, wherever the hostility thus challenged found an opportunity of manifesting itself. Under these influences, the feeling of nationality gradually became political fanaticism, and engaged the people in incessant contests, provoked by an instinctive antipathy to the foreigner which no considerations of prudence could quell. The political dissolution of the country was in part thus hastened; but even this catastrophe redounded in a manner to the glory of Pharisaism. For if, alone of all ancient communities, Judaism was able to survive such a crushing calamity, it was a proof

that no other nationality was founded on a basis so firm and so independent of any political form whatever.

The religious tendencies of this party led it in the same way first into exaggerations and then into errors more lamentable still. Their faithful attachment to the principles and traditions of their forerunners, combined with the exclusively dialectic spirit of the Jewish schools, led the Pharisees into studies of petty detail altogether barren of profit. Their superstitious regard for the letter did not prevent their devoting themselves to the most arbitrary exegesis that can be imagined, and extorting from the text visionary prognostics of the future, and ritual and ascetic regulations of the utmost minuteness. It was the unhappy fate of this party generally—worthy of esteem as in many other respects it was—to witness the drying up, in great measure by their own fault,* of that fountain of noble inspirations which had in the early days when Judaism was as yet unborn, produced so many marvellous results. Its divine breath no longer animated its members, and when their practical activity found itself restricted, they began to expend what remained of their intellectual life in those hollow forms and minute observances which have been the most inalienable apanage of the Jewish people. This last tendency of the spiritual activity of the Pharisees to multiply forms without any inner and organic life—like those fossils which outlast all the revolutions of the globe—had another effect still more to be deplored. It could not but weaken and corrupt the ethical essence of Judaism, the most precious heritage derived from the prophets. At a period considerably more remote than this, collections of moral aphorisms (which have come down to us; some of them associated with very ancient names) show that already, side by side with the manly and

* That divine inspiration required a special susceptibility in those who received it is certain; but is it equally certain that the cessation of prophecy four hundred years before Christ was the effect of the Pharisaic spirit? The religious life of the Jewish people had been in a far worse condition in earlier ages than it was during the first hundred years after the return from the exile.—ED.

severe beauty of Jewish morality, there was the complete and characteristic absence of tender feeling, of heart-life, and a very decided tendency to follow the guidance of self-interest. Asceticism, and still more casuistry—that canker of all morality—began to colour the morality of the Pharisees, and if, under such influences, virtue and generous sentiments were yet propagated and exhibited in the life,—and in view of the many noble characters made known to us in their history we are far from saying this was not the case,—the school at least did all in its power to foster in the people an utterly wrong estimate of the relative importance of the substance and the form.

We cannot leave this subject without calling the attention of our readers to a circumstance extremely important in the history of Judaism, and which on the first view appears to be in open contradiction of that which we have just said. We refer to the doctrine of the resurrection. It is a fact admitted in our day by all unprejudiced exegetes, and which should never have been denied, that this doctrine was never taught by the prophets previous to the exile, especially in any close association with the idea of a future reward. But it is a fact as indubitably established, that at the time of the appearing of Christ these two ideas formed an integral part of the popular beliefs among the Jews, and that the Pharisaic party had notably made this one of the principal points of its teaching. From these two facts, critics were at one time disposed to derive the theory, that the Jews had become acquainted with these doctrines during the exile, and more particularly through their contact with Parseism, or the religion of Zoroaster; and that they had appropriated them with some modifications of slight essential importance. It did not occur to the supporters of this theory, that it must involve one of two admissions—either that the Pharisees were unaware of this foreign origin of the doctrine, or that they were not sufficiently strong to oppose the intrusion of so potent and practical an idea. But these explanations appear to us inadmissible. We hold that the natural and progressive development of Messianic hopes would lead in the end to such a doctrine of the resurrection

as we find in the later history of the Jews—a doctrine ever closely associated in their minds with those very hopes. Those hopes were always, as we know, the palladium of the theocratic party, and would naturally be so also in the case of the successors of that party, the Pharisees. The justness of our explanation is supported by the fact that, among the Jews, the resurrection appears always as the direct means, the necessary condition of the foundation of the Messianic kingdom upon earth. In support of the other theory, the fact has been urged that the devil of Jewish theology bears a close resemblance to Ahriman. But the utmost that can be conceded on this point is, that some foreign elements became blended with the substance of the national belief as gathered from history. The resemblance is indeed rather a matter of modern speculation than of popular and primitive belief. We may add that the Pharisaic party, in taking under its patronage the ideas of which we have been speaking, gave an important impetus to the religion of the prophets, and rendered an immense service first to Judaism itself, and then to humanity at large. For it is easy to comprehend that Gospel preaching, if it had had to address itself to a people destitute of any religious conception of the future, would have been ineffectual or impossible. It must also be remarked that the Pharisaic party laid no claim to the glory of invention or discovery, but that, true to its principles, it proclaimed the doctrine in question as that which in truth it was, the natural and necessary consequence of the traditional teachings which had descended from age to age from the days of Moses.

Our conclusion, then, in brief is this: that in the hands of the Pharisees Judaism finally become petrified, and has attained to the immortality of the mummy only through the possession of other and more noble elements, which do not belong exclusively to any one nationality. This judgment of ours is based provisionally on a general estimate of men and things. It will find more exact expression when we come to place in juxtaposition the principle of Pharisaism and that of the Gospel. Here we have been seeking to take a historical

view of that which will presently have to be judged from the standpoint of religion and Christianity, or rather that which has already for eighteen centuries been judged by a sentence against which there is no appeal. The judgment of history can only be fairly pronounced from a contemporary point of view, and being thus purely relative, it may differ from that arrived at by a consideration of principles, without being therefore in itself false. Thus the apostle Paul, Christian as he was, could still continue to boast of having been once a Pharisee, and even a little of being one still.* Principles praiseworthy in theory, are no absolute preservative against practical errors, and a party ought not to be identified with the totality of its members, just as, on the other hand, encomiums merited by individuals are not necessarily bestowed on the banner under which they serve.

At all events, it is certain that the Pharisees were the creators and preservers of the Judaism of to-day, and by that very fact are the authors of a phenomenon unparalleled in history, the founders and organizers of a social and religious form which undoubtedly offers a broad field to the critic, which is perhaps one vast mistake, but which commands the admiration of the historian by its very vitality, and by the precious heritage which it once preserved in the midst of perils without number, till under the guidance of other and wiser hands that heritage ceased to be the majorat of one people, and became the patrimony of the whole human race. The Pharisees have shared, it may be said in all respects, the fate of the Jesuits, that of seeing great merits obliterated by faults no less great, especially by an equivocal and unsound morality, and of having been in the end, and in spite of their decried name, the firmest supports of a Church the providential destinies of which are not yet fulfilled.

Pharisaism is then the most powerful exponent of the ideas and tendencies which from the first were the vital element of the new Judaic community, constituted at Jerusalem after the return from the exile. As is universally the case in human

* Acts xxiii. 6 ; Gal. i. 14 ; Phil. iii. 5, etc.

affairs, it was the imperfect, defective, erroneous side of this Judaism which found fullest development. They were the principles more or less false, the forms more or less accidental, which finally became dominant, and assumed to be the substance of Judaism, while the nobler elements, of which it contained a large proportion, stifled under such pressure, and fettered in their action, were obliged to free themselves and seek elsewhere and under other forms, their legitimate expression. All that we shall be able to discover then of life and movement among the Jewish people, must be regarded as an organic reaction against Pharisaism, against its obstinate separatism, and its increasing barrenness—a reaction which we shall find varying greatly in its principles, and very unequal in its methods and in intrinsic importance.

CHAPTER V.

S A D D U C E E I S M.

THE influence most diametrically opposed to that of the Pharisees was Sadduceeism. This name, of doubtful origin, which may perhaps be simply a protest against the exclusive appropriation by the Pharisees of the right and honour of the Jewish name, designates a party still less understood and more falsely judged, if that be possible, than that of the Pharisees, and to which at any rate the name of sect is still more inappropriate. In its commencement, undoubtedly, Sadduceeism was nothing but a refusal to acquiesce in the extravagances of ritual and ascetic formalism; it is not open to the faintest imputation of heresy. On the contrary, there would be more reason for saying that in the outset, the Pharisees were the neologians. Their particular doctrines were additions made to the law, while the Sadducees professed exclusive adherence to the law itself. This is the explanation we accept of their aversion to traditionalism, with its religious and ascetic demands, and of their rejection of the doctrine of the resurrection. But as a party, led on by the natural course of things to sustain a prolonged contest on the arena of public and social life, they also in the end became involved in party politics, and assumed an attitude of hostility to the Pharisees on points which had at first been quite indifferent to them. Less popular with the people, they were more ready to acquiesce in the political relations with the foreigner which had been entailed by the national misfortunes, and they were rather disposed to live in peace with a world which could neither be conquered

nor absorbed. They even went so far as to inquire what good and profit that world might have to offer; they ceased to despise its pleasures or its wisdom, and finally were disposed to share with it an empire of which they could no longer hope for the monopoly. The ideas and forms of Judaism, as they had developed themselves during the first two centuries after the exile, were acknowledged and adopted by the Sadducees. They were distinguished from the Pharisees primarily in this: that they did not seek, as did their rivals, to meet the successive and growing needs of civil society and philosophic thought, by purely national development. The principle adopted by the Pharisees tended to restrict the life of the people within more and more exclusive and narrow bounds, while the first condition of true progress, alike in the social and intellectual world, is free intercommunion and exchange. The Sadducees, on the other hand, acquiesced with tolerable complacency in the government of the foreigners, and in the sway exercised by them in the general sphere of civilization. To resist an influence daily becoming more powerful, they held to be both foolish and futile;—foolish, since if such resistance were successful, little would be gained in the end; futile, since with the means at their disposal, defeat would be certain and fatal in its effects. Under the Persian rule, this tendency was yet perhaps only in germ, and had hardly acquired a conscious existence, so that Nehemiah could be at the same time a legislator of the Pharisees at Jerusalem, and a humble courtier at Susa. But it manifested itself as a principle and a party maxim in the Macedonian period; finally, in the time of the Romans, the party became a power in the nation—a power which was constrained, however, to seek strength and support beyond the nation itself, and among its foreign rulers, since it had no rooted hold of the masses, and was not upheld by the sympathies of the multitude. In truth, the Sadducees, who according to all appearance were in their origin a sort of sacerdotal aristocracy, were never a popular party. The masses were more impressed by the appearance of severer sanctity among the Pharisees, and instinctively hated those who courted

alliance with the foreigner. Thus the Sadducean party became ultimately a political coterie, and as such necessarily disappeared when, in consequence of the fall of Jerusalem, questions of government ceased to be agitated. It should be unreservedly admitted that politically they were wiser than the Pharisees, and that they are free from responsibility in the final catastrophe of the Jewish state. It ought to be acknowledged that they scorned to purchase by hypocrisy an influence over the populace which they could not gain by lawfully-merited affection. But it is nevertheless true that the majority of them, in seeking the friendship of the Greeks and Romans, and in serving the political ends of the foreigner, had in view their own personal advantage, and were almost as ready to sacrifice the religious as the civil interests of their nation.

We repeat, then, the assertion we have already made, that the Sadducees are even more inaptly than the Pharisees described as a *sect*—that is, as a party bound together by some special theological or ecclesiastical system. We should be at a loss indeed to define exactly their doctrinal tenets. As the opponents of Pharisaic Judaism, they were characterized chiefly by a cold neutrality, and by the negations more or less emphatic with which they met the dogmatism of that party. But no school or sect can live by negations. Perhaps their most positive and characteristic feature, apart from the general principles of the Mosaic religion, was a certain predilection for foreign customs and ideas, a bias more or less strongly manifested according to the character and circumstances of the individuals, and as a general rule bearing less upon dogmas and theories than upon the forms of social life. If we were engaged now upon a political history of the Jews, we should find it an easy task to point out the maxims which guided the Sadducees as a body. We might characterize them as the servile faction in the age of the war of independence waged against the domination of the Seleucides; later, under the Asmoneans, they appear as the political and dynastic party; and finally, in the fanatic and desperate insurrection against Roman rule, they are the moderate section of the nation; but

these are not the characteristics of a *sect*. Such a designation is no more applicable to the Sadducees than to the Herodians—that is, to the Jews who had embraced the cause of the family of Herod, in opposition to the patriot and republican party. Nor does it concern us here to inquire to what extent the members of this party naturalized the vices as well as the arts and sciences of paganism; for such questions have no connection with a system of theology or philosophy. For our especial purpose, it will be enough to verify the important fact, that among the Sadducees the very basis of Judaism, the idea of the theocracy, was shaken, for the simple reason that that idea, both in prophetic and Pharisaic Mosaism, supposed a separateness of Israel from all other nations, incompatible with the cosmopolitan tendencies of the Sadducean party. From the decline of the theocratic principle, there necessarily resulted the decadence of other ideas, which flowed from it when it was held in all its fulness and force. The Messianic doctrines and hopes, of which the dogma of the resurrection is an integral part, would necessarily be regarded by the Sadducees as chimeras, or even as political offences and revolutionary maxims. Caiaphas and Pilate here met on common ground, and the high priest showed himself even more desperately determined than the procurator, to purchase the peace of the empire by a sentence of cold-blooded cruelty. That sentence seemed doubtless the surest means of quelling the imminent rising of Roman arms, but by condemning the innocent it only the better fulfilled the inscrutable purposes of Providence, laying the foundation of a freedom such as men had never before known, and which they are still scarcely able to appreciate.

We may conclude, then, that the Sadducees happily escaped the hollow and burdensome formalism of the Pharisees, and were free from their narrowness and petty scrupulosity, but that in things more essential they had wandered much further from the spirit of the prophets, and that in losing their faith in the nationality of Israel, they had, at the same time, lost in large measure the religious convictions of their countrymen. With as many errors, they had less superstition and more indif-

ference ; with as much egoism, more prudence and less nobleness ; with as many faults, more success and less merit. Such is a fair estimate of Sadduceeism in contrast to Pharisaism, its most direct and constant opponent, an adversary repeatedly defeated, and yet, in spite of every crushing blow, unquestionably conqueror at last. The Sadducees as a party lamentably degraded Judaism ; the Pharisees made it a lifeless petrification.

The sketch we have just given is simply designed to present general considerations, having reference to the mental progress made during an age of ancient history no less interesting than obscure and neglected ; also to throw some light upon phenomena closely connected with the most remarkable and glorious revolution that ever took place in the sphere of religious thought. We may therefore refrain from entering into fuller detail on various special points, the study of which would complete the parallel we have just traced. It will have been already seen that all that is commonly supposed to form the respective codes of faith of these two so-called sects, is in truth only the natural consequence of the point of view or of the national position which they occupied. We shall devote presently a special chapter to the consideration of certain doctrinal theories, developed and propagated in the Jewish schools, and which deserve the more particular attention of those who desire to study the sources of Christian theology.

The inaccurate estimate commonly formed of the two parties in question, is somewhat excused by the nature of the sources generally consulted. The writers of the New Testament mention both parties only incidentally, and in view of certain special relations ; it does not devolve upon them in any instance to rise to the height of the historical point of view, from which they could command the facts in their broad bearing. They tell us what the Pharisees and Sadducees were in relation to Jesus and His Church ; it was not their province to tell us what they were in themselves, and as members of the Jewish nation. On this point, the historian Josephus, who of all ancient writers ought here to be the safest guide, has helped rather to mislead than to rectify the judgment. Placed in the most favourable

position possible for explaining to us the events of his time, by the causes more or less obscure which gave rise to them, he was either too little of a philosopher to discern those causes, or had too strong a personal interest in drawing over them a deeper veil. His writings bear stronger evidence of critical trifling and of petulant self-love, than of the faithfulness of the historian, and the devotedness of the patriot. A cringing courtier, and mistrusted as a general, he may well have preferred the repose of the cabinet, and the leisure of a man of letters, to a glorious death for his country. But that, Pharisee as he was, and as such, a leader of the insurgents, he should have purchased his ransom by base flatteries of the destroyer of his nation, that he should have carried his craven adulation to such a point as to betray, by a sacrilegious profanation, the cherished hopes of his party and his people, deprives his testimony, in our opinion, of all authority as to the principles and facts with which he was identified, and as to the character and conduct of men, some far better, others every whit as bad as himself.

We have yet one remark of still greater importance to make. So far we have spoken only of a Pharisaic and a Sadducean party. We intended thus to designate a number of men who followed two paths, in accordance with recognized principles, and with a clear consciousness, secret or avowed, of their own motives and aims. We may now add that the masses, all those who did not reflect for themselves on religious ideas and practices, but who followed in the beaten tracks of custom and tradition, were Pharisees also, and accepted all that the schoolmen of that party enjoined upon them with a view to the furtherance of their system. All the other parties, however powerful they might be, formed together a numerical minority so small as to be scarcely perceptible in the Israelitish nation, from the time of the Maccabees. The people were Pharisees, or rather Pharisaic in all their modes of life—dressing, fasting, praying, offering sacrifices, paying tithes, eating, washing, observing the Sabbath, cursing the Gentile,—doing everything, in short, according to the rites and rules of the synagogue, in

which Pharisees were the sole preachers and expounders of the law. But all this might be done by the masses without any distinct idea connected with it, with that artless piety and modest sincerity, which are not necessarily banished from the domestic roof, when forms of worship have become symbols without sense, mere mechanical habits, and when the frigidity of the theological school has quenched the fervour of the young Levite. We shall not then be surprised to find that in spite of the keen sarcasm of Jesus directed against Pharisaism,—a sarcasm so much the more cutting because it was just,—it was nevertheless among men imbued with these principles, that the apostles gathered adherents to their faith. For the fact was that religious men, those who cherished the memory of prophetic promises, and who had learned to bear burdens heavier than the yoke of the Gospel, were to be found, in the Jewish nation, only among the disciples of the Pharisees.

CHAPTER VI.

JEWISH THEOLOGY.

So far we have considered the movement of mind in Jewish society in its relation to politics, and in its application to the forms of social life and religious institutions. It still remains for us to examine it in the particular sphere of scientific or intellectual effort. It is in this aspect especially, that the development of Judaism will connect itself with that of which the history forms the subject of our work, and it is the more important for us to dwell upon it for a moment, because many of the facts which will come before us will remain obscure, or give rise to a false impression, unless traced back to their origin.

The conviction must have been reached from all we have said on the spirit of the Judaism of the renaissance, and in particular of the tendencies of the Pharisees, that two main principles determined the nature and progress of this interesting phase of the history of Israel, that two constituent elements lie at the base of this new and compact nationality. The first is a religious and steadfast, often even a pedantic and servile, attachment to the things and thoughts of the past. The second is an astonishing power of reflection and analysis, joined to a passion no less rare for dealing with minute details. These two elements or motive powers did not cease to be active and influential after they had reorganized Jewish society, restored its worship, and originated the synagogue, with its rites and ascetic regulations; they also gave birth to a theology, a science of religion, such as the prophets in their holy enthusiasm had never dreamed of, but which the Christian Church has not

absolutely refused to receive as a heritage,—a theology bold and spiritual in its abstract speculations, dry and narrow in its dialectic deductions, brilliant and daring in its pictures of the future, breaking through at all points the too confined circle of the simple piety of a former age, and jealous at the same time to secure for its innovations the immutable authority of Scripture.

This theology is not well known among us, because there exists no document setting it forth directly and completely. It was taught in Palestine, especially at Jerusalem, and even in foreign countries, in schools of growing celebrity. This teaching was oral; the respect of the disciples for the learning of their masters was such, that the latter ran no risk of seeing their lessons lost to posterity, for want of sufficient means for their transmission. Nothing was lost; the store both of theories and of ritual prescriptions went on accumulating without undergoing any change. Each new generation of doctors sought for itself the honour of augmenting it. Diversity of opinions, so far from being excluded by this mode of propagating them, was only the more surely perpetuated,—every idea, conjecture, explanation once put forth, having an indefeasible right to subsist, and to concur in forming the sum of probable truths. It is not till about the time of the middle ages, that the sources of the history of this theology begin to flow more copiously. But even before the destruction of the temple, a large number of documents were in existence in which its elements were already found. These writings are in great part preserved, and from them we gather in scattered fragments, the distinct traces of these curious rabbinical labours. We are even able partially to trace their gradual development in the later books of the sacred code of the Jews; then in those commonly called the Apocrypha, in the Septuagint version, in some interesting Revelations, whether prior to Jesus Christ, as the book of Enoch, or contemporary with the apostles, as the fourth book of Esdras;* subsequently again in

* For an interesting discussion of the date of the book of Esdras, see Dr. Ginsburg's article in *Kitto's Cyclopaedia* (Alexander's Edition).—ED.

the New Testament itself, especially in the Gospels, where mention is often made of the doctrines of the rabbis; finally, in the most ancient Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases of the law, down to the Mishna, which though it assumed its present form at the close of the second century, was unquestionably based upon more venerable traditions.*

It is not our intention to set forth here at length, these traditions and doctrines, which in their variety and importance would require a volume to themselves. For our present purpose, a rapid sketch will suffice. This will bring into view principally the doctrines which appear to form a link between the Mosaic religion, as recorded in the sacred books of the Hebrews, and that of the Jewish contemporaries of Christ, who formed the nucleus of the apostolic Church. The necessity and lawfulness of this study, as introductory to a history of Christian theology, will become fully evident, when in the course of our narrative we have reached the period of the Church's formation. Science can never ignore or neglect with impunity, the regular succession and natural connection of facts, and it acts under a singular illusion when it attempts to bring together the two ends, after cutting away the thread which unites them.

The first point to which we shall call the reader's attention, is that Jewish theology, considered as a science, was formed on another basis than the teaching of the old prophets. These sought the inspiration of the Spirit of God; the rabbis knew only too well, that for them this fountain was dry, and they never had the hardihood to lay claim to such inspiration, though some venerated doctors might be held by their scholars, to stand in direct communication with the eternal wisdom. The high-priest no longer delivered the divine oracles; and the heavenly voices, so often spoken of in the Jewish authors as the latest form of revelation, appear to belong rather to theory than to history. Theological learning was based upon

* The oldest collection of these traditions, which constitute the Mishna, appears to have been "codified"—if the expression may be allowed—at the close of the second century and at the beginning of the third. It was not reduced to writing till long afterwards.—ED.

the tradition of the schools and upon Scripture ; but the former always needed the support of the latter to give it an assured value. Hence arose deep and toilsome exegetical studies,—as is the case in all analogous circumstances ; these studies, however, were pursued with little scruple as to their means and methods, since the system was constructed beforehand, and the texts were made to uphold it.

Such a course of study necessarily implies the existence of a definite collection of sacred books. The *canon* of the Old Testament must have been formed, but we have no means of knowing certainly whether this work was completed at a period long anterior to Jesus Christ. One thing, however, is certain, namely, that the common opinion which attributes it to Ezra is absolutely untenable, for the simple reason, that the Hebrew code, as it exists, contains a considerable number of books subsequent to the time of that great legislator.* Whoever was the compiler, this canon of the schools of Palestine came down unaltered to the Christian Church, which in its turn, enriched it subsequently with several other books of Jewish origin, though neither the first nor second edition could lay claim to any authority other than that of learned criticism or practical utility.

The Scriptures, on account of their Divine origin, were naturally deemed to contain treasures, which the vulgar intellect would not easily discover, and which were of such moment that every oversight would be a loss, every error a peril. On this ground, therefore, learned exegesis became a primary necessity. Now exegesis deals, always and only, with that which claims to be authoritative, whether it be a civil and ecclesiastical code, a prophetic oracle, or a religious and moral revelation. The Old Testament uniting all these characters,

* This is a statement which Reuss ought to have qualified. The categorical declaration that “the Hebrew code, as it exists, contains a considerable number of books subsequent to the time of” Ezra, is indefensible. No doubt, great names may be alleged in support of this theory, but there is a good weight of authority on the other side. If the canon was not fixed in the time of Ezra, it is difficult to discover how it could have obtained its undisputed authority.—ED.

Jewish exegesis might and should treat successively of the principles of law, forms of worship, ascetic precepts, and promises of the future therein contained. It was at once legal, ritual, doctrinal, and Messianic, and thus contributed to jurisprudence, liturgical science, casuistry, and theology. In brief, it may be said, the whole science of Judaism was exegetical. Its learned men were *Darschanim*, that is to say exegetes; its schools, houses of *Midrasch*, or halls of interpretation; and in all the spheres of knowledge, the assertions or theories enunciated by the doctors, derived their whole value from the Scriptural basis on which they claimed to rest. Here then we have two facts of the highest theological importance, which in their origin carry us back to the Jewish schools, namely, the canon and exegesis, both unknown to ancient Israel, and both transmitted to the Christian Church in its birth.

Theology, properly so called,—that is to say, the doctrine of the essence and attributes of God,—was the subject of earnest meditation on the part of the philosophers. Their minds were not satisfied with the popular teaching of the prophets. They were especially shocked by the numerous anthropomorphisms used in the simple and poetic language of Scripture; and the personal and corporeal appearances of the Divine Being, mentioned more than once in the history, did not harmonize with speculative views no longer in embryo. The most simple expedient for removing this difficulty, was to substitute angels, the messengers and representatives of God, for the Divine Person Himself, wherever the reference was to a direct communication between God and men. Such a substitution was introduced, for example, in the capital event of the Mosaic religion, the giving of the law from Sinai, for the glory of which the primitive narrative had asserted in the most positive manner, the direct intervention of Jehovah. We shall see presently that the apostles are acquainted with the sacred history solely in this scholastic form.* But this was only the first

* The apostles recognize the ministry of angels in connection with the giving of the law (*e.g.* Gal. iii. 19; see also Heb. ii. 2), but their function is simply ministerial. That the acknowledgment of the *presence* of angels

flight of philosophic thought, eager to rise above the popular conception. It went further. The custom of speaking of God only through periphrases, which avoided naming Him directly,—a custom dictated in part by the requirements of poetic speech, but in part also, and more frequently, by a reverential and timid piety,—led insensibly to the use of metaphysical formulas, which in the end gave a peculiar character to Jewish theology. The first indications of this tendency are found in the historical books of the Old Testament, where in some accounts of the Divine appearances among men, His being seems to be divided in two, at least in the human apprehension of Him. He is one as regarded in Himself, and another in His concrete manifestation. In the course of time, this same process of speculation advanced further and further, and with a sensibly increasing power of abstraction. Thus it is difficult to tell whether at first, when some manifestations of the Deity are described as those of His presence, or of His glory, or of His word, this is to be understood simply of God (as is the case when we speak of Providence), or of a particular personality, a Divine hypostasis which speculation had come to recognize as distinct from the Supreme Being. It is certain that the latter explanation is abundantly sustained by proofs, many and irrefutable, as we approach the age of the apostles. The schools no longer spoke, as the old prophets had done, of the hand, the arm, the eye of the Lord, to give tangible form to the idea of the government of the world, but personified His metaphysical attributes, and regarded them, if not always objectively, at least in theory, and according to dialectic requirements, as separate existences, acting with perfect self-consciousness and spontaneity. We cannot therefore pass by as merely poetical figures, the justly famous passages in which Wisdom is repre-

when the law was given at Sinai is a “scholastic” gloss on the sacred history cannot be conceded by those who acknowledge the early date of Psalm lxviii. (see v. 17), or of the book of Deuteronomy (see cap. xxxiii. 2). The *presence* of angels does not necessarily imply their intervention in the divine act of Revelation, but it suggests that intervention. It is absurd to suppose, as Reuss seems to affirm, that the apostles did not know the Old Testament scriptures.—ED.

sented as the eldest of the creatures of God, itself the Creator and former of the whole universe;* we regard these as the enunciation, in a poetic form it may be, of a thesis of speculative theology, of a dogma, in fine, which, variously modified in the schools, became essentially the basis of the entire system.†

We might refer further to the attempts made by this same scholastic theology to classify the essential attributes of the divinity, to determine their number, and to consolidate by the application of special technical and significant names, the doctrine of the creating and revealing hypostasis. We might dwell upon these and other similar points, but as this part of the science did not come into immediate contact with the doctrinal formulas, diffused through the first Christian society,‡ we fear to wander too far from our subject in pursuing such an analysis. We prefer, therefore, to reserve it for a future opportunity.

Another field upon which the science of the schools bestowed much labour is that of demonology. The ancient sacred literature had spoken of angels, of messengers or sons of God executing His providential orders; and more than once the poetical origin of this conception is obvious, as when natural phenomena are or seem to be metamorphosed into persons.§ The genius of the language, quite as much as the philosophic tendency of the writers' minds, led to the personification of

* "Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach," chap. i., chap. xxiv., etc. "Wisdom of Solomon," chap. vii., viii., etc., perhaps also the prologue added to the Proverbs, viii. 22, and following.

† The Jewish preparation for the Christian idea of the Logos is one of the most interesting questions in relation to Jewish theology. It is to be regretted that Reuss did not give it more space in this chapter.—Ed.

‡ We do not by this intend to say that no trace of it is to be found in the Christian literature of the first century. Thus the passages Rev. i. 4, iv. 5, can only be explained by a reference to the Jewish theory of seven divine attributes. [See Alford, *in. loc.*]

§ Psalm xviii. 11; civ. 4; 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16, etc. Readers must be on their guard, however, against supposing angels are referred to, in the present acceptation of that term, wherever the texts use the word *maleak*. On the contrary, in almost every such passage, that word designates a form of manifestation of the Divine Being Himself.

these various effects of the supreme cause. The metaphysical attributes of the Deity, represented first by concrete symbols, borrowed especially from animal life,* were ultimately apprehended by the vulgar mind as subordinate beings, though originally they were only elements detached by speculative analysis from the very essence of God. But this was not the sole nor the most fruitful source of these beliefs. The memories of ancient Sabaism, and contact with the Canaanite religions, did much more to foster and aid their development. It may even be said that it was the progress of monotheistic ideas which multiplied the angels, inasmuch as the numerous divine powers recognized by the religious conscience in the period of its infancy, all became finally subordinate as creatures and ministers of the one God. The relation of favour or disfavour, of protection or hostility, which might subsist between God and mortals, was soon supposed to be regulated by the intervention of these intermediary beings, who concerned themselves in the affairs of men with very various ends,—a belief shared by polytheism with regard to its gods. But the supreme government of the world was always reserved to one sole Master, holy and just. The religion of the prophets, in which we find scarcely any indication of this *angelology* of the generations after the exile, remained unaffected by it.

There was one particular angel, among others, who was regarded as emphatically the adversary of men, and as bitterly bent upon accusing them or bringing them into disfavour with God.† This idea, which appeared in Scripture only as a poetic fiction, though it might have its root in the beliefs of the people, was in its turn the commencement of a very important chapter of Jewish theology. It combined with the notion of a principle of evil, as recognized in dualism; and this combination, always kept subordinate to the monotheistic theory, finally produced the idea of the devil, which soon became one of those most popularly received among the Jews, and thus, in spite of its metaphysical origin, sank to the level of a vulgar superstition. It would be superfluous to give here in detail

* Ezek. i. 10; Isaiah vi. 2, etc.

† Job i., ii.; Zech. iii.

all that the Jewish schoolmen were prepared to communicate as to the history of good and evil angels, their offices, number, abode, names, their hierarchy, and their influence upon the affairs of earth and the well-being of men. All these things have passed, almost unchanged, into the beliefs of Christian nations, and we shall meet with them again as we proceed.*

We pass on to a portion of Jewish theology much less widely known than the foregoing, but far more worthy of study, because it is the result of a psychological analysis of human nature, and of its relations with the law of God, and not of a capricious flight of imagination; we refer to anthropology, the philosophical examination of the problems of the origin of moral evil, of death, of the liberty of man, of the absolute prescience of God or of destiny, and, finally, of immortality and the resurrection. Unless we resolutely close our eyes to the evidence, it must be admitted that these problems are dimly discerned and stated, but never solved by the writers before the exile.† In those times, faith had so much vitality, and reflection so little curiosity, that rocks were avoided, and doubts which presented themselves to the reason on questions of this nature, were subdued. The often painful contradiction between the lot of a man and his moral conduct, sometimes called forth some essays at theodicy; but logic, still weak and unpractised, quickly took refuge again in the arms of an ever-triumphant faith in the justice of God. Subsequently this faith gave place to logic. Science boldly assailed these hard questions, and succeeded, in part at least, in finding solutions of them which posterity has religiously accepted, or at least has made the starting-point for its own theories. We have already mentioned the most important and influential

* Jewish speculation on angels, both good and evil, was an audacious and fanciful development of hints and suggestions in reference to their existence and functions which cannot be set aside without gravely affecting the supernatural character of the whole series of revelations recorded in the Old Testament.—ED.

† It is difficult to see how one, at least, of these problems could be stated more distinctly, or invested with more tragic power, than in the book of Job, and in some of the Davidic Psalms.—ED.

dogma which thus took its rise—the dogma of the resurrection, which, in truth, has become the basis, not only of the whole Jewish theology, but also, in a sense, of the Christian creeds. We shall not here dwell upon it, because its great importance will oblige us to speak of it more in detail, and we shall devote a special chapter to presenting it in its connection with all that relates to men's belief in the final issue of things. We may allude further to the very animated discussions held on predestination. The Pharisees were the first to endeavour to find a formula that should serve as a *via media* between the fatalism of the absolute decree, favoured at once by logic and by mysticism, and the so-called liberal doctrines of the Sadducees. Special attention was devoted to the narrative in Genesis of the history of the first man. This gave rise to various theories of the primitive nature of our race, of the fall, on the origin of death, and of physical evil in general. The question of sin was discussed—was it innate, or produced by external and accidental causes? In a word, Jewish speculation had been directed, before the birth of Christianity, to most of the great problems which have since engaged the thinkers of the Church, and the questions raised by such speculation were more or less familiar to those Christians who had passed through Jewish schools. Independently of this circumstance, it has an interest for us also by its forms and methods. Its methods of interpretation have outlived it, and we shall speak of them again. Its marked tendency to create for itself concrete forms, has peopled religious philosophy with figures, in part mysterious, which served at once to facilitate dialectic labours and to popularize their results.

Our conviction then is, that this old Jewish literature does not deserve the oblivion to which it is habitually consigned by Christian science. Its extravagances, absurd fables, senseless deductions, the numerous errors of the rabbis arising out of a false and arbitrary exegesis, and other palpable defects, were made too exclusively the ground of polemical animosity by our fathers, and our generation has too hastily adopted their judgment. A religious philosophy, which, after all, drank of

the purest and fullest fountain accessible to the ancient world, cannot—however its merits may be compromised by defect and error—deserve the contempt of thoughtful men, who desire to study the history of the human mind. On still stronger grounds, it is ungrateful for Christian theology to slight, whether through indolence or ignorance, the labours of an indefatigable school, from which it has borrowed so much, and on many points has even accepted the heritage derived from it, without guarding itself against the chances of injury, by pleading its non-liability to inherited debts beyond assets.

CHAPTER VII.

HELLENISM.

IN the previous chapters we have seen the spirit of Judaism developing itself in divergent directions in the land of its birth. If the modifications to which history bears witness in the current of the national ideas, were due in part to contact with foreign civilization, they yet first took form in Palestine; that is to say, Judaism received or repelled them from a defensive position. It made no advance to meet that which would be regarded by the one party as a misfortune, by the other as a necessity, or a step of progress.

But this very contact with the foreigner, and the influence which it was to exert upon the spirit of the Jewish nationality, were steps in a higher progress, and had important effects upon the ulterior development of religious and philosophical ideas, in a far wider arena than that within the limits of which our narrative has up to this point been confined. We have now to turn our attention to a transformation of Judaism, as interesting in its details as it is unfamiliar; a transformation which by its results, is directly connected with the progress of the destinies of Christian theology from the very first century, and apart from which the history of that theology remains an enigma. The heading of this chapter will introduce the reader into the new sphere we have to contemplate; it will also bring to his memory a name in use in the primitive Church, and the origin and import of which deserve to be understood, before we pass on to our main subject.

The history of the conquests of Alexander and his successors

is familiar to all. We shall only make such allusion to it here as is necessary for the comprehension of the national and psychological phenomenon which is our present theme. The ruling principle of the policy of the conqueror had been the fusion of the various conquered peoples, the amalgamation of the heterogeneous elements of an empire more vast than any that had gone before it. Alexander died without having been able to consolidate his work, but his ideas of organization and of civilization did not perish with him. Ambition, craft, crime, dismembered the vast heritage he had left, and generations employed their powers in rending that which his single genius had in a few years united. The sword destroyed that which the sword had reared. First arose several new empires, the ephemeral creations of brute force, upheaved one after another and then submerged by the inconstant floods of military fortune. After repeated convulsions, there was left a residue of more solid masses, which began to develop the germs of a new civilization. Among these masses, two especially demand our attention. On the one hand, we find the new Egyptian kingdom of the Ptolemies; on the other, the great monarchy of the Seleucides, which had its seat in Syria, but which extended its sceptre far over the countries of Upper Asia. Palestine was situated between these two rival states. Belonging to Syria by the laws of nature, indispensable to Egypt by the laws of policy, it became the arena of foreign conflict, and the prize of rival diplomacy. After changing masters four or five times in the space of twenty years, it was finally incorporated with the Egyptian empire, with which it remained united for nearly a century. During this long period, a peace rarely interrupted, permitted an enlightened and far-sighted government, which understood how to bind together the interest of the peoples and that of the dynasty, to resume the policy of Alexander, and to labour steadily but quietly at the fusion of the nationalities. The Seleucides began without delay to imitate their neighbours, but with less prudence. After the lapse of a few centuries, it became evident that the success of this policy had been but very partial; it had nevertheless results so solid, that

they yielded only to the irresistible ascendancy of Arab civilization. Those results were especially manifest in the sphere with which we are now occupied.

We note first along the Mediterranean shores, as far as the Macedonian dominion extended, an extraordinary blending of populations. The immigration of Greeks into Asia and Africa was encouraged in every possible way. The invasion of colonists produced more decisive effects than that of phalanxes. It went on in vast and ever-growing proportions. The influence of the court, of the administration of military life, of commerce, of literature, and, as the result of all this, that marked preponderance of the towns over the country districts, which is the characteristic feature of Greek civilization,—all these causes combined, expelled national idioms and native customs from the circle of movement, life, and progress. The new colonies, the governors' residences, the depots of commerce and of war, founded in great numbers and rising as if by enchantment under the steps of two dynasties full of vigour and ambition, were so many fertile oases where the Hellenic spirit sprang up and flourished, in the midst of a world which had become almost a desert for lack of an assimilating force.

The flood of Greek immigration soon met the flood of Jewish emigration. Like two rivers which pour their differently coloured waters into one basin, but never mix, these two peoples threw themselves into the young Macedonian cities, and established themselves at the same time, without comingling, ever kept apart by the irreconcilable diversity of their creeds and customs, ever drawn together by the community of commerce and the uniform legislation which protected their interests. Already on their accession, the Ptolemies found many Jews in Egypt; they knew that the affection of this people would assure to them the safety of their Asiatic possessions; they therefore endeavoured to conciliate them, and to bind them to support their ascendancy, by bestowing on them all sorts of favours and privileges. Entire communities of Jews were formed at Alexandria and in other cities; the free exercise of their worship and a sort of civil

self-government was accorded to them, and they were thus raised to the same level as the Macedonians. But that which contributed most to acclimatize the Jews in these remote regions, which were formerly regarded with a sort of secret terror, was the attraction of trade, to which they might, and were even bound, to devote themselves exclusively in this new country. The commercial spirit, inherent in all the nations of Semitic race, had long been restrained among the Israelites by their unfavourable position in the land of Canaan, far from the great highroads of ancient traffic. Now suddenly, their industrious activity found a vast and brilliant theatre open to it in the greatest markets of the world, which appeared as if expressly created for their benefit, and from which the Pharisee sought in vain by shadowy scruples to detain them. Never till now had the Jew found himself in his true element. The life of a tiller of the soil, which the prophets had so strongly urged, which they had imposed upon him almost against his will, and in which he had been bound to acquiesce, while living in a country cut off from the ocean and walled in by deserts, he now abandoned with delight, and for ever. Having once grasped the pen of the banker, he never wished again to handle the plough. Egypt became his second fatherland—Egypt, the country of all others towards which he had been taught to cherish a factitious antipathy, and the road to which had been most sedulously closed against him. It was like new vigour infused into a nation, whose life was languishing on an exhausted soil. Material prosperity helped him to bear more easily the loss of political independence. Fortune brought credit, and soon governments learned to bargain with the Jews, on matters more momentous than those transacted in the market-place or the warehouse.

Nor must it be supposed that they had to make important sacrifices in entering upon this new career. The sciences and arts had not yet reached among them a stage of development at all worthy of note. The warlike spirit, supposing that it had ever been a part of the Jewish character, had fallen into a long slumber under the protracted Persian rule, and never

awaked in the Jew out of Palestine. Commerce is by nature cosmopolitan, and when by an almost instinctive impulse, it was substituted for agriculture, Judaism virtually abrogated the Mosaic law in its most essential and characteristic feature, and unwittingly effected a revolution, the nature and significance of which it has been the last to recognize. Even the rivalry between the Seleucides and the Ptolemies tended to foster this tendency, which was henceforth dominant. The two dynasties, both equally interested in securing the friendship of the Jews for the sake of Palestine, competed with each other in the lavish bestowment of material favours, and thus helped to fix the attention of that people more and more on their pecuniary interests. They taught them to grasp greedily with both hands, and to accept a momentary advantage from whichever side it came, thus deadening the hatred of a people wounded in national honour, without however by these means gaining the grateful affection of their new subjects.

It was impossible that these relations of growing frequency and intimacy with a new world so far in advance in all the arts of civilization, should not exert a deep influence upon that portion of the Jewish people who most directly shared in them. It is not our task now to trace that influence in its effect upon the habits of social life; we hasten to point out a more curious phenomenon, and one more immediately bearing upon the sphere of thought, the history of which we are studying. This is the fact of the adoption of the Greek language by the Jewish families settled beyond Palestine, and in the maritime towns of that country. Next to religion, language is certainly that which stands in closest relation to the inner life of a people, its most sacred and inalienable heritage. Yet the Jewish people, in the dispersion, sacrificed their mother-tongue with a readiness which would remain an enigma, if we had not already shown that material interests, and not even the pretext of a justifiable necessity, were the sole motives of the new migration. The same considerations led the Jews to substitute for the tongue of their fathers, a foreign idiom. They first began to make use of the latter for the purposes of common life, and

soon found it indispensable in other spheres of thought. But there is a great singularity about the dialect which thus arose almost accidentally from the contact of the two nations. The Jews took possession of what we might call the treasury of the Greek language ; that is, of all the words which compose it, and of the necessary grammatical forms. But as they received both from the mouth of a very mixed and only partially cultivated population, the dialect they learned differed substantially and to a large extent from the ancient literary Hellenic tongue. With the spirit of the language it fared still worse. This they utterly failed to catch ; of the syntax, which gives the peculiar character to every language in a state of perfection, and which in Greek is the great essential, they had no comprehension, or rather they did not concern themselves at all about it, and simply ignored it. They continued to think according to the genius of their Semitic idiom, so differently moulded from the Greek, and translating their thoughts word by word from Hebrew into Greek, they produced a unique language, Hebrew in spirit, Greek in body, a bastard jargon in its origin, but gradually asserting a place for itself in the world by its extended use, forming a literature as remarkable in itself as it is exceptional, and destined to leave deep traces in the most highly cultivated and widely diffused modern tongues. For it is especially by its application to religious thought that this peculiar language has acquired its celebrity and influence. It was soon employed to translate the law for the Jews in Egypt, who began to forget the sacred Hebrew, and gradually all the other books of the Old Testament were in turn transcribed into Greek. Lastly, the apostles, who came to preach and write in Greek, had only this Hellenistic dialect at command ; they had to struggle, not always successfully, with the hopeless poverty of a language, the material forms of which were not adapted to the elevated task demanded of it.

This change of language, while a phenomenon very interesting in itself, may yet be regarded by some as only an external fact. But we must not judge of the spirit which directs the destinies of humanity by the movement more or less violent

perceived on the surface of events. The future of the world is prepared at a depth beneath the surface to which no eye can penetrate. The new current setting in far below can only become slowly apparent, and by tokens at first hardly perceptible amid the tossings and heavings of the surface water. The fact of the metamorphosis of Hebrew Jews into Hellenist Jews, presents not only that statistic or philological interest which we were bound first to point out; it conceals within itself consequences to be afterwards revealed, and which go straight to the heart of the history of Christian theology.

We observe first, to the honour of the Hellenist Jews, and especially of their teachers, that religious apostasy was of the rarest occurrence among them, notwithstanding the numerous temptations to which they were exposed in prosperous no less than in adverse times. This attachment to the faith of their fathers, and to all their ecclesiastical institutions, was at once their virtue and their misfortune. Their riches and usurious practices would not have provoked such bitter antipathy in the Greek cities, if the difference of religious forms, still more than the difference in the substance of their faith, had not fostered and fed it. Wherever the Jews were in sufficient numbers to form a community, they built a synagogue, and thus drew upon themselves the attention of the people, and became, so to speak, a natural conductor for all the storms of base passions so frequent in the great cities of ill-governed countries. The governments themselves were ever ready to share the prejudices of the people, or at least to utilize them at the dictation of interest. In spite of all adverse influences, however, or perhaps because of them, Judaism stood firm, and its sons, from the pedler to the farmer-general, held their ground both against the blind hatred of the crowd and the dazzling seductions of the court.

Nor is this all that may be said. Persecution from beneath did more to strengthen Judaism than protection from above, and did not prevent it from undermining, silently and stealthily, the power of paganism, when that power, ceasing to be national, and becoming cosmopolitan, seemed about to enter on an ex-

clusive and lasting dominion. The gods of Greece had grown old; the breath of philosophy was beginning to chase away the mists which had veiled Olympus from the eyes of mortals. To many men, the glory of that poetic pantheism which had animated nature, seemed to vanish under the scalpel of science, or faded away under the influence of doubt. Belief in the gods was retained only for theatrical or political purposes. First a frightful demoralization, and then a superstition as absurd as it was degrading, took the empty place of religion. It is everywhere and always the destiny of those who, in order that they may lay the reins on the neck of their passions, cry most loudly that they have been cheated by the priests, to become the ready and easy dupes of charlatans.

Nevertheless, in this universal shipwreck there were many individuals who sought a saving raft elsewhere than in the intoxication of the senses, or in the delusive mysteries of occult sciences and secret societies. Pressing on, weary and heavy laden, many found the God of Israel—the ideal of the wise, the consolation of the poor—and learned to reverence Him often without fully knowing the letter of His law. They frequented the synagogues, and there heard simple and fervent prayers, sacred songs which touched the heart, and exhortations which could not fail to be more edifying than any such rites as were celebrated around the altars of the ancient gods. The women especially, less easily contented than the men with an indifferentism calling itself philosophy, repaired thus in large numbers to the synagogues. Old writers even tell us that dim presentiments of a new revelation had crept into pagan society. Doubtless these took their origin in the Messianic expectations of the Jews. But even when nothing more than a vague curiosity led these men to the feet of the rabbinical chair, the fact that in the synagogue they found a living faith, is sufficient proof that Providence guided their steps.

Our readers will remember that away from Jerusalem, public worship consisted exclusively in the religious exercises we have just named. To these all were freely admitted. Accustomed to hold intercourse with the uncircumcised in the

ordinary relations of life, the Hellenist Jews were not shocked to see them mingling in their religious assemblies. A prolonged sojourn among pagans had naturally fostered feelings of toleration, which, after all, did not necessarily compromise their strict fidelity to their religious duties. Family connections were established between the two classes; the Jew at least made no scruple of marrying his daughters to men who allowed them to perform the rites of their religion, and to bring up their children in the fear of Jehovah. The theological jurisprudence of the doctors even made formal provision for this new relation. Pagans who desired to join in the Sabbath assemblies were not compelled to be circumcised; no ritual obligations were imposed upon them. They were simply forbidden to take part in acts of idolatrous worship, especially in the sacrifices, and this prohibition was so rigorous that they might not even be present at a feast at which meat taken from beasts offered to idols was used. Viands were also interdicted into the composition of which blood or the flesh of strangled animals entered. A profound aversion to these things among the Jews, made them feel intercourse impossible with persons who indulged in them. These prescriptions, to which some moral obligations were annexed, were afterwards called in the schools the precepts of Noah, which designation signified that they were principles more ancient than the Sinaitic law, and binding upon the whole human race. From the history of the apostles, we know that the number of persons of this class was very large, and that in some places they formed an important element in the Jewish community, which by the very fact of their presence was led to consider the interests of the soul and the moral life as of wider importance than ritual observances. It is scarcely needful to say that for themselves the Jews held those observances as binding as ever; habits of piety, even those that were external merely, were never lost among the Jews properly so called, but they ceased to be the distinctive signs of the worshippers of the true God, since among these were found numbers of men who gave no adherence to such rules or customs. They were distinguished as

proselytes—that is to say, strangers who had sought a home within the territory of Israel,—citizens of the second class, who did not enjoy all the civic rights of the legal theocracy, but who placed themselves under the powerful protection of Jehovah. They were therefore simply called the pious, the worshippers,* the name marking definitely the essentially spiritual character of their religion, and implying as if designedly, their abstention from Levitical practices, without conveying any imputation of blame.

Let us picture to ourselves the Jews, far from their native land, in the midst of strange nations, dwelling in populous cities, where the most various creeds, customs, and languages met in conflict or friendly coalition; where everything favoured a process of fusion or assimilation; where, so to speak, a freer current of air tended to dispel the mists of narrow or local prejudice; and it will be readily understood that these Jews were more accessible to new ideas, and to generous and cosmopolitan influences, than their brethren breathing the heavy atmosphere of their ancient city, into which the noise of the world never penetrated, to break the time-honoured monotony of a life scrupulously governed by rule in its minutest details. Nor were these scattered Jews in any danger of losing their monotheism; such a peril was no longer to be apprehended in an age when polytheism was shattered by satire, undermined by philosophy, practically abandoned, and barely sustained by official forms.

We may mention another circumstance of great importance as imparting to Hellenistic Judaism a spirit different from that which prevailed in the metropolis. If the diversity of language already proved such a barrier between the Jews of various provinces, that those who were scattered abroad could no longer frequent the same places of prayer when their religious duties led them to Jerusalem, the remoteness of the Levitical worship and of the temple which was its scene and centre, could not but weaken its moral influence almost

* Σεβόμενοι, εὐλαβεῖς, εὐσεβεῖς, προσήλυτοι. See, for example, Acts x. 2; xiii. 43, 50; xvi. 14; xvii. 4, 17; xviii. 7, etc.

in the ratio of the distance. Those who could behold the splendour of the temple worship, and take part in its ritual only at long and distant intervals, perhaps not more than once in a lifetime, were doubtless the more impressed with the imposing character of the sacred ceremonial, and carried away an indelible memory of it. But if they were thus strengthened in the feeling of nationality, and in attachment to the faith of their fathers, this was a spiritual impression, elevating the soul, and nourishing it in thoughts of virtue and holiness. That which favoured the development of Pharisaic Judaism in all its narrowness and pettiness, was the daily and mechanical repetition of various ceremonies, observed only at Jerusalem, and which many of those who constantly beheld the spectacle, came to regard as the substance of religion.

One other fact must here be noted. In Europe, in Africa, and in Asia Minor, the Jews felt themselves to be the foreigners; they must needs tolerate the presence of other foreigners, as their own presence was tolerated; all the world had as good a right there as they, and exclusiveness was impossible. The Jews of Palestine, on the other hand, knowing that they were the masters, or believing themselves and claiming to be such, were more naturally inclined to regard as intruders, and consequently to treat with contempt and hatred, even the most inoffensive pagans who lived among them. They never spoke of them but in injurious terms; they called them plainly "sinners of the Gentiles," † possibly in the self-complacent notion that circumcision alone made of themselves models of virtue. Thus moral prejudice had its root in national prejudice, but the latter kept its hold mainly in the soil of its birth, and could scarcely extend in all its rigidity into foreign lands.

It has not been our intention, in the foregoing remarks, to convey the idea that all the Jews speaking the Greek language were necessarily exempt from certain weaknesses which belonged to the religious character of their nation. We know only too well that this was not the case. But we have endeavoured to show how among them, mainly and primarily, a more liberal

† Ἄμαρτωλοί, in the Gospels, ἄδικοι, 1 Cor. vi. 1.

spirit and broader views would be likely to be found, than in Palestine, at the time when the Gospel came to act as a new and powerful leaven in the Jewish world. To the Christian historian, the dispersion of the Jews, more often voluntary than compulsory, will always appear, therefore, as a providential arrangement, and the great revolution to which the son of Philip owes the immortality of his name, and which is in itself the mightiest event of ancient history, acquires a still higher importance, when it is recognized as preparing for revealed truth, the highway of the West.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALEXANDRINE PHILOSOPHY.

OF all the indications of a metamorphosis in the national character of the Jews, which we have observed in the preceding chapter, that which is most worthy of note is the relation which was rapidly established between the religious ideas of the Hebrews, and the various systems of philosophy then current among the Greeks. We have already seen how, even in their own country, the Jews had risen to a scientific study of their religion ; but there they still confined themselves generally within the narrow circle of their national traditions, and displayed unwearied patience and extraordinary acumen only in the investigation of their literary documents. The influence of foreign ideas, that of the East for example imported by the Jews from Babylon, at first only made itself felt in the schools of Palestine, on a small number of special points. The aspect of things was changed, when in a new country, the Jewish theologians devoting themselves to these studies, were brought into contact with the philosophy of the Greeks. A new world seemed then to open before the astonished eyes of these eager students, a world as attractive in the mysteries it presented as food for speculation, as in the solutions which it offered of old problems. The prophetic mind, familiar only with the imperfect forms of a more or less primitive anthropomorphism, by means of which to explain religious truth, seemed to these new inquirers, scarcely to rise above the sphere of a childish philosophy and material experience. Pythagoras and Plato appeared to have more profound views, and to have given them

worthier expression. In the Greek language, the Jews found an instrument better adapted to the new work, to which they were about to devote themselves. Philosophy at this period had established its head-quarters at Alexandria, the centre of civilization in the era extending from Ptolemy Philadelphus to the Emperor Augustus. It there found itself in the best possible position for drinking deep from the fountains of two worlds. There oriental imagination was wedded to Greek philosophy, and gave birth to that singular system of pantheistic mysticism, which successively adapted itself, with some essential modifications, to three religious formulas differing radically from each other. We find it engrafted upon the paganism of the Neo-Platonist school; the theology of the Christian Church has borrowed largely from it; and the cabalistic philosophy of the Jews is its legitimate offspring. Finally, gnosticism in several of its forms has almost succeeded in combining, without changing their nature, these three heterogeneous elements

At the period of which we are speaking, this contact with Greek philosophy inspired the Jews, who made it their ardent study, with a profound repugnance for the prosaic and popular simplicity of the moral and religious teaching of their nation. This appeared to them worthy only of vulgar minds, for it gave no solution of the grand problems of philosophy—the connection of the infinite with the finite, of God with matter, the reality of the absolute, the final destiny of man, and the path he must pursue to fulfil it. In place of the purely ethical theology of the prophets, we soon see systems rising, produced by the most abstract speculation; and instead of the popular morality preached to their ancestors, the new school presents to the mind, a virtue born of science and reflection.

In consequence of their early traditional education, possibly also through personal interest, these philosophers continued to be Jews outwardly; but in truth they were no longer attached to the faith of the synagogue, by any solid bond or deep conviction. They did not wish, however, openly to separate from it. In this they acted like the Greek philosophers, who on their part came to no open rupture with the national religion.

They found means to disguise their apostasy through the very fact which ought to have brought it to light. They made use of the Holy Scripture, with its narratives and laws—which in their literal signification they regarded as mere productions of the vulgar mind, the most inadequate expression of truth, and often even conveying absurd and blasphemous error—as an excellent medium for sanctioning their own novel ideas, and affixing to them the ancient and sacred seal of revelation. They set themselves, therefore, to find an allegorical, often spiritual, and always arbitrary, interpretation for all Scripture. Taking as their starting-point the theory—easy of vindication—that the narratives of primeval time, and the ritual ceremonies of worship, are in their origin ideas materialized by poetry or reflection, they endeavoured to reduce them to their first elements; but this could only be accomplished by a process of substitution, which removed the very foundations, to put in their place some, metaphysical or mystical theory, utterly unknown to antiquity. They imagined, or sought at least to persuade others, that all the wisdom of Greece was substantially borrowed from Moses; and they so far succeeded in accrediting this singular assertion, that it finally became an axiom in the Apologies of the Fathers of the Church.

The application of this kind of philosophy to Judaism, thus tended to decompose the latter, to destroy it in its most essential element, to volatilize it, if such an expression may be allowed, to divert it from its true purpose, to do it therefore far more serious injury than it had suffered from the religious indifferentism of worldly men. Not only was there a loss of all national interest and hope in the future; the religious beliefs and habits of the masses were sacrificed at the same time. Now here in history do we find philosophers the leaders and conductors of the people; those of whom we are now speaking, were least of all adapted to such a position, aliens as they were from popular ideas, feelings, prejudices, and passions. The influence they were able to exert upon the national development of Judaism was almost *nil*, but it was more powerful in its effect upon scientific theology.

We have spoken of this new phase of the development of Judaism as occupying a large place in history. We are fully convinced that this philosophy could not have been produced, and have reached its maturity in a single day, or in a single brain. It bespeaks a work of preparation so extensive, that no narrow limits can be set to its duration; and if we inquire into the condition of literature and of teaching in the schools of the age of the Ptolemies, numerous facts appear, to prove that this philosophy was not confined to the mind of a solitary thinker. Indications of its origin can also be traced back for a considerable distance, and even the proper names of its representatives are not altogether wanting. As a perfect whole, however, and in its details, it is known to us through the writings of only one author, whose reputation as a philosopher cannot but have been enhanced by this literary longevity. We allude to the celebrated Alexandrine Jew, Philo, the contemporary of Jesus Christ, who lived to an advanced age, and died at the time when the Gospel was beginning to spread beyond the limits of Palestine. The very preservation of his numerous works, which have come down to us in part in an Armenian version, is a proof of the interest which the Christian world took in their contents.

But even earlier than Philo, we find a book, the author of which drew his inspiration from the same source, and whose teachings show us Alexandrine philosophy in a stage of development much less advanced. This is the Book of Wisdom, the latest of those works of Jewish philosophy, which shelter, under the name of King Solomon, principles differing widely from any held by him. Its object is essentially moral and practical, but its lessons of virtue and justice are based upon a theosophy and cosmology which more than once betray their foreign extraction. It would, doubtless, be easy to point out in the Old Testament itself, passages which might be regarded as the positive bases of certain metaphysical theories* which form the essence of the Alexandrine philosophy; but it is more

* See, for example, Exodus xxv. 9, 40, xxvi. 30, for the idea of the *κόσμο νοητός*.

natural to suppose that these theories were directly elicited by the light which the Greek philosophical systems seemed to throw upon obscure points in the national tradition of the Jews. On the other hand, these very theories appear scarcely more than in embryo in the Book of Wisdom, as compared with the forms they assume under the treatment of Philo. The idea is indeed present of the creative hypostasis emanating from the Absolute Being, in order to organize formless matter; but it is not yet presented in that character of a metaphysical necessity, by which its existence will afterwards be justified from the speculative point of view, still less with that train of various elemental forces, which analysis, as it pursues its course, discovers. Of all these ideas, we have as yet in the Book of Wisdom only the earliest germs,* although already sufficiently distinct to be predictive of further organic development. The morality there taught, rests also upon grounds altogether different from those of the Pharisees; it is based upon mental and spiritual activity, directed to the study of the manifestations of the Divine Being,† and in assuming a systematic form, it borrows from Plato his division of the four cardinal virtues.‡

To return now to Philo's philosophy. This may be described as the most decided expression of that cosmopolitan tendency which we have already pointed out as the extreme reaction against the spirit of Pharisaism. Greek, Oriental, Jewish elements are all blended in it, with an indiscriminating syncretism, which goes so far as to unite in one system, principles borrowed from all previous rival schools, from the Academy, the Portico, and the Lyceum, without always succeeding in forming them into one homogeneous body, perhaps even without a perception of their innate incompatibility.

The ultimate aim of the entire system of Philo is undoubtedly ethical; it is in the purity, we are almost disposed to say the holiness of the tendency of his philosophy, that he

* Chap. vii. 12—30; viii. 1, and foll.; ix. 9, 10; x.; xi. 18, etc.

† Chap. viii. 21; ix. 6, 17; xiii. 1, etc.

‡ Chap. viii. 7.

is least untrue to his Jewish origin. His morality, however, is essentially mystical and religious. It is based upon the principle of the passivity of man, who receives and appropriates divine elements by inspiration and contemplation, even by a sort of ecstasy, and who finds his supreme blessedness in the repose and peace of the soul, in estrangement from the world, and fellowship with God. It is deeply impressed with the consciousness of the imperfections of our nature, and of all that surrounds us; it expresses the imperious craving of the soul to find some more perfect object; and, persuaded by intuition that God comes down to give to the creature the revelation of Himself and sanctification, it recognizes this as the way for man to return to God, and to rise to an ideal standpoint, where knowledge and virtue are one.

All these theses, and many another, Philo declares to be explicitly taught in the books of Moses. The personages who there appear upon the scene, the facts there narrated, the institutions therein founded and organized, are all to surrender any claim to material and historical value, and to be transformed into so many allegorical symbols. The three patriarchs, to quote only one instance, are no longer men who really lived; their acts, their journeyings, their domestic relations, are only figures of which exegesis must disclose the true spiritual signification. They represent the supreme virtue, towards which philosophy should aspire, under three different forms or aspects: Abraham personifies virtue acquired by the diligent use of the mind; Isaac, virtue realized by natural instinct; Jacob, virtue attained by asceticism and trial. To these ideal forms of perfection correspond three inferior virtues, which might be rather called the means for attaining to the former. In fact, the first is arrived at by faith and hope, which are here closely allied and almost identified; the second, which is the noblest of the three, is reached by righteousness; the third by repentance. These conceptions, it is evident, did not become incorporated with Christian morality; there is something striking, however, in the association of these terms faith, hope, righteousness, repentance, to which a large number of the like order come

to be added, and which carry us immediately into a sphere of thought more nearly approaching our own.

Such a theory was ill adapted to solve the problem of the harmony of the freedom of man with the absoluteness of God,—a problem which was only beginning to be mooted in the schools of Palestine, but which had long been distinctly stated by Greek philosophy. By his mysticism, Philo was led to incline the balance in favour of the Divine action, so far as to use expressions which almost seem to ascribe evil itself to God. But by his strongly practical tendency he was perpetually recalled to the opposite view, and in insisting on the ideas of sin and of duty, he gives a large scope to the action of human freedom. We note this inconsistency, not by way of blame, but in order to show that this question, to which our main subject will compel us repeatedly to recur, was not new in the age of the apostles, and, especially, that science had as yet failed to give to it a clear reply.

If the moral philosophy of Philo presents few analogies with the apostolic teaching, his metaphysics, on the other hand, offer so many, that it is impossible to mistake the secret link, which unites the first essays of speculative theology produced in the Church, with the theories and formulas of the Jewish school of Alexandria. We think it well to give here an outline of these theories, leaving it to the discernment of our readers to discover presently the points of comparison between them and the Christian doctrines, as the latter come to present themselves distinctly before us.

The primary necessity of the metaphysical system of Philo, is to separate God from the material world by a gulf which excludes every idea, not only of affinity, but even of direct contact. It seeks to remain equidistant from materialism and idealism; it believes in the reality of both the material and the spiritual, but at the same time recognizes the immeasurable distance which divides them. This distance has to be traversed, the action of God upon the world to be explained, and first of all the origin of the world itself. To this end, it is needful first, that the human mind should be able to form an adequate con-

ception of God. But this is a task beyond its strength. It knows nothing of God except that He is. His absolute existence, without attributes, is all that it can grasp. God is to the mind of man a pure abstraction. Popular religion had taught that God is invisible, that His name ought not to be profaned by the lips of men ; philosophy translates this sentiment into a speculative axiom. But God contains in Himself all perfections, the principles of life and of all action ; it might be said that He is a focus of light, from which rays emanate in all directions,—the intensity of the primitive and central brightness never growing less by this perpetual radiation. These rays or motive principles are called the powers of God,—the same which the Bible calls angels, and Philo calls ideas. These powers are regarded, not as abstract conceptions, but as personal existences, separated from the Divine essence by a species of emanation, in order to give life to matter, of which they are, so to speak, the souls. Their number cannot be determined ; but speculation comprehends them under two generic names, which indicate their principal characteristics, namely, goodness and power. These same forces are also called words, doubtless in order to give a philosophical explanation of the myth of creation, in which God is represented as creating the world by His word. Taken as a whole, they form the transcendental world, that is to say, the world as it exists in God, ideally and apart from all reality.

But speculation finds it necessary to reunite all these forces—so various in their influence and manifestations—in one personality, and this necessity is amply justified by the unity of the Divine Person, in whom these forces are contained, so to speak, in a latent condition, and become recognizable by reason only as they are revealed in action. Now this personal unity, in other words the Divinity considered as concrete, that is to say in possession of all the attributes which render the conception of it possible to the human mind, is the Logos, the Creative Word, the Word *par excellence*, comprehending in itself the whole plurality of words which serve, each in its measure, to reveal the Divinity, who would else be inconceivable to man. The Word,

in Himself, is immanent in God, and consequently co-eternal; He reveals Himself only in the act of creation, by which He emerges, so to speak, from the essence of God, detaches Himself and emanates from it. But in revealing Himself, He reveals also the invisible God, of whom He is thus the image or reflection. Regarded as an emanation from the Divine Being, He is called His Son; as alone of His kind, He is called the only Son; as comprehending in Himself the totality of Divine forces or angels, He may receive the name of Archangel. Inasmuch as His creative manifestation took place in time, or at least is apprehended as posterior to the notion of the Absolute in the order of speculative ideas, He bears the name of the *second God*. Finally, as His emanation precedes creation, He is the eldest or first-born; He forms the intermediate link between God and the world; He is the Mediator, not indeed directly, but by the successive expansion of all the Divine forces, which in due progression emanate from Him; in a word, He is the instrument of God, who abides ever the great First Cause.

Many questions were yet left open, to which the system, of which we have been able to give only a slight outline, gave no positive reply—questions, for example, referring to cosmology and psychology. But we refrain from pursuing further, investigations which would lead us astray from our purpose. We observe only, that this second part of the system of Philo evidently lent its aid to Christian metaphysics, with which it shows striking resemblances, though nowhere amounting to complete identity. But it may be said to have had scarcely any connection with the ethical part of Christianity, or any relation to the moral wants of humanity therein recognized. It is this which constitutes the essential difference between the speculations of the philosopher of Alexandria and those of the theologians of the Church.

CHAPTER IX.

EBIONISM AND ESSENISM.

THE various influences at work in the heart of Judaism, which we have described in the preceding chapters, have this in common, that they were all more or less the result of reflection. All originated in an application of the reason to the ideas and facts supplied by tradition, both those which were purely theoretical, and those which emerged from that narrow circle, and asserted themselves more or less powerfully in the sphere of active life. But religion is not designed simply to enlighten the conscience, to furnish food for speculation, and to govern the conduct of men or the modes of worship; there are other and very legitimate demands which it is called upon to satisfy. These are the requirements of the heart and of feeling. Judaism almost ignored this aspect of the spiritual life. It may indeed be said that the peculiar character of the Semitic nationality gave small recognition to it, and did little to foster or develop it. The prophets in particular exercised scarcely any influence in this direction. Their lofty eloquence represented Jehovah in all His majesty, holiness, and justice; their powerful imagination painted in the most brilliant colours His future glory and that of His chosen people; their fearless devotion set the example of obedience, of reverence, and of fear. But the God of Israel claimed only such sentiments as these, and their lawful manifestations. The religious relations between Himself and His worshippers, were not based upon the affection of the heart or the yearnings of tender love. His greatness was their shield and defence, but it did not raise

them out of their own lowly sphere; on the contrary, it perpetually reminded them of their insignificance. While a hundred passages represent the majesty of Jehovah, overwhelming with the terrors of tempest the mortal men to whom in His condescension He deigns to stoop, there is but one in which that majesty comes near as the breeze of evening, breathing softly to bless the weary heart; and even then the man veils his face in awful reverence and fear.*

This peculiar character of the Jewish religion may be explained in part by the weakness or the absence of the individual principle. One overpowering sense of solidarity governs all the manifestations of religious feeling, and is the paramount idea in all the teaching of the law and the prophets. The individual is lost in the nation; it is as an Israelite, and not as a man, that he stands in relation to Jehovah; between him and his God there is a law, a covenant, an altar, which were before him, which are not therefore for him, but for which he and thousands exist, and without which he would be nothing. The principle of the theocracy did not necessarily involve this consequence, but it arose out of the nature of its application, and the centralization of worship gave it ultimate predominance.

The intellectual or rational element in Judaism could not, however, permanently retain absolute sway. The deep religiousness of the people, especially in the ages after the exile, must in the end correct, at least in part, that which was defective and incomplete in the Jewish religion itself. To prepare the way for new influences, which were subsequently to play so important a part in the religious history of mankind, to make ready the soil for the Gospel seed, Providence employed its most powerful instrument of education—suffering. It is suffering which has the high prerogative of driving man into himself, of making him seek in his own heart, with patience and humbleness, a God who comforts more than He afflicts.

There came a period when the policy of the Seleucides, with reference to the Jews, underwent an abrupt change. The assimilation of the various nationalities went on too slowly to

* 1 Kings xix.

please a despot like Antiochus Epiphanes, and he thought to hasten it by violence and coercive measures. The consequences are matter of history. Bloody and interminable wars, a stormy and transitory independence, kept the country in perpetual agitation during two centuries. Oppression weighed still more heavily upon individuals than on the body of the nation; every species of cruelty—religious persecutions, iniquitous spoliations, burdensome imposts, the miseries of war, the raileries of paganism, the venality of judges, and all the melancholy train of vexations that accompany a bad government—taught many of the Jews to seek Jehovah elsewhere than at the threshold of the temple, and to speak to Him more directly than by the mouth of a priest, or with the breath of incense. A large number of psalms, inspired under these circumstances, and ever since the solace of those passing through analogous experiences, bear testimony to this new direction of men's minds. Reconciliation and peace with God became the main object of desire; the consciousness of this oneness was the supreme felicity to which each individual could aspire, and its attainment was deemed worth the sacrifice of all earthly good.*

This sentiment did not indeed at once rise to the full purity of evangelical religion. It was born upon the soil of Judaism, and Judaism bequeathed to it a portion of its Pharisaic and peculiar spirit. The renunciation of the world was not unaccompanied by a measure of self-complacence; the contempt of riches was often translated into hatred of the rich. The resignation which had flung away the sword, and would no more be dazzled by the glory of the battle-field, was yet not incompatible with fierce imprecations on the odious adversaries. Poverty and suffering claimed an inherent merit for themselves, and the individual who endured them was wont to regard them as the attestation and seal of his own righteous-

* The Psalms to which Reuss refers, and to which, on adequate grounds, he assigns so late a date, can be paralleled by compositions the earlier date of which is incontestable. The twenty-third Psalm, and the Psalms associated with David's sin and repentance, have the same personal character. Many others might be quoted.—ED.

ness. But, nevertheless, a boundless trust in God was paramount to every other feeling in souls which had taken this direction. The calmness, consolation, inward quietness flowing from that trust, became so natural to them, that they did not even feel the necessity of seeking in the future, compensation for their present tribulations. Their hopes did not at any rate assume, by preference, the brilliant and fantastic form of the Messianic visions; nay, more, their expectations of the coming end of evil, still, as in the old times, found their goal on this side the grave.

The tendency just described, was so distinct and decided in its peculiar character, that it became both necessary and possible for it to assume a special name, by which it might be distinguished from opposing schools. Its representatives chose to be known as the poor, the humble, the oppressed; and by an association of ideas very natural after the explanation given above, these designations uniformly implied the notion of piety and religious resignation. We may even safely say, without fear of error, that the latter became ultimately the essential idea. Such designations were not indeed absolutely new. They were already found in the writings of the old prophets, but it is in the later portion of Hebrew literature—that which has always been regarded as presenting the closest affinity with the spirit of the Gospel—that we become familiar with these terms in the more concrete acceptation. The idea that pious men are destined to suffer—an idea only too commonly justified by experience—led therefore to the habit of using the name of suffering to designate piety. Taking this fact as a basis, we shall venture to simplify our explanation by the use of this name. We shall denominate as Ebionism the peculiar character of mind we have just described, and which we regard as the first cause of a series of religious manifestations, which are connected both with the sphere of Judaism, and with the first period of the Christian Church. The literal translation of this name—derived from a Hebrew word often employed with many other synonyms in the Psalms—is pauperism; but as this term has in our own days a

signification altogether different, we shall convey a more exact idea by calling it the pietism of the poor. This designation does not imply a shadow of blame, while it has the advantage of directly recalling analogous facts in modern times.

As this word *Ebionism* has a great affinity, external and internal, with the word *Ebionitism*, subsequently adopted, and familiar to those who have interested themselves in the history of Christian sects, it is necessary for us to dwell upon it a moment, in order to prevent any confusion of ideas. We have expressly chosen a term which should recall the other, because, in our opinion, the fact represented by the later name, stands in close connection with that now before us. Only we must dismiss that narrow and incomplete definition of Christian Ebionitism which makes it consist in the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ. For if this had been the main element in this particular form of the Christian system, there would be no justification of the name it bears, and we should err altogether in placing it in any relation with a school of Judaism formed before the coming of Christ, and having absolutely no connection with any Messianic theories. We shall see in the course of this history, how much the Ebionism of which we are speaking, did to prepare the ground for the Gospel, and how many minds disposed to receive the teaching of Jesus and His apostles, were found among those who had become familiar with a doctrine which, imposing abnegation of self and worldly hopes as a primary necessity, rendered it at the same time so easy.

We can hardly conceive in the midst of Judaism, the existence of a purely inward piety, which should seek no outward acts or forms in which to embody itself. On the contrary, we naturally look for its manifestation in a more or less vigorous asceticism. Such an expectation is more than justified by facts. First, the pious usages generally enjoined by the synagogue, could not be neglected by men deeply concerned about their religious interests. We do not refer here particularly to the Levitical rites strictly so called, the sacrifices and other public ceremonies, which were too often above the

pecuniary means of this class of persons; but rather to that secret and unassuming asceticism, which every one might practise for himself, without need of priest, or any official preparation whatsoever. Prayer and fasting especially, were duties held in high observance by this school of ancient pietists, which was as well deserving of honour in its principle and primitive simplicity, as any other religious manifestation of the same kind to which the name has since been given. These duties were performed without ostentation. The splendour of the public worship had little attraction for men of this order; they would gradually withdraw from it to seek the sustenance of their souls in more private assemblies. Abstinence from worldly pleasures—from the use of wine, for example—was a direct consequence of their principles. Aversion to war, and all connected with it, was natural and consistent. The religious reverence for the name of God, so deeply impressed on the heart of the Jew, would lead finally to the absolute refusal to take any oath. Last of all, we see celibacy acquiring the character of a peculiar virtue in one section of a nation which had always highly exalted motherhood. The fact is, that the impulse once given, ideas do not stop after having reached their lawful or necessary conclusions. We may make the general observation that the principle of this pietism, as it developed itself and penetrated more and more every sphere of the religious life, became further and further removed from Pharisaism, though in its origin it had started from the same point.

Nor was this all. It is in the nature of such a tendency to make renunciation of the world the subject of a still more practical study, and in the end to become the basis of a society. Such was the case with Ebionism. Its piety became exclusive; its habitual separation from men who did not share its views and manner of life, finally stifled the characteristic sentiment of Judaism, that of religious and national solidarity. Its preference for private means of edification, led it to forsake the temple; in a word, Ebionism became a sect. It formed, indeed, as we do not hesitate to affirm, the only true sect which existed

in the Judaism of this period ; that is to say, the only really separatist party. Out of Ebionism arose Essenism.

We know nothing of the time of this transformation, and have no precise information as to the significance and origin of the name. It may perhaps be taken for granted that this new phase was not produced by any sudden or accidental cause. Such changes are long in preparation, and are not necessarily the work of an individual. Possibly Essenism, as a distinct sect, is not of date much anterior to Christianity. The general statements of the oldest and most competent writers with reference to it differ greatly. But if it be admitted that the change from a mere principle widely diffused among the people, to a separatist society, would naturally be effected by degrees,—that many would be likely to stop halfway in the progressive movement, and that primitive Ebionism, more or less defined, might and probably would co-exist with Essenism already formed into a sect,—such being allowed, as we say, to be the natural course of things, all contradictions disappear. We shall not here quote that which Philo and Josephus say with reference to the sect of the Essenes. Their testimony is familiar to all, and we have no interest in dealing with matter which we regard as foreign to our main subject. For we deny most positively that this sect, as such, exerted any direct influence either upon the rise or the theology of the Christianity of the first century, though the assertion that it did so has been often made and received in modern times.

We know that Essenism delighted in mystery. It initiated its disciples by degrees ; it formed a brotherhood united by the bonds of the most devoted charity, and by the substitution of the social for the family bond ; it introduced the community of meals and of goods ; it was averse to all labour which did not produce results of direct utility ; it enjoined upon its members the wearing of a particular garb ; it avoided contact with other men, discouraged dwelling in towns, and went so far as to forbid marriage. This singular combination of estimable virtues, extravagant prejudices, and puerile forms could not long continue intact. In a few generations we see

it taking a new direction, very different from that at first pursued. Separation from the world, hollow forms, asceticism, mystery, wherever they are found together, are never long without falling into philosophic mysticism, into that which is called theosophy, or secret doctrines, the product more often of the imagination than the reason, deriving their chief strength from the veil in which they enwrap themselves, and cherishing a pleasing illusion of high antiquity in which they boast. The Essenes of Philo and Josephus soon vanished from the scene; after the fall of Jerusalem, they were no more heard of; but subsequently they reappear in various forms and under various names, among which that of the Ebionites will especially call for attention. These Ebionites of the second and following centuries are described sometimes as Christians, equally destitute in point of evangelical knowledge and of material means; sometimes as more or less philosophical heretics, who had invented systems equally ingenious and curious on the relations of Christ and Moses. These statements, long regarded as contradictory, may be explained and vindicated by the analysis we have given. They refer to various Christian phases of an ancient principle and tendency, so deeply enrooted that it survived all the revolutions among the Jews of the nation. We have not here to study these manifestations subsequently to the period at which our narrative will stop. But we shall have occasion to show that the Ebionite doctrine also helped to prepare the way for the Gospel, while at the same time, as was the case with Pharisaism and philosophy, it left the traces of its presence.

CHAPTER X.

MESSIANIC HOPES.

THE religion of the Jews is distinguished from that of other peoples of antiquity, at least in the later periods of its history, not so much by monotheism, as by faith in the future. While in all other nations, we find men expending their imagination on the retrospective picture of a golden age irrecoverably passed away, Israel, guided by its prophets, persistently turned its eyes in an opposite direction, and clung the more closely to the belief in a blessedness to come, the more the present aspect of things seemed to belie its hopes. We have already observed that of all the influences successively developed within the sphere of Judaism, the strongest ascendant over the religious education of the people, was gained by that school which most fervently cherished these hopes of the future. The political and worldly axioms of the Sadducees, the metaphysical studies of the Alexandrine philosophers, the solitary asceticism of the Essenes, could not in the nature of things gain more than a limited number of adherents; the mass of the people, educated and moulded by the Pharisaic school, imbibed from it two ruling and equally indestructible principles—attachment to the ritual forms of religion, and belief in Messianic ideas.

These ideas did not form a body of doctrine articulate and definite. From the very fact that they were to so large an extent the product of imagination, and that science had not therefore the exclusive prerogative of moulding them by its laws, they present vague and uncertain outlines, and assume colours varying with the spirit of the times, of classes, and of

individuals. In the minds of some, these Messianic expectations were ardent, warlike, fantastic; with others, they were pious, reasonable, calm. In the one class the political element predominated—national hatred, visions of vengeance and of universal domination; in the other the moral element was uppermost—the religious feeling, the craving for reconciliation with Jehovah, the desire for a happy brotherhood of all mankind. The terms which the school had invented for the expression of its theories, and which had been rendered familiar to the people by the public instructors, did not always, and in all minds, awake the same images. Messiah, salvation, the kingdom, appeared now in an ideal but somewhat hazy light, and again in more definite but also more material forms. The hope of Messiah, so dearly cherished by the people of Israel in its distant wanderings, had already begun to vibrate on the ear of the astonished West, which received it with a thrill of instinctive response, before that hope had assumed even in Judæa any definite form;—a providential indication, surely, that the true and perfect idea had yet to disengage itself from the immature germ.

It is certain that the existence and diffusion of this hope did more than any other element of spiritual activity to prepare the ground for the Gospel; and that the history of the Christian Church and the astonishing success of the preaching of the apostles must remain an enigma, unless we recognize and take into account this attitude of mind, common to men far beyond the strict limits of Jewish civilization.* It is important for us then to observe it carefully, to form a true idea of the expectation cherished, whether secretly or avowedly, by the majority of the Jewish people, especially by that portion of the nation which received with most readiness, and with least egoism, the true Messiah, at length revealed to the world. The Gospel history itself introduces us in the most direct manner

* I do not know on what grounds it can be shown that among the heathen there was any such general expectation of a Messiah as to account for the success of apostolic preaching. The well-known passage in Tacitus is an insufficient proof of the position maintained in the text.—ED.

to this circle of men and of ideas; the persons who were most closely gathered around the Saviour from His birth to His death, are those who give us the clearest insight into the secret yearnings of a generation wearied by long political reverses, and still more by the barren and idle disputations of the schools.* In the Gospel narrative, we see around humble family hearths, simple men sincerely faithful to the precepts of the law, sighing after better times, and looking for a new Elias, whose powerful word should change the spirit of the nation, still rent by contending passions and rebellious against God.† The evil was too firmly rooted, the political and moral degeneracy of the people too deep, for its regeneration to be possible without direct Divine interposition, first by the voice of a prophet and then by the mission of Messiah. He, when He came, was to set up again the glorious throne of David, and to inaugurate a kingdom that should have no end, in the house of Jacob. A vast revolution, all tending to the benefit of good and God-fearing men was to be brought about by the power of the Most High.‡ A feeling of patriotism, as lawful as it was ardent, ennobled this hope. The glory of Israel would be seen in all the earth; its redemption from the hands of its enemies was but the fulfilment of the ancient and sacred promises made to the patriarchs, and guaranteed by the oath of the covenant.§ But this victory and this deliverance were to be the signal of a new era of holiness and righteousness, in which Jehovah, “the Lord God, merciful and gracious,” would pardon a people repenting of their unfaithfulness, and would cause to succeed to the darkness of present sorrow, the dawn of a new day, in the light of which the feet of His children would walk in paths of holiness and righteousness.|| This was the consolation of Israel which pious and just men waited for with holy confidence. There were many such men in Jerusalem and elsewhere; they were preparing themselves by fasting and prayer for the manifestation of the Saviour,¶ and as the energy of their

* Matt. vii. 29; Mark i. 22.

† Luke i. 6, 17.

‡ Luke i. 32, 33.; 50—55.

§ Luke i. 54, 55, 68, and foll.; ii. 32.

|| Luke i. 74—79.

¶ Luke ii. 25, 37, 38.

faith grew with the evils around them, there was doubtless more than one, to whom a revealing presentiment gave the assurance, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ.*

The picture we have just drawn by means of the analysis of a passage which contains all its elements in combination, may appear to some an idealized representation, since it has come down to us through the medium of the Christian mind. We reply that the two points of view—the Jewish and the Christian—were not in the commencement far removed from each other, as we shall abundantly show as we proceed; and that, in fact, all the ideas we have just mentioned are found, literally expressed, in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. They thus form, therefore, what may be called the religious kernel of the Messianic hope, around which subsequently gathered, as a sort of husk or shell, the definitions of the schools. These definitions, alternately concealing and embellishing the primitive conception, and not always harmonizing among themselves, became infused in very unequal proportions in the popular mind; and according to the predominance of the moral or political element in the masses, they favoured or hindered the evangelical movement. The latter fact comes out prominently on many occasions in the life of Jesus Himself and in the history of His apostles. As He gained ground in public opinion, as His miracles especially attracted attention to His person, He had to defend Himself against the false interpretations of popular prejudice, to flee from the effects of the feverish excitement of men's minds, and to complain of the misconceptions of even His most intimate disciples. We may readily excuse, however, these innocent mistakes of His unhappy contemporaries, when even in our own day we find men of science, falsely so called, ready to bestow on Him the epithets of democrat and revolutionary.

Rabbinical theology, in taking up so fruitful a subject as the expectation of Messiah, imposed upon itself an arduous task. The people were sorrowfully convinced that there were

* Luke ii. 26; comp. Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 51.

no longer any prophets among them ; and yet these leaders of public thought, undertook to predict the future, to determine beforehand the succession of changes it was to bring, and to define events as far beyond human conception as they were without historic precedent. The means which this theology employed to attain its ends consisted in an essentially divinatory exegesis. Not content with collecting clear and positive texts, which were insufficient to gratify their curiosity, the interpreters, in their eagerness to lift the veil of the future, vied with each other in inventing new methods by which to wrest from the obscurity of the sacred text a sense hitherto undiscovered, and which was maintained with an ardour proportioned to the difficulty with which it had been reached. Under such treatment, Scripture soon became a collection of hieroglyphs intelligible only to the initiated few, and requiring from its adepts the preliminary possession of a sort of occult science. By this means, proofs were never wanting to sustain any ideas, sound or superstitious, which might arise in the brains of masters or disciples, and which, once mooted, were sure to be perpetuated by the aid of tenacious tradition, which held every opinion uttered from the rabbinical chair to be an immortal truth.

As we are not writing a critical history of the theology of the Jews, but are only seeking an acquaintance with the ideas current in the society of Palestine at the time when the Gospel was first preached, we shall simply gather from contemporary sources the most important elements of the Messianic hopes, and thus gain a broad outline of the expected future. Such sources are very abundant. We have no need to descend to the Targums or Chaldaic paraphrases of the Bible, nor to other more recent rabbinical works, though these all contain some doctrines of great antiquity. We possess, beside the Revelation of Daniel, which is more ancient, the book of Enoch, written probably under Herod the Great, and that of the pseudo-Ezra, which was almost immediately subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem. Lastly, our Gospels themselves supply us with valuable and tolerably full information both as to the ideas current among the people, and as to the measure and

manner in which these ideas of their compatriots were shared by the disciples of Jesus. Should the picture still leave anything to be desired, it can easily be completed by the aid of the theology of the primitive Christian Church, which we shall place before our readers.

Jewish theology divided the whole course of time into two great periods: the one, embracing the past and the present, was the age of misery and sin; the other, comprehending all the future, was to be the era of virtue and happiness. The closing years of the former period, immediately preceding the advent of the latter, form the most important epoch in the history of humanity, that of the transition to a new order of things, and are therefore characterized by a special name, the fulness of time, the latter days.

This era is introduced by the appearing of the great restorer of the people of God and of the world at large, whom the prophets had already foretold, and for whom men, faithful to the traditions of their nation, were looking with all the stronger confidence, as their actual position became more and more at variance with the ideal of their dreams. From the time of Daniel, this expected Restorer is most frequently called the Messiah, the Lord's Anointed,—that is to say, the Chosen King, the King of Israel.* As such, He is the successor, the Son of David.† He is also spoken of simply as "He who was to come."‡ Other honourable titles exalt His dignity.§

As to the nature of His person, the schools had not arrived at any definite or positive theory. The opinion that Messiah would be a man, a descendant of David, a successor of the prophets, always had its adherents.|| But the idea that the Saviour of Israel would be a superhuman Being was also, on

* Matt. ii. 4; xxiv. 23; xxvi. 68; xxvii. 17, 22, 37; Mark xv. 32; Luke iii. 15; xix. 38; xxiii. 2; John i. 20, 41, 49; iv. 25, 26.

† Matt. xv. 22; xx. 30; xxi. 9; xxii. 42; Mark xii. 35; Luke xviii. 38, 39.

‡ Luke vii. 19.

§ Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34; xxiii. 35.

|| John vi. 14.

the other hand, maintained, and was even beginning to prevail. It was the natural corollary of expectations so vast as those connected with His name, and would have probably asserted itself even had it found no foundation in Scripture. No doubt there was much vagueness in this conception; but the name *Son of God*, specially appropriated to Messiah, is in itself evidence that it had a real and positive existence.*

The precise period of His advent was a mystery, though curiosity often attempted to unravel it, or tried to fix its date by calculation in round numbers.† Failing to find a direct solution of this problem, men endeavoured to fix the series of precursive signs of the great revolution, with the view of recognizing its eventual approach.

The first of these signs is the progressive advance of corruption upon the earth, and the inevitable increase of every kind of calamity. The latter days are described as the world's *anguish*, a word singularly suggestive of the state of mind consequent on such an aggravation of all physical and moral evil. These are to be as the birth-throes of Messiah.‡ War, famine, pestilence, the most terrible natural phenomena—eclipses, earthquakes—will keep pace with impiety, apostasy, the profanation of holy places, and all the horrors of vice and crime. Numerous passages from the prophets lend the colour for this part of the picture.

The signs which were to be more directly precursive of Messiah were, first, the appearance of an extraordinary star;§ then that of a prophet of the old covenant, restored to life expressly to proclaim Messiah. Jewish theology generally assigned this part to the most illustrious of the successors of Moses, Elias.|| Sometimes, however, it was divided among

* Matt. xxvi. 63; Luke iv. 41; Luke xxii. 70; John i. 49, 65, 69; John xi. 27.

† Luke xvii. 20; Matt. xxiv. 3.

‡ ὠδύνης, Matt. xxiv. 8.

§ Matt. ii. 2.

|| Mal. iii. 4, 5; Sir. xlvi. 10; Mark vi. 15; viii. 28; ix. 11; Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 10; Luke ix. 8, 19.

several prophets, Moses, Jeremiah, and others being named as well as Elijah.*

Lastly, Messiah was to be immediately preceded by Antichrist, a terrible and mysterious being, at once man and demon, combining in himself all influences hostile to God, all the powers of the world and hell, and thus provoking heaven to the final manifestation of its almightiness. The image of this supreme adversary of the chosen people and of the Messianic kingdom, had been first traced by Daniel; the imagination of the exegetes had delighted in filling up the outline with all the virulence of the political animosities of every age, and at the time of the apostles it formed part of the common current of ideas.†

The mode of Christ's appearing had not been positively defined by exegesis. It was sometimes supposed, from a passage in Micah, that He would come out of Bethlehem,‡ but the general idea was that He would present Himself in a sudden and unexpected manner in the midst of the people, so that He might be at once recognized without any preliminary manifestation.§ This is clear from the technical terms in which His coming was spoken of—the appearing, the revelation of the Lord,—terms which have become so familiar that they have even passed into modern languages in their Greek form—the apocalypse.

The object of Messiah's coming may be stated in general terms to be the foundation of the kingdom of God. This, however, implies a series of preparatory or accessory facts, which we must briefly enumerate. There was needed, first, a political, moral, and religious restoration of Israel, such as the ancient prophets had foretold. The political restoration consisted in deliverance from the Roman yoke;|| the recall of all the dispersed Jews;¶ lastly, the re-establishment of the

* Matt. xvii. 3; Rev. xi. 3, and foll.; 2 Mac. xv. 13, and foll.; Matt. xvi. 13, and foll.; Mark vi. 15; Luke ix. 8.

† John ii. 18.

‡ Matt. ii. 5; John vii. 41, and foll.

§ John vii. 27; Matt. xxiv. 27.

|| Judith xvi. 17; Sir. 50, 24; Luke i. 67, and foll.; ii. 38; xxiv. 21.

¶ Tobit xiii. 10; xiv. 5; 2 Mac. ii. 18.

throne of David.* The moral and religious restoration comprehended the remission of sins, granted in consideration of the prolonged sufferings of the people and of the punishment of the wicked; the sanctification of the survivors, who were to be thenceforward a righteous nation; the conversion of the Gentiles; and, finally, a new order of prophecy and a new legislation suited to the future condition of Israel.† It is scarcely necessary to say that extraordinary miracles were to accompany all these Messianic events.‡

A new series of scenes yet more imposing was annexed to these first manifestations of the Christ, and was vastly to extend the sphere and the dignity of His operations. At a trumpet signal, given by the angels who accompany Him, the dead will rise and stand up for the judgment of the last day. The righteous, who alone are worthy of the resurrection,§ will join in the judgment of the condemned, who will be cast into the fire of Gehenna, prepared for the devil and his angels, and will there suffer eternally, which is called the second death. Men even ventured to fix the scene of these events, and the kingdom of Christ, which was to be immediately set up, was placed by some on earth, by some in heaven. In either case, the world as it then existed was not held worthy of it; and a glorious transformation was in store for the universe, to prepare it to serve as the abode of the elect. Its great metropolis was then to be the new Jerusalem, on the description of which the eastern imagination delighted to lavish its wealth.||

We need not inquire what was to be the duration of this Messianic kingdom. The idea of cessation or end was incompatible with the very conception of the Christ.¶ What is important for us to prove, on the other hand, is that nothing

* Acts i. 6.

† 1 Mac. iii. 8; 2 Mac. vii. 38; vii. 5, etc.; Job xiii. 11; xiv. 6; Luke i. 74, and foll.; John iv. 25; vi. 14; Acts iii. 22.

‡ Matt. xii. 23; John vii. 31.

§ Daniel xii. 2, 13; 2 Mac. vii.

|| Tobit xiii.

¶ John xii. 34.

could be more alien from the Jewish idea than any interruption whatever in the mighty sway of the Saviour, from the moment of His revelation. This it was which made the idea of the death of Messiah appear to the disciples a paradox utterly inadmissible. The prophetic words of Jesus on this subject overturned all their established convictions.* To the members of Messiah's kingdom, theology could not but assign eternal blessedness, when the idea of the resurrection and of immortality had been once clearly conceived. Previously to that, a comparatively long life was spoken of,† and the most ancient calculations which ventured on figures, fix the duration of the Messianic blessedness at a thousand years.‡ The names of the elect are inscribed beforehand in the book of life; they wear, as a distinctive mark, white robes, and bear the seal of God.

Lastly, the felicity which will close this brilliant evolution of future events is variously depicted, according to the point of view of the men who fed their imagination upon it. Images were used to set it forth, which were only too often taken literally by the materialism of the popular taste. Among these images, the one in most frequent use is that of a feast, and as it was the custom to recline at table with the head leant against the breast of the next guest, the idea of being at the same table with the holy men of the old covenant—of sharing, that is, in their felicity—naturally found expression in the phrase, resting in Abraham's bosom, a phrase so ridiculously interpreted by painters.§ This image and the expressions conveying it had passed into such general use, that they scarcely retained anything of their original significance.|| As feasts in the East usually took place at night, in splendidly lighted halls, other figures were derived from them, expressive, on the one hand, of the privileges of the guests; on the other, of the privations of those excluded. These similes are frequently met

* Matt. xvi. 22; Mark viii. 30; ix. 12; Luke ix. 22, 44, 45; xviii. 34.

† Isaiah lxxv. 20, and foll.

‡ Psalm xc. 4.

§ Luke xvi. 22; comp. xiv. 15.

|| Luke xiii. 29; xxii. 30; Matt. viii. 11, etc.

with in the parables of Jesus, which is a proof of their wide popularity.

Apart from this image of a feast, the analysis of the idea of felicity led the prophets of Messiah's kingdom to proclaim the absence of all pain or privation, the enjoyment of the presence of God, incessant adoration of His majesty, absolute rest and cessation from toil ; in a word, an eternal Sabbath, a perfect condition of body, exempted henceforth from all failing or infirmity, and endued with new and extraordinary properties ; the fruitfulness of all nature, not dependent on conditions of labour ; sustenance by celestial fruits, chiefly those of the tree of life ; superiority to angels, who were to minister to the elect, and so forth. It would be doubtless an injustice to the Jewish theologians to say that these figures were suggestive of nothing but earthly and material conceptions ; but it is unquestionably true that the education imparted to the people gave comparatively little prominence to the spiritual element.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

HITHERTO we have been dealing with generalities. It was necessary for us to study the tendencies common to a greater or less number of individuals, that we might familiarize ourselves with the world into which the Gospel was introduced, and the influences under which the disciples would be placed both in its reception and propagation. The picture of Judaism in the time of Jesus Christ is now complete, at least in all that relates to the moral and religious ideas current in the society professing it. But before passing on to the study of the other element of the apostolic theology, that which by its growing ascendancy was gradually to obliterate the former and to change the face of the world, we must pause a moment to contemplate one imposing figure, to whom religious history and Christian theology alike assign a place apart, between the two phases of revelation. "For the law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come."* With John therefore, and with his appeal to the heirs of the promises of God, the teaching of the apostles commences.†

The history of John the Baptist, regarded under this aspect, which is the only one of interest to us at present, offers

* Matt. xi. 13, 14 ; Luke xvi. 16.

† Acts i. 22 ; x. 37 ; Mark i. 1.

many very grave difficulties, which science sometimes refuses to perceive, or which it is content to remove in a summary and superficial manner. Happily, we have for the guidance of our judgment in this matter, the most irrefragable testimony that can be received, the judgment pronounced on the preacher of the desert by the Saviour Himself, on a solemn occasion, and at a time when the forerunner had fulfilled his mission, and was approaching the close of his life.* After paying tribute to the steadfastness and severity of John's character, Jesus proclaims him a prophet and more than a prophet, the greatest of all the men who had lived under the old dispensation; but He immediately adds that the least of those who enter the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. It is a singular fact, an unaccountable caprice of the tradition of the Church, that in spite of this judgment of the Saviour, so clearly pronounced, John the Baptist should be represented as an evangelical Christian, who not only understood all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but preached them in anticipation. Difficulties are thus created, as if designedly, which do not exist in the real history, while others are ignored which are very palpable in the letter of the text whence we derive our information.

John appeared at a period when a belief in the near approach of the Messianic era was widely diffused among the populations of Palestine, though it manifested itself in very various forms, sometimes as an ambitious superstition, sometimes as a sacred anticipation. Understanding well the feeling of his downcast countrymen, who had long lost the simple trust of their fathers in the prophetic rapture, John dared not assume the name of prophet,† though he *was* a prophet in all the force of the term; he was modestly content to call himself "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight

* Matt. xi. 7—11; Luke vii. 24—28.

† There is nothing to show that John shrank from calling himself a prophet, much less that he shrank from doing so for any such reason as Reuss suggests. What he disclaimed was, the honour of being that great prophet to whom the prediction of Moses had pointed.—ED.

the way of the Lord."* But the very solitude which he chose, and the austere manner of life he imposed upon himself and his disciples, which was perfectly in harmony with the popular tradition of the life of the old prophets, assured to him the respect and attention of his contemporaries, who were eager to thrust upon him a dignity to which for long ages no Israelite had dared to aspire.†

This purely ascetic form of his prophetic ministry, which did not even always produce the effect desired, was doubtless, in the mind of John the Baptist, more than a mere method of propagandism, a simple necessity of circumstance. It reveals to us no less the nature of his convictions, the conditions under which he considered the realization of Messiah's kingdom to be possible, and gives us thus a key to the contrast, which Jesus repeatedly marks, between John's point of view and His own. We shall understand this still more clearly when we come to examine, in the second place, the substance of the teaching of the Forerunner.‡ This consists of three very simple elements, which we shall give in a few words. It is, first, the proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom; with this is connected, as a necessary consequence, the call to repentance; and, lastly, there is the positive proclamation of Messiah and of His work.

On the first point there is no difference between the preaching of John and of the Gospel; for without speaking of the apostles, we find the very same form of words put into the lips of Jesus Himself, by the sacred historians. There remains

* John i. 21, 23. According to the three other gospels, this correspondence of the preaching of John with a well-known passage in Isaiah (xl. 3) appears only as the result of Christian reflection upon the history.¹ The same remark will apply to various other circumstances of which we shall have to speak; it suggests at once the source of the difficulties to which we have alluded.

† Matt. iii. 4; ix. 14; xi. 18. Comp. Heb. xi. 37; Matt. xxi. 26; Mark xi. 32.

‡ Matt. iii. 2, 7—12; Luke iii. 7—17. Comp. John i. 26, and foll.; iii. 28, and foll.

¹ But on what grounds are we to refuse the testimony of the Evangelist John, that the Baptist himself was conscious that he was fulfilling the ancient prophecy?—ED.

the question of the nature of the kingdom. We may be allowed to say simply here, that from the very first we discern a difference in this respect between the two teachers; but we shall find a clearer reply to this question when we come to speak of the work of Christ as described by John the Baptist.

The second point is of greater importance. Let us first observe the grandeur and beauty conveyed in the few lines, which give us the epitome of a ministry carried on probably for years, and powerful enough to stir to its depths a people either plunged in a mournful moral apathy, or engrossed in the schemes of an idle fanaticism. From such a world as this, either indifferent or self-complacent, John demands a complete change of inward feeling, and a corresponding change in the outward life. The motive to which he appeals in this urgent exhortation is fear of the righteous judgments of God, which are no longer to be delayed. This motive, and the resolution which it is to suggest to the individuals addressed, belong to the sphere of Judaism; they appeal undoubtedly to that religion in its highest function, but still they do not go beyond it. When the Pharisees are warned that it is not enough to be of the seed of Abraham in order to have part in the heritage of Israel, and that, failing the Jews, the Almighty could form for Himself a new people out of the stones of the desert, it is only the eloquent repetition of a truth many times proclaimed by the old prophets, whose words on this point are appealed to in the Gospel itself. So far then, unless we are prepared to assert the absolute identity of the old and new dispensations, we discover no element in the teaching of John which warrants us in raising him to the level of the latter.

We pass to the third point of the Forerunner's teaching, that which relates to his historical and providential relations with the Messiah whom he proclaims, and with His work. That which first of all strikes us here, is his own bold and candid avowal of his sense of inferiority and of deference to Christ. This may be generally explained by the considerations of the Messianic dignity in itself, as it was apprehended by a disciple of the prophets and rabbis. If the Christ of God is declared to

be greater than the hermit-preacher on the banks of the Jordan, He must be shown to be so, independently of His origin, by the greatness of the work He is to do, the chief object of which, for the time, is the definite separation of the wicked from the good. But if we closely examine our texts, which are confirmed in this respect by an unvarying tradition of the Church,* we shall find they concentrate the comparison entirely on one special point. "I," says John, "baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I; . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Now, unless we are greatly mistaken, it is this sentence (which became to the generation following the very nucleus of its memories of John the Baptist), which will serve us in our turn, better than any other to explain the judgment of Jesus, quoted above. Christian thought, at any rate, has clung to this as the formula most characteristic of the relation between the old ideas and the new. The baptism of water is only a symbolic ceremony, practised now perhaps for the first time in this form, and with this special significance; it represents the inward purification promised by those who receive it, or if it be preferred, a purification effected in them, as the result of a subjective resolve, and of their own moral energy. It means more than the obliteration of old vices and sins; it includes also the determination of the will, positively to renounce such sins for the future. But the baptism of the Spirit is to be something higher and essentially different from this, since John declares himself incapable of administering it. We may not then look to him for its explanation. We shall learn presently what is its peculiar nature; but we already see that here is something new, an element foreign to the sphere within which the religious conceptions and prophetic activities of John were confined—an element of which he might vaguely feel the need, but which he was certainly unable to impart to others, since he himself did not possess it. And it is precisely for this reason that the least of those who enter the kingdom of Christ, having received the baptism of the Spirit, is greater than John

* Acts i. 5; xi. 16; xiii. 24, and foll.

the Baptist. He, by his virtuous self-denial in a corrupt age, by his zeal in preparing the way for Christ, by the privilege granted him of pointing with the finger to Him whom the prophets had only seen afar off, through the dim haze of a passing rapture, and, lastly, by his glorious martyr-death, well deserved to close the line of spiritual heroes of the old economy, of which he was the purest and most sublime exponent. But he himself stood still on the threshold of the door, the way to which he had shown to others, and nothing gives so grand a conception of the new inheritance now for the first time opened before us, as the fact that such a man as John was not permitted to enter on its possession.

Here we approach the last point—one which has so often baffled theologians, and led them into exegetical errors. John the Baptist from the depths of his prison sends his disciples to ask Jesus whether He was He who should come, or if yet another was to be looked for.* Much trouble has been taken to colour this fact, and to dispel the shadow which it is supposed to cast upon a form else so brilliant. And yet the matter is perfectly simple, if only the explanation be not attempted on preconceived notions. The question in itself, in its bare and positive form, reveals the presence of a thought or a hope which was not satisfied by the work of Jesus, so far as it had then developed itself. The reply of the Saviour, which will appear complete and striking only as it is apprehended in its inner and spiritual sense, proceeds on the assumption of this thought, and implicitly rebukes it; the closing words express regret, if not blame, and justify by anticipation the place lower than that of true believers, which is assigned to John. After all, John the Baptist was still a Jew; he looked for the brilliant and august inauguration of the kingdom which he had proclaimed with so much fervour and devotedness; he grew impatient, in his cell, of the protracted delays. We feel the less bound to seek excuses for him in this, as others have thought necessary, because we should certainly be the last to reproach him with not having been other than Providence

* Matt. xi. 3, and foll. ; Luke vii. 19, and foll.

designed him to be. It is Providence itself we accuse when we judge its instruments according to false and preconceived notions of our own.

But we are prepared to go further still, and ask this simple question: How came John the Baptist to have still disciples of his own, after the time when Jesus began His ministry, and long after the consummation of their respective destinies? * Was not his mission terminated so soon as Christ appeared? Those who persist in representing him as an evangelical Christian, in spite of the Saviour's testimony, in which He acknowledges John as His prophet, but not as His disciple, † can give no answer to this question. Our reply is this: John baptized in the name and in view of a Messiah to come. We know what the Messiah was expected to be—the founder of the true theocracy, of a kingdom of just men, to whom the will of God would be the only law, and who on that ground alone would be exempt from all the miseries of life. To be worthy to enter that kingdom, it was needful first to amend and purify heart, word, and deed. The baptism of John was to be the symbol of the right of citizenship in the kingdom of God. Happy they who were thus prepared to receive the Christ, and to be received by Him in the day of His glorious manifestation! Till that day John felt bound to continue his ministry. His conviction with regard to the mission of Jesus may have been reached gradually, or formed by a sudden inspiration; ‡ in all probability it was strengthened and confirmed, like that of all other men, by the extraordinary impression produced everywhere by the discourses and miracles of the Saviour. The more irresistible that impression became, and the stronger that conviction, the more impatient grew the prophet to see the day so long expected; the uneasiness necessarily arising from the delay of an event deeply desired, might at times cloud the calmness of his courage, or overtax his power of patient waiting. But so long as the kingdom was not, so to speak, publicly and officially

* Acts xviii. 25; xix. 3, 4.

† John v. 33, and foll.

‡ Matt. iii. 14; John i. 33.

proclaimed, it was the duty of the humble servant, anxious to fulfil his mission, to continue both preaching and baptizing. He would have done so still longer if the brutality of a despot had not put a stop to his activity. He would not have addressed his doubtful question to Jesus, if his arm had not been bound in chains. Did he understand the answer which his disciples brought him? We are not told, and cannot venture on a positive reply. He had indeed seen the Messiah; he was quite sure of having seen Him; he had levelled the mountains before His feet; he had toiled zealously to multiply the subjects of His kingdom; he might even have discerned around him the first upspringings of the grain of mustard-seed piercing the earth; but his eyes, dazzled by an ideal image, saw not the light—so faint it seemed—which was about to dissipate the chill darkness of the night of ages; they closed under the axe of the executioner, still gazing towards the far horizon to catch the first beams of the rising sun, and never saw the myriad drops of sunlit dew, which within two paces of his prison already told the awaking of the dawn and of the spring.

BOOK SECOND.

THE GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE portion of our work which we are now commencing is unquestionably the most difficult of all. In treating other parts of our subject, we may expect to arrive at positive and certain results; here we can scarcely hope to succeed in the same way. Let us then, before commencing, take account of the obstacles which will impede our progress.

The first and chief cause of the difficulties encountered in the study upon which we are entering, is the personality of Jesus Himself. If even an ordinary man who rises above the general level, and enunciates new ideas and suggestive discoveries in the domain of mind, is appreciated only by the few and misunderstood by the many, this must be still more emphatically the case with Jesus, who in a higher degree than any other revealer of truth, stands on an elevation above those who are to be His disciples. Who will dare to say he has sounded the depths of truth and wisdom contained in the word of Christ? Nowhere does the famous saying of the prophet, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" find a fuller application, or one more humbling to the pride of human reason.

And this assertion would be justified even if Jesus were regarded only as an extraordinary man, placed on the highest step of the scale of humanity, the privileged one of God and of nature. Still more abundantly true must it be, then, when

with all the community of the faithful, we assign to Him a place far above the sphere of mere mortals.

History bears witness that we are not saying too much. For eighteen centuries has not the world been disputing as to what Jesus taught? Nor has the difficulty arisen only from passion or prejudice, or from the blindness of party interest, by which questions are complicated and truth concealed. The most pious and sincere of men, Catholic or Protestant, Lutheran or Calvinist, orthodox or heterodox, have been found sustaining opposite theories, all in the most perfect good faith, and all supporting their arguments by the same words proceeding from the mouth of Jesus. Even in our own day, in theology, in morals, in questions affecting the very basis of the Church's constitution, and which have been for ages the watchwords of parties and sects, both sides appeal to the same discourses of the Saviour, explain them differently, and accuse each other either of adding to or of taking from their true signification. In order to prove this assertion, we need only quote the sacramental words of the Lord's Supper, the question of divorce, of oaths, of the priority assigned to Peter, the predictions as to the final issue of all things, and other points of this kind. It need scarcely be added that any uncertainty which may attach to the substance or to the form of a principle or word preserved by tradition, is necessarily and immeasurably increased by the prejudices and preconceptions of the men who undertake to explain away or to dispel it. Do not the majority of these, unintentionally, perhaps even unknowingly, bring to the investigation, a system already formed? We ourselves, writers and readers of this book, dare we say that we are exempt from the same failing?

Eighteen centuries, then, have not sufficed to bring men to a complete and final understanding of the whole teaching of Christ! Let it be well observed that we do not assert that men have been going further and further away from such an understanding. On the contrary, we believe that they have been coming nearer to it, and are still coming nearer. Every day more profound truths are discovered in His divine thoughts,

in His sublime words ; the deeper they are sounded, the more unfathomable seem their depths ; the innumerable studies, and preachings yet more numberless, of which they have been made the subject, have deprived them of none of their glory and beauty, which seem, on the contrary, to augment with time, and which shine forth especially with fresh lustre, whenever the breath of adverse criticism has sought to tarnish them. But if, after all the advance of eighteen centuries along the path of knowledge, we cannot yet affirm that we have nothing left to learn, shall we say that the end was more nearly attained at the commencement of this long period ?

We know Jesus in His person, in His purposes, and more particularly still in His teachings, which are our chief subject now, only by that which others tell us. Were these men in a position to give us that which they received, without alteration, without diminution ? Were they as great as He of whom they spoke,—as pure, as free, as clear-sighted ? They have often been charged with lending to Jesus their imperfect opinions, with making Him the spokesman of their own prejudices. We do not repeat this reproach. We simply ask if it can be affirmed that each one of those who came in contact with Christ fully comprehended Him, or if it is not more probable that each gives to us the impression which the person and words of the Master produced upon himself ? Would this impression be necessarily and in all cases the same ? or, what is of more importance, would it be always adequate and exact ? Jesus was no doubt intelligible to all ; He had much to offer to minds of every sort, and each disciple would go away richer than he came, or rather he would not go away at all, feeling that he had much to gain by staying. But what human intelligence, under the teaching of such a Master, could ever venture to say : I have no more to learn ? Among men, genius is perfectly comprehended only by its equal ; on how much stronger grounds may it be said that here the disciple was not on a level with the Master. Could we conceive otherwise, then we must admit that He who was the ideal of all the perfections of mind and heart, had His compeers, and that those

who had the happiness to learn of Him, were able in a short time to rise to the height of a wisdom, holiness, and love, such as the world had never before seen.*

But another preliminary consideration suggests itself, which is also of a nature to make us pause on the very threshold of our enterprise. We are to present a summary of the doctrine of Jesus. But what is intended by the term? Did Jesus teach any doctrine in the common acceptation of the word? Did He give to the world a collection of dogmas, which might form the basis of a systematic synthesis? Did He preach a religion which could be summed up in so many articles of faith? Was His preaching a matter of historic narration appealing to the memory? Far otherwise. It presents no such characteristic. He used no pulpit; He wrote no book; He had not even a regular auditory, to whom He might have given a connected course of instruction. Assuredly, then, we shall fail to comprehend His teaching aright, if we attempt to translate it into a learned and formal body of divinity.

Most writers who have treated this subject, have therefore wisely eschewed such a method as we have just described. They have restricted themselves to seeking in the discourses of Jesus, His pronounced opinion upon the great questions agitated by theology. And, unquestionably, it is of importance for the Christian to hear the divine witness of the Saviour as to His own person, to God, to the nature and destiny of man, to the conditions of salvation, and kindred subjects. But, after all, it was not in this way that His powerful influence was felt in His own age. He did not stand towards the men of His

* The preceding paragraphs are a strong demonstration of the necessity of the illumination of the Spirit, promised to the disciples, who was to "bring all things to" their "remembrance whatsoever" Christ had said to them. Apart from supernatural teaching, the disciples were not likely to produce so wonderful a representation of our Lord as that which we have in the four gospels—a representation which carries with it irresistible evidence of its spiritual trustworthiness. But it must also be added that the form of our Lord's teaching, which consisted so largely of parables and proverbial sayings, rendered it easier for men who did not fully understand it, to report it accurately.—ED.

generation in the position of an oracle, waiting to deliver replies to questions addressed to Him. He Himself took the initiative in His intercourse with the world. He offered Himself freely to it, and scattered the grains of mustard-seed far and wide over all the fields through which He passed. Let us respect His own method, and hope the better to comprehend Him, the more we remain in the position of attentive spectators of His work.

There is another reason, yet more decisive, which ought to prevent our attempting a systematic exposition of the doctrine of Jesus, and thus assimilating it in form, at least, to other theories of the same kind: namely, that we largely depreciate its value, by restricting it to the significance of mere theoretic teaching, however high we may place it as such. We do not hesitate to ask if it was really His *teaching* which gave to the person of Jesus its vast importance to the human race? if He Himself regarded the instruction He had to give to the people as the essential part of His ministry? We venture also on another question still more paradoxical, and ask if after all He taught so many things that were new and before undivined, that we need attempt to recapitulate them in logical sequence, as it is necessary to do in treating of Plato or Descartes?*

We might observe here, that the Church has always regarded the death and resurrection of Jesus as facts more important than His doctrine. But this is not the antithesis we are anxious to mark. For if there were a determination to regard His influence on the world exclusively from the standpoint of His theoretic teaching, it would be easy to include His death and resurrection within the sphere of His doctrine, since He spoke of them to His disciples. That which we are

* This is more or less true, but there was absolute originality in what our Lord taught concerning Himself and His work, and this affected all His ethical and religious teaching, and gave it altogether a new significance even when it seemed most like what had been in the world before. Moreover, what Christ taught must include those ideas which were created in the minds of men by His character and work.—ED.

aiming to bring out by the questions we have just put is this: that it never was the design of Jesus to put new doctrine in the place of the old, but to bring new life where previously there had been none.* Other reformers may have sought to change the ideas and beliefs current in the world, or even the laws governing society; Jesus sought to change the men themselves; and such an end lies far beyond the scope of any dogmatic teaching whatever. In truth, this new life which He came to bring, was not designed for theologians only; it was not then a theology at all. He intended it not for thinkers merely; it was not a matter of thought, of speculation.† He meant it to be for all, great and small, and He offered it to all; both in substance and in form, it was within the reach of all, and those least imbued with the wisdom of this world, found themselves the best prepared to receive it. We may add without hesitation, that the means adopted to effect this powerful reformation were perfectly in harmony with the end. The pivot of the Gospel is not a formula, a principle, an idea more or less large and lofty; it is the person of Jesus Himself, but the living person, of whose regenerating influence every disciple is conscious; not that metaphysical personage reduced by the definitions of scholastic theology to a mere abstract and incomprehensible idea.

A very little reflection will then show that our purpose here cannot be to expound a system of religion, as would be the case were we attempting, for example, to study and estimate the law of Moses. In fact, the discourses of Jesus ought never to be made the subject of a purely scientific and historic study; they are designed only for religious and earnest meditation; He Himself has said that in order to understand we must begin by practising them.‡ Unhappily, the theology of all ages and of all parties has wilfully reversed this order, putting off the practice, and hurrying to lay hands on the theory. And among

* So far as this is true, it constitutes one of the great elements of originality in our Lord's method as a spiritual Teacher and Reformer.

† Mark xi. 25, and foll.

‡ John vii. 17.

those who have done otherwise, where is the man so perfect a Christian, as to have the right to say that, having exhausted the former, he has arrived at the latter part of the task ?

We may mention also another difficulty not less serious, though of a purely literary nature : this is the question of authorities to be consulted. We know how interminable are the discussions of modern science on the origin, authenticity, and mutual relations of our gospels. We do not attempt here any appreciation of these or of others of the same kind. The genuineness at least of the teaching of the Gospel, will be always more surely demonstrated by its nature and import, than by literary criticism. But there still remains the very perplexing question of the possible relation between the didactic elements contained in the first three gospels, and those of the fourth. For ourselves, we cannot but give a place apart to the theology of John : it is a distinctly recognized and historic possession of the Church. But neither are we prepared to disjoin it altogether from the synoptics. We find ourselves therefore under the inconvenient necessity of examining one and the same book under two different aspects, and we much fear that our exposition will, from one point of view or the other, be held deficient.*

For all the reasons just given, we conclude that any exposition designed to recapitulate the teaching of Jesus Christ, and to form it into one whole, must necessarily fall always far short of its ideal,—far short, that is, of the truth,—for the very reason that it is compelled to separate thought from action, the abstract principle from the life, though the latter is the essential element of the Gospel.

The number of writers who have hitherto attempted to give a separate *résumé*, however incomplete or unsystematic, of the

* The discussion of the relation between St. John's Gospel and the Synoptics is too large a question for a note ; but for myself, I must say here that early impressions of the conflict between them in their representation of our Lord's teaching have gradually given way as the result of a deeper acquaintance with both. The first three gospels contain far more of the mystical teaching supposed to be peculiar to the fourth than is commonly supposed.—ED.

teaching of the Saviour, is very small; and we are bound to add that the success of their endeavours has not been of a nature to satisfy science, nor to induce others to undertake so difficult a task. Purely historic science, with its ordinary methods and means, feels instinctively that here is something passing the limits of its competence, and that the perfect understanding of teaching so different from that elsewhere presented by men and schools, must be achieved by an effort to which the powers of the intellect alone do not suffice. But while we maintain that those who have gone before us in this path have fallen far short of the ideal to be attained, we would not be understood to speak too slightly of their endeavours. We are quite aware that the sketch we are about to offer our readers will incur the same reproach of imperfection, and we can only disarm our critics beforehand, by freely confessing that we ourselves are far from content with our work, and by challenging them in their turn to take it up.

Let it be, then, clearly understood that in devoting a considerable part of this book to the study of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, though spoken before a perpetually changing auditory, have been carefully collected by tradition for the edification of a permanent body of disciples, we do not pretend that we shall be able to treat our subject exhaustively. Still less is it our idea to assign to the great Teacher Himself, His true place in the series of those who preceded and followed Him. The title of our book may show our readers, beforehand, what standpoint we take in reference to this part of our work. We are presenting the history of Christian theology, not the history of Christianity, or of the Church at large in the apostolic age. It is obviously but a single phase of the Christian movement which we propose to study, and that not the only one of importance. We wish to describe and analyze the process and results of reflection upon the facts and principles of the Gospel, of reflection itself guided and enlightened by the Gospel, and always specially directed to meet the wants of the Church. The Gospel will thus be regarded by us here solely as the basis and source of apostolic

teaching. But we all know that to the Church and to believers it is far more than this, and that its salutary influence does not, and never ought, to make itself felt exclusively in the sphere of the reason, as the generative principle of systems and methods. Its influence is designed to be more active and far more universal in the moral sphere, leading to the transformation of the inner life of individuals, and establishing the normal constitution of human society. The study of the teaching of Jesus, on which we are about to enter, aims then only to define truly the religious ideas contained in that teaching, especially in so far as these became the groundwork of the doctrine of His disciples, and of their immediate successors. We ask that this may be remembered in any judgment formed of our attempt.

So much for the special aim which we set before us in the present book. Let us add a few words in justification of the plan which we have pursued in the arrangement and order of its details. An attempt has sometimes been made to discover in our gospels the traces or elements of a progressive development in the teaching of Jesus, which, on a not unnatural hypothesis, is supposed to have shown a methodical progression, gradually raising the hearers to the height of the ideas with which it designed to render them familiar. But, whatever may be said on this point, our texts fail to show any such order. We must endeavour then to grasp the substance of the teaching of Jesus rather by an analytical than methodical process.

The first thing to be done is to discover and to determine the relation to Mosaism in which Jesus placed Himself and His doctrine. We have already hinted that the method of a history of Christian theology in the apostolic age must be essentially determined by the various relations sustained by the Gospel to the law, both in the minds of men generally, and in the systems of theologians. It is then of much consequence for us to know the views of Jesus in this respect. If they were not always the rule for the conceptions of His followers, they will at least be our rule in estimating the teaching of His disciples. There are also several other considerations,

which make a preliminary study of this main point indispensable to us.

Such a study must be of importance even from a purely human and rational point of view. In truth, nothing in the world is absolutely new and unconnected with any anterior fact; on the contrary, everything presents itself to the observer as the effect of a foregoing cause, which it may be possible to discover, which it is at least wise to seek. Everything appears as a phase of the successive evolution which links the totality of things together, and binds them to a first cause. Thus, on this general ground it may be affirmed that Jesus, being born among the Jewish people, brought up as a member of the community of Israel, and devoting Himself to the good of His countrymen, would have regard in some measure to their ideas and religious institutions, or may even Himself have come under their influence.

But placing ourselves at the standpoint of Christian theology, we arrive more directly and more surely at the same result. Here Jesus appears as the supreme revealer of the decrees and mysteries of God; but Mosaism first, and then the prophets, its guardians and interpreters, are equally the organs of revelation—of a revelation imperfect perhaps in more than one aspect, but still proceeding from the same source. There must then necessarily exist some relation between these different degrees of revelation—not a relation recognizable only by the theologian and by the historian, who can cast a retrospective glance over the whole series, but one which must have been present to the inner consciousness of Him who delivered the final utterance of revelation, and knew and declared Himself to be not merely the successor of the prophets, but the very subject of their thoughts and words, or, at the least, of their dim anticipations.

It is from this point of view especially that we see of what paramount importance is the question we have just put; the reply it calls forth will serve to give us the general spirit of a teaching, with the details of which we shall deal presently.

This first point established, we have to seek the means of

bringing together within a compass neither too large nor too limited, all the principal elements of that which formed subsequently the Christian theology of the apostles, as these are to be found, in a more or less definite form, in the discourses of the Lord. It does not appear to us difficult to discover them. The very simplicity of the teaching of Jesus facilitates our research. The fundamental idea which recurs perpetually is that of the kingdom of God. We dwell upon this all the more readily, because it is not in His lips a purely abstract and theoretical idea, which might have at most the merit of serving for the construction of a system, but an eminently practical and living idea, which, under His handling, and with the help of His spirit, has never ceased to translate itself into action whether in the individual or social sphere. In taking it as the basis of our particular study, we have a guarantee that we shall not depart from that which is most essential in the Gospel revelation; we shall not separate an important branch of the Christian life from the root and the trunk by which it is united to all the other branches. We shall see that the evangelists, when they wish to epitomize in a few words the teaching of the Master, find no other formula so characteristic as this: He preached the kingdom of God. We hear Jesus Himself describing His instructions, various as they are in their concrete form, as the word, the doctrine of the kingdom. When He will commission His disciples to go forth into all the world to carry on the work commenced by Him, the Gospel of the kingdom is again that which He charges them to preach. There can be no doubt, then, that this full and suggestive idea of the kingdom of God, must be in some way the mine to be explored by us, in order to bring to light the treasures which Christian science will have to mould and fashion, to meet the necessities of every successive sphere, and the measure and capacities of every mind.

Having thus found the fundamental idea, we shall seek to discover also, by the help of the same source, the elements of which it consists. The more sure we are that the deepest study will only show the inexhaustible riches of the mine, the

more important is it for us to follow in this work of analysis a safer guide than our exegetical instinct, or our subjective convictions. And here again the text meets our desires. Two of our gospels, in giving at the opening of their narrative an epitome of the preaching of the Saviour, make use of formulas the elements of which, elsewhere found separately, will furnish us with the means of a true analysis, and the basis of a division as simple as it is natural. "*The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*"*

The first phrase, which speaks of the fulfilment of the time, will give us occasion to show the relation in which Jesus placed His doctrine to Mosaism. The second will lead us to speak of the kingdom of God, and its essential properties. The third, which is the most important to theology and the Church, points out the conditions of entrance into that kingdom. Of these conditions, which are two, the second is at once shown to be the new and characteristic element by the complement added to it. It is, in truth, to the Gospel, the good tidings, that Christian preaching points; and the knowledge of its object, of its surety or mediator and of its realization, completes the cycle of ideas which form the basis of the religion of Christ.

If the diversity of rendering in the two texts we have just quoted, proves that throughout these studies we shall find it necessary to adhere to the spirit rather than to the letter, final analysis will show that, in spite of the freedom and variety of the renderings, the essence of the thought remains unchanged. The fuller formula will serve as a guide in the analysis of the shorter, which, without this key, might in its extreme simplicity embarrass us. Even this would, however, if necessary, suffice for our present purpose. Of the two terms of which it is composed, the first sums up the objective aspect of Gospel preaching, the second the subjective; the one marks the starting-point, the other the aim and end of the new order of things; and they thus together embrace all its essential elements.

* Matt. iv. 17 : Μετανοείτε ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. Mark i. 15 ; Πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. μετανοείτε καὶ πιστατέτε τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW.

THE time is fulfilled! These opening words of the ministry of Jesus mark the close relation which it sustains to the Old Testament. A time of fulfilment supposes a foregoing period of expectation, hope, anticipation,—a consciousness, in short, that things were not to remain as they were. Expectation, again, implies a promise or prediction. We arrive at the same result if we examine the idea attached to the Greek word which forms the subject of this phrase, and which always signifies a set time; or, again, if we consider the proposition “The kingdom is at hand,” in which the kingdom is spoken of as a thing familiar. Lastly, the term Gospel, or good news, evidently conveys the realization of a hope long cherished by those to whom the joyful message was to be carried. Over and above all these inductive inferences, however, we have the clear and repeated assertion in many of the discourses of the Lord, that the law and the prophets (the rule of the relations between men and God) were until John the Baptist, and that from that time commences the Gospel of the kingdom.*

Thus Jesus at once connects His teaching with that which preceded it, with an order of thought or a doctrine well known to His hearers, familiar indeed to His whole nation. Whether this relation be purely external, chronological, prophetic, or whether it rests upon a deeper affinity, is to be ascertained by careful and thoughtful study. But we warn our readers that this is the very question which became the apple of discord

* Luke xvi. 16.

among the first generation of Christians, and consequently the point from which their theology in its scientific development, begins to diverge. It fills so prominent a place in the history of the apostolic age, that we shall from this time have it almost constantly in view, and the present volume in particular will call our attention to it, directly or indirectly, on almost every page.

It will not be necessary to pause to prove that the antecedent doctrine, with which Jesus intended to place His own teaching in the relation we shall endeavour to study, was not any of the doctrines elaborated in contemporary Jewish schools. We shall presently show the radical dissonance between all these and the Gospel; for the moment we content ourselves with recording the positive declarations of Christ on this subject. His constant controversy with the Pharisees and their principles is known to all readers of the gospels. It is directed at once against the spirit of their morality, the puerile rigour of their ascetic precepts, their political tendencies, and their hypocrisy.* “Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,” He says, “ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;”† and if the difference is in this passage expressed by a term of quantity, the explanation which immediately follows, combined with the very pretensions of Pharisaism to absolute legal perfection, shows that the difference is not in quantity only, but in quality. Against the austere and misanthropic asceticism of the Essenians, Jesus does not protest with the same vehemence; but He does not Himself adopt the life of an ascetic, He does not affect any peculiar saintliness in the outward deportment, and does not propose to save the world by withdrawing from it.‡ Lastly, as He addressed Himself generally to the people, and did not seek out by preference the adherents of the schools, the occasion did not arise for Him to compare the tendency of His teaching with

* See, among other passages, Mark vii. 12, 13, and foll.; Luke xi., xii.; Matt. xii., xv., xvi., xxii.; John viii., ix., etc.

† Matt. v. 20.

‡ Matt. ix. 14; xi. 18, 19; John ii. 1, and foll.

that of contemporary philosophy, but we may safely affirm that He repudiated it on more than one ground. His Gospel was for all, and not merely for a privileged class: the very fact that it was acceptable to the poor and simple, placed it out of the horizon of the wise men of this world, whose hazy metaphysics were indeed little adapted to give sight to the blind and to unstop deaf ears.

We must then go back further, to Scripture Mosaism, to the authentic code of the old covenant, to find the link to which Jesus intended to fasten His Gospel, whether to show its legitimacy, or to mark its position in relation to the series of antecedent revelations. The more fully we are convinced that the Gospel goes beyond all prior revelations in its scope and principle, the more important is it to establish that Jesus did not commence by proclaiming it incompatible with them, by asserting its radical opposition to the law, and thus teaching that antinomianism, into which the Church has again and again been drawn. He acknowledges the divine origin of the law; He appeals to its inspired predictions, as a sufficient and irrefutable testimony;* He refers men to the commandments as pointing out to them the path of life;† He derives from the law dogmatic witness to the truth;‡ lastly, He contrasts it, as the expression of the will of God, with the false moral doctrines of men.§

It would be erroneous, however, to conclude from all this that Jesus simply proposed to restore the Mosaic religion in its primitive purity, and aimed at nothing more than to remove all that rabbinical and scholastic theology had superadded. It is not possible to hold such a view in presence of the series of formal declarations which may be regarded as a criticism of the law itself—at least in so far as they point out the inequality in value of its various elements. No one can forget, for example, the sentiments expressed by Jesus with regard to the

* John v. 39, and foll. ; x. 35 ; comp. Luke xviii. 31, xxiv. 44, etc.

† Matt. xix. 17, foll. and parall. ; Luke x. 25, and foll. ; xvi. 29.

‡ Matt. xxii. 31, and parall.

§ Matt. xv. 4, foll. and parall.

Sabbath, that sacred and ancient institution ; how He not only refused to submit to all the requirements of irksome custom, but positively affirmed * that the Sabbath is subordinate in its dignity and claims to other considerations of a higher order, which may lawfully infringe upon it. Again, as to outward worship, which formed in all its essential arrangements an integral part of the law, He assigns to it a lower rank in the order of religious observance, giving the preference in all points to moral service ; nay, we might almost say setting aside the first to establish the second.† Generally speaking, asceticism, which consists in purely material observances, and imposes formal duties, though it had received explicit sanction from numerous legal prescriptions, is not only held of little account by Jesus in comparison with inward purity, but is even condemned by Him as likely to become an obstacle to true spiritual purification, and to be accepted by men as a substitute for it.‡ Even the Temple, that visible monument of legal worship, and as such the object of highest veneration, is reduced to a lower level,§ in the presence of a new and more spiritual dispensation. Jerusalem has no longer in this aspect any prerogative over Gerizim ;|| the prediction of the ruin of its sanctuary almost necessarily implies the decree of desuetude upon the law which consecrated it, and this consequence is only the more certain where the prediction is to be understood in a spiritual sense.¶ In one word, Jesus shows that in the body of this law, some commandments are of more importance than others ; and the examples which He quotes, to give definiteness to His meaning, ought to satisfy us that the difference is essentially that between morality and ritual religion.** The latter is not at once rejected or abrogated ; on the contrary, in the passages to which we refer, it seems rather to be ex-

* Mark ii. 27 ; comp. John v. 17, and foll.

† Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7, and parall.

‡ Matt. xv. 10, foll. and parall.

§ Matt. xii. 6.

|| John iv. 21, 22.

¶ Mark xiv. 58 ; Matt. xxvi. 61 ; John ii. 19 ; comp. Acts vi. 14.

** Matt. xxiii. 23 ; comp. Luke xi. 42.

pressly maintained; but elsewhere, in recapitulating, by means of Mosaic texts, the principal duties of man, Jesus passes over in silence those which belong to the latter category, or affirms that the law is fulfilled in the first alone.* This fact is the more important inasmuch as the law itself marks no such distinction.

In view of all these statements, of the import of which there cannot be a shadow of doubt, the personal participation of Jesus in the acts of worship, and in all the forms of the religious life which belong to the same category, must appear to us as a condescension, a practical accommodation or compromise, the true design of which is clearly indicated on repeated occasions.†

Before going further, let us pause a moment over one more passage peculiarly instructive in this connection. We are acquainted with the decision pronounced by Jesus on the subject of divorce; we remember also that the Pharisees proposed a question to Him on this matter, to which He replied in such a way as to place Himself in direct contradiction to the letter of the law.‡ In order to justify this reply, He appeals from the law of the nation to a primitive, sovereign, normal law derived from God in a manner still more direct; and He thus declares that the law of Moses, calculated as it was to meet the necessities of the time, is not always in harmony with the absolute and eternal principles of morality. As the point here in question is no ritual observance, but a moral precept of the highest importance to society at large, this anti-legal declaration becomes supremely momentous. We shall not therefore allow ourselves to be misled by the letter of certain declarations of a seemingly contrary tendency,§ and by which the smallest jot or tittle of the law appears to be invested with inalienable authority. Such a contradiction cannot be real; it must exist on the sur-

* Matt. xix. 16, and foll.; vii. 12; xxii. 40; Mark xii. 33.

† Matt. xvii. 27; comp. iii. 15.

‡ This question did not consist, as appears in the much abbreviated text of Mark, in an inquiry whether divorce is lawful, this not being questioned by any of the schools, since the law was explicit; but the controversy referred to the various cases which might come under the law—that is, to doubtful causes not provided for. Matt. xix. 3, 6, 8; comp. v. 32.

§ Matt. v. 17, 18; Luke xvi. 17.

face only. It must be explained first by the restrictions imposed by the context itself, of which we shall presently speak ; it will vanish altogether if it is once granted that tradition, under the bias of its own attachment to the law, may have given in too absolute a form, the expression of the thought of the Master.

We must have stopped far short of the truth, however, and formed a very inadequate idea of the Gospel, if we could imagine from what has been just said and demonstrated, that the Gospel was a simple compendium of certain articles in the Mosaic law, the result of a critical operation, by which some were abrogated and others confirmed by a new sanction. It is our design to show that the Gospel goes far beyond any such narrow conception of its scope and purport. In order to establish this, we may take as our starting-point the very same passage, the letter of which, as we lately quoted it, seemed to tend to carry us back to Mosaism pure and simple. In the text to which we refer, Jesus declares that He is not come to destroy the law[†] and the prophets, but to fulfil.* The point is to discover the true meaning of these terms, of which the latter, as is at once evident, must finally determine the meaning to be attached to the words of Jesus in reference to the permanent obligation of the law. Happily, the Gospel, which has handed down to us the principle itself, accompanies it with a long series of examples or applications,[†] which may enable us to understand it without having recourse to conjectures more or less doubtful. It can be readily shown that the fulfilment of which the Saviour speaks, is something more than the mere observance of Old Testament precepts. For instance, the law condemns and punishes murder and adultery. Jesus teaches us to ascend to the first spring of these acts, to the secret and often almost imperceptible impulses of the soul, exposed to the sway of passion or overmastered by it. He tells us that sin exists, not only where this ascendancy of evil becomes manifest in acts of open criminality, but in the evil thought

* Οὐκ ἤλθον, καταλύσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

† See for what follows Matt. v. 21, 27, 34, 38, 43 ; vi. 3, 17.

which will lead, unless repressed, to the evil deed, and which in very truth virtually holds within itself the evil deed, since the actual perpetration may be prevented by outward circumstances independent of our control, or by motives dictated by other than moral considerations. In place of the simple prohibition of perjury, Christ interdicts the use of even veracious oaths, as a profanation of the great name of God, and an avowal of the lack of mutual faith among men. Instead of the law of retaliation, He lays down that of brotherly love, patience, and pardon. For a system of morals which recognizes two weights and two measures to be employed in dealing with different sets of men, Christ substitutes one which embraces in a common love all those on whom our heavenly Father bestows the good gifts of His providence. According to Him, the very practice of duty is good and blessed only by reason of the spiritual power thus exercised, without any thought of personal merit, without craving for honour or reward—a power which makes self-sacrifice light and easy, and even joyous.

As we bring these facts together in order to gather their general significance, and to raise them to the rank of axioms, we discover that the *fulfilling* of the law, in the Gospel sense, gives us a view of duty not as a legal act of outward conformity to the letter of a commandment, but as an outgrowth from the idea of the divine perfection, and a result of the religious feeling flowing from it. It is impossible not to see that such a fulfilment implies not merely a metamorphosis of Mosaism, (such an image would very unfitly express the truth,) but a change in its very essence. It was no piecing of an old garment, no pouring of new wine into old bottles,*—a process which could only have ended in a wider and more fatal disruption. The divine idea had suffered in its contact with that low and backward sphere of civilization, for the sake of which it had been compelled to assume a legal form.† Jesus desired to restore it to its primitive and true lustre; and to this end, He laid hold

* Matt. ix. 16, and foll.

† Matt. xix. 8.

of that which was most exalted in the conception of Deity, of that divine perfection which, if we may so speak, is least foreign to the spiritual nature of man—love; and this He made at once the fountain-head of all morality, and the end of all religious aspiration.*

Thus historic Mosaism found itself lifted above itself; it became truly spiritual, a result which had not been attained in any of the progressive transformations through which it passed, as we have seen, in the various schools of Judaism. It thus preserved its dignity as a revelation, while it laid down its claim to be a positive religion. In a sublime prophecy—the meaning of which His enemies apprehended more truly than His disciples†—Jesus spoke of the destruction by Himself of the old temple, and the rearing of the new. The sight of that sanctuary, devoted to a destruction more absolute than any wrought upon it by the hand of man, made all the more glorious the prospect of the victory of His Gospel;‡ and just as He was about to fall beneath the blows of the iniquitous champions of an effete dispensation, He proclaimed the foundation of a new and imperishable economy. The legal theocracy gave place to the kingdom of God.

* Matt. xxii. 37 ; John xiii. 34.

† John ii. 19 ; Mark xiv. 58, etc.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 2, 14.

CHAPTER III.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.*

LET us remark at our outset that the name inscribed at the head of this chapter, is that most frequently employed to represent the fact we have to analyze. The second and third gospels use no other term, and as it also occurs repeatedly in the first gospel, and in many other New Testament scriptures,† we may conclude that it was habitually used by Jesus Himself, and thus naturally assumed a prominent place in dogmatic tradition. In Matthew's gospel, however, we more frequently find the expression, the kingdom of heaven. This strikes us as a less comprehensive form than the other, inasmuch as it seems to restrict the idea to a coming period or place, to a state of things different from that in which humanity at present exists, and to exclude, or at least not to imply, many of the characteristics which we shall presently point out. It appears to us to belong originally to the Jewish theology, which assigned the

* Reuss is right in giving the foremost place to the idea of the "kingdom of God." The whole substance of our Lord's teaching might be developed under the title of this chapter. The chapter itself, however, is one of the most incomplete and unsatisfactory in the whole book. It would be worth while to inquire how it has happened that the idea of a divine kingdom which holds the supreme place in the New Testament has fallen into so subordinate a position both in the scientific theology and the popular thought of the Church.—ED.

† For John and Paul see Books v. and vii. ; after them the Acts only remain to be mentioned. Beyond that book the term *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* is not found ; for in the Revelation *βασιλεία* is the royal dignity (of the elect or of Christ).

idea of the kingdom of God absolutely to the sphere of final or future things.*

As a matter of fact, Jesus Christ was not the first to speak of a kingdom of God. We have seen that the preaching of the prophets was built up upon this idea as its basis, though the name itself is not employed by them. But their teaching, as well as that of the schools which succeeded them, has this uniform characteristic, that it always connected the principles of religion and morality with the national and political constitution of the people of Israel, alike when it gave instructions of immediate application, and when it pointed onward to an ideal future. As their notion of a theocracy was derived directly from the forms and conditions of a temporal government, their successors, members of a bitterly oppressed nation, were constrained to distinguish the ideal from the actual, and to transfer even its most practical and salutary principles to an order of things of which the present seemed only the dark reverse.

It was in the full consciousness of these facts that Jesus, in His turn, adopted the idea and the name of the kingdom of God. He found in it elements homogeneous to His own design, and capable of being raised to the level of His own high

* In the prophetic scriptures there is no perspective—the coming of the Messiah and the final triumph over the sins and sinners and confusions of the world, are blended together. Hence among the Pharisees there were two distinct theories with regard to the establishment of this kingdom upon earth. There were some who supposed that at His coming He would not only confer on the Jewish race freedom, security and unprecedented glory, but that the dead would immediately rise, and the whole order of nature be transformed. There were others who believed that His coming would simply introduce a period of moral and social regeneration, of political freedom and splendour, and that the resurrection and the final transformation of the material world would not take place till the end of time. It seems clear, however, that according to both, the coming of the Messiah necessarily involved the regeneration of the world as well as of man. Ideally, the kingdom included the glory which follows the resurrection as well as the moral and spiritual change which precedes it. There is no reason for rejecting the term “the kingdom of heaven,” which appears to express this ideal perfection.—Ed.

purpose.* Our task must be to seek out these elements, and to trace the characteristics of the kingdom in the evangelical conception of it,—a task of extreme importance, since this is the central idea of the Saviour's preaching as we have it in the epitome given by His biographers. That preaching itself is designated simply as the Word or the Gospel of the kingdom.† This expression must then have seemed to convey all that was essential in the doctrine of Jesus, and in the Greek version of that Gospel we find the term unhesitatingly put into the mouth of Jesus Himself.‡ It will not be difficult to show, however, on the same authority, that the resemblance of names does not imply identity of ideas. For, according to the unanimous testimony of the evangelists,§ Jesus, in explaining to His disciples why He teaches the people by parables, declares that a few only are as yet able to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Now a mystery, in the language of the apostles, is a truth revealed for the first time by Jesus, or by the Spirit of God carrying on His work, and unknown to earlier generations; we see then from the use of this term that the idea now presented to our study will contain absolutely new characters, and that a special education was required to grasp and apprehend them.||

The first of these characteristics which we shall stay to examine, and which, in some sort, contains all the rest, is the purely spiritual nature of the kingdom which Jesus came to proclaim and to establish. The well-known words spoken by Him in a moment of supreme interest, "My kingdom is not of

* Those who recognize the unity of divine revelation believe that it was no accident that our Lord found, in the common faith of the Jewish people, elements homogeneous to His own characteristic thought. God's ultimate intention to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth had determined the whole development of divine revelation.—ED.

† *Εὐαγγέλιον, λόγος τῆς βασιλείας*, Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35; Mark i. 14; Luke viii. 1; ix. 11; Acts i. 3.

‡ Matt. x. 7; xxiv. 14; xiii. 19; comp. Luke iv. 43; ix. 60; x. 9; xvi. 16.

§ Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10. The disciples are not the twelve exclusively (see Mark iv. 10), either here or elsewhere.

|| Matt. xiii. 52.

this world,"* express unquestionably something more than a mere hope fixed on futurity; the proofs of this assertion are found on every page of our gospels. Is it needful to recall to mind the scene † in which, replying † to a captious question of the Pharisees, Jesus draws a sharp boundary line between the dominion of Cæsar and that of God, which is no less His own; or that other occasion on which He refuses to intermeddle with affairs purely secular; ‡ or yet, again, the history of the temptation, in which the true character of the Christ of the Gospel is so clearly distinguished from the mere wonder-worker awaited by the Jews? We shall arrive more directly at our end by reconsidering the antithesis pointed out in the preceding chapter, between the Gospel and the law, or by anticipating what we have to say in subsequent chapters on the subject of conversion and faith. We find moral considerations made paramount on every question, and giving the tone and colour to every scene. Everything connected with forms, the mere framework, the concrete and material history of the past, disappears to give place to a conception, the objective truth of which every man can verify in his own experience, in his conscience, and in emotions hitherto unknown. Beforetime, the kingdom of God presented itself to the imagination; now it reveals itself in the heart. Formerly, knowledge, reflection, factitious duty conferred the privileges of the kingdom; now it is the heritage of children and the childlike.§ Access into it is obtained simply by doing the will of the Father in heaven,|| an obedience which can be rendered only by those who turn their back on the world,¶ and steadily and at any cost to themselves seek first the righteousness of God.** This righteousness is other than that of men.

* John xviii. 36.

† Matt. xxii. 21.

‡ Luke xii. 13.

§ Matt. xxiii. 13; comp. xviii. 3, and foll.; xix. 14; xi. 25; v. 3, and parall.

|| Matt. vii. 21.

¶ Luke ix. 62; Mark x. 24, etc.

** Matt. vi. 33; Mark ix. 47; Luke xviii. 29, 30; Matt. xix. 12, etc.

Human laws, social institutions and judgments,* are formed upon principles foreign in their origin to the normal relation which should subsist between the Creator and the creature, and insufficient to realize that relation. The material fact of sin itself, which is common to all men, is not an insurmountable barrier opposing entrance into the kingdom. Let it only be recognized as what it really is, let there be no assumption of an imaginary virtue, and the arms of Divine love are open to all who cast themselves upon them.† The poor, the miserable, the feeble may on these terms take courage and dismiss their fears; for those who believe, the way is always wide enough to attain to that which the grace of God has prepared for them.‡

But in thus converging to one focus the various passages which may help to elucidate the true nature of the kingdom, we are trenching on departments to which we intend to devote special and separate study. Let us then turn to other indications, both clear and copious, which may complete this introductory sketch.

The second leading trait by which the teaching of Christ characterizes the kingdom of God, is its universality. It is to embrace and unite within itself all men, without distinction of origin. Notwithstanding the ample proofs of this fact, we shall discover in the apostolic Church a lingering reluctance to admit it. We are bound therefore to adduce those proofs, and to inquire how their force came to be neutralized in practical application.

From a purely theoretic point of view, the abrogation of every sort of exclusiveness seems to be the necessary consequence of the spiritual character of the kingdom of God, as we have just exhibited it. The conditions which we shall subsequently find imposed by the Lord on those who desire to enter it, are equally open to all men; or if difficulties must always exist in this respect, they arise solely out of the moral

* Matt. v. 21, 31, 38; John viii. 1, foll., etc.

† Luke vii. 47; xviii. 14; Matt. xxi. 31, etc.

‡ Luke xii. 32.

dispositions of the individuals, not out of their national relations. Furthermore, Jesus maintains the most absolute silence upon all matters outlying these spiritual conditions, and which might be regarded as limiting the horizon of His kingdom, or circumscribing its sphere of action. Circumcision, for example, is not mentioned in His discourses, or, more strictly speaking, on the one occasion on which it is introduced,* it is distinctly declared to be a thing peculiar to the religious constitution of the Jews. All our observations in the preceding chapter on the position assumed by Jesus towards the law, must confirm this assertion.

But we have stronger demonstration than mere inductive proof to bring forward. We have abundant direct and palpable evidence in the explicit and positive declarations contained sometimes in the parables, designed to familiarize the vulgar mind with a principle contrary to national prejudices, sometimes in the instructions given to the disciples for their future apostolate, or in the predictions of the triumphant success of the Gospel. Thus while extolling the faith of the Gentile centurion, Jesus warned the unbelieving Jews that many would come from the ends of the earth to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the heavenly feast; while those to whom the kingdom had been first promised should be shut out; † for the kingdom is not the inalienable possession of one sole nation, but belongs to those who bring forth the fruits of it. ‡ The sheep which the Good Shepherd will gather into His flock belong not all originally to the same fold, § and those who confidently think to be first, resting their expectation on imaginary claims, will find themselves left behind by some to whom they had assigned the lowest place, or whom they had excluded altogether. || In reference to the parables, we will only ask our readers to look, for example, at those of the royal feast, of the wicked husband-

* John vii. 22.

† *Oi viol τῆς βασιλείας*, Matt. viii. 11 ; comp. Luke xiii. 28, and foll.

‡ Matt. xxi. 43.

§ John x. 16.

|| Matt. xix. 30 ; xx. 16 ; Mark x. 31.

men, of the prodigal son,* and they will find the same ideas in them all; now we see the Jews disinherited through their own fault, through their perversity or crimes, and the Gentiles taking their place; again the Gentiles are represented casting themselves into the compassionate arms of their heavenly Father, and in their sincere repentance being welcomed back to the family hearth, and to a place as warm as that of the elder brother in the father's heart. The parables of the tares and of the net † may indirectly teach the same lesson, since they make admission into the kingdom dependent on purely moral conditions. Lastly, the commission given to the apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, ‡ proclaiming the pardon of sins on repentance and faith alone, must remove the last doubt, if any can yet remain, as to the universality of the principle on which the kingdom of God rests. It would be strange indeed if tradition, which often shows itself so eager to preserve all that might seem to favour Jewish opinions, should have forgotten, on a point so capital, the restrictions designed to secure the prerogative of Israel, had that prerogative been really recognized by Jesus.

It is a matter of importance, both for the honour of the Gospel and for the explanation of prejudices which we shall find existing in the Church, that we should here show that this universalism is altogether foreign to the spirit of the Old Testament. It is true that the prophets speak more than once of the conversion of the Gentiles, but they do not say that that conversion implies the establishment of another law and another worship than that which alone had the divine sanction in their day. The sanctuary of Zion was ever to be the centre of the nations; the offerings were ever to be laid on the Levitical altar; and side by side with the sublime visions which represent the happy era when the law of God should be written in the hearts of His people, we read explicit declarations, placing the circum-

* Matt. xxii. 1, and foll.; Luke xiv. 16, and foll.; Matt. xxi. 33, foll., and parall.; Luke xv. 11, and foll.

† Matt. xiii. 38, 47.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 14; xxviii. 19; Mark xiii. 10; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts i. 8.

cision of the flesh in the same category with that of the heart, as a condition of admission into the city of God.* This fact must not be lost sight of, if we would account for and understand the antipathy manifested by the first Christians towards the uncircumcised who sought admission into their community. The disciples appear to have received the words of the Master, subject to the prejudices natural to the spirit of their nation, and to have even clung by preference to certain sayings of His which seemed to countenance these preconceived ideas. Thus they tell us that Jesus expressly forbade them to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans;† that He said He Himself was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;‡ that He instanced the heathen when he would reprove any evil practice,§ thus sharing the opinion of the Jewish people, who stigmatized all but themselves as “sinners of the Gentiles;” lastly, that He so expressed Himself in order to assign to them, in any event, a place outside His Church.|| Historical criticism does not permit us to call in question the authenticity of these words, but as little does it sanction the idea of a contradiction or change in the thoughts and purposes of the Saviour. The difficulty can be solved by supposing, first, that Jesus was often obliged to use the language of His hearers in order to be more easily understood; next, by remembering that the blame cast upon the heathen was well deserved, and that it does not imply praise of the Jews; and lastly, by admitting that, in His wisdom, Christ designedly drew a narrow circle for His disciples in their first mission of evangelization. In the story of the Syro-Phœnician woman, the trial of her faith only called forth in the end the more emphatic manifestation of the Saviour’s purpose of boundless mercy. These incidents will come before us again as we proceed.

* Ezek. xlv. 9; comp. Isaiah lii. 1.

† Matt. x. 5.

‡ Matt. xv. 24.

§ Matt. v. 46, and foll.; vi. 7, 32; Luke vi. 32, and foll.; xii. 30, etc. (ἀμαρτωλοί). [In Matt v. 47. Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles read “heathen” for “publicans.”—ED.]

|| Matt. xviii. 17.

We have still to notice one last characteristic of the kingdom of God, which also is only a natural consequence of that already pointed out, but which calls for especial and separate notice, because the Church, as we shall see, soon forgot its importance and lost sight of it. Happily, its essential nature is established by one word* of our foundation text, to the explanation of which the remainder of this chapter will be devoted.

The kingdom of God, which Jesus desired to make a reality, commences with His personal appearance on the theatre of the world. His advent and the setting up of the kingdom are one and the same thing, because He is the head and cause of the kingdom, and the cause cannot exist without its effect. The commencement of the kingdom is not consigned to some coming epoch ; it is not connected with some outward, visible, palpable event. The kingdom is established deep down in the hearts opened to receive it ; it is prepared in silence, set up without noise or tumult, as soon as the seed scattered by the sower's hand begins to develop its germ in a soil suited to it.

In the same manner, organic life in nature commences from the moment the grain comes in contact with the humid soil ; it is developed invisibly in the bosom of the earth, and sends forth first the feeble blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. It would be quite as false to restrict the application of the name corn to the standing golden crops, as to restrict the notion of the kingdom of God to a future development. This allegorical image is not of our invention. Jesus Himself uses it for the same purpose to which we have here applied it. He recurs to it on repeated occasions, varying the forms of the figure.†

The parables of the grain of mustard seed and of the leaven‡ are both designed to set forth the feeble commencement of the most momentous phase of human development, its slow and almost imperceptible progress, and the grandeur of its final

* ἡγγελικε, Mark i. 15 ; Matt. iv. 17 ; x. 7 ; Luke x. 9, 11.

† Mark iv. 14, foll. and parall. ; Matt. ix. 37 ; Luke x. 2 ; John iv. 35.

‡ Matt. xiii. 31, 32, 33 ; comp. Mark iv. 26, and foll.

results. This progressive education towards an end which, though ideal, is not to be regarded as purely abstract and without foundation in present realities, is clearly denoted in the parable of the tares.* In all organic development, moreover, the germ is the matter of capital importance, since on it all the rest depends. In this aspect, therefore, it would be wrong to circumscribe within too strait limits the idea of the kingdom of God.

But Jesus does not simply use allegories in order to teach His disciples that the kingdom of God has already commenced, at the very time when He is speaking to them of it. He expresses Himself on this subject in clear and exact terms. The victories, apparently partial, gained by Him over the powers of evil, are so many signs of the advent of a new order of things, characterized by the preponderance of good.† In vain He says to the Pharisees, you strain your sight with interested curiosity‡ to catch on the far horizon the first tokens of the dazzling dawn of the kingdom; if your eyes were not holden by selfishness so that you are truly blind, you would discern the tokens of the kingdom all around you, in the midst of those very men whom your pride contemns. The worship of God in spirit and in truth does not require the temples and ceremonies now connected with it, and which have the melancholy prerogative of dividing men; from this time, the contest between Zion and Gerizim is decided in favour of a worship far more in harmony with the nature of God, and adopted by those who understand His will.§ While the faithful were still persistently looking for the manifestation of the kingdom as yet to come, Jesus declared that God had already visited His people, but that they had not discerned the signs of the times.|| He goes even further, and

* Matt. xiii. 24, and foll.

† Matt. xii. 28 (ἐφθασεν).

‡ Luke xvii. 20 (μετὰ παρατηρήσεως).

§ John iv. 24 (νῦν ἐστι). We shall find the theology of John based essentially upon this idea.

|| Luke xix. 44 (ὁ καιρος τῆς ἐπισποπῆς); Matt. xvi. 3 (τὰ σημεῖα τῶν καιρῶν).

assigns a precise date to the commencement of the kingdom, and that date is no other than the moment in which John the Baptist, the last and greatest of the prophets, opened its doors, so to speak, by proclaiming to the world Him who was to realize its most cherished hopes.* From that moment, the movement towards the kingdom begins, and men eagerly press into it. Lastly, when the scribe professes a conviction of duty altogether different from that of the Pharisees, Jesus declares him to be near to the kingdom,† which proves that the proximity of the latter is a subjective and relative thing, a conclusion to be drawn also from the exhortation to men to seek the kingdom of God. ‡

When after this Jesus teaches His disciples to pray to God, "Thy kingdom come," we understand at once that He refers not to some wholly future period, to what was called the end of the world,§ but to the growing realization of an order of things conformed to His holy will, such as may and ought to be brought about by a fulfilment of Gospel precepts.

This insensible but constant progress of the kingdom among men undoubtedly leads forward our expectations to a goal beyond the limit of the earthly life. The kingdom is indeed advancing slowly and insensibly towards a glorious perfection in a heavenly order of things. But this is a new idea, one to which we shall have to recur, but which we must not confound with that now before us.

* Matt. xi. 11—14; Luke xvi. 16 (*βιάζονται*). Two interpretations, diametrically opposite, are given of this saying: the one favoured by Luke's version, which we follow here; the other supported by the text of Matthew, which supposes the assertion of a hostile sentiment. [The passage in Matthew may be fairly interpreted, "The kingdom of heaven is taken by force, and violent men press into it as if for their share of the plunder." There is no necessary conflict between the passages from the two gospels.—ED.]

† Mark xii. 34.

‡ Matt. vi. 33; Luke xii. 31; comp. the parables, Matt. xiii. 44, 45, 46.

§ Luke xi. 2; Matt. vi. 10. This would form, indeed, a singular *ὑστερον πρῶτερον* with the petition following. On our explanation it is easy to see how, in the version given by Luke, a part of this prayer may be omitted without any real alteration of the meaning.

CHAPTER IV.

CONVERSION.

Two exhortations, two practical consequences—a system of morals and a religion, to use the language of the schools—are founded upon that basis of fact which we have been hitherto considering. “The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of heaven is at hand; *repent ye and believe the Gospel.*” We shall be struck with the constant recurrence in the New Testament of these two words *repent* and *believe*, which seem to contain the most succinct epitome of the whole Gospel teaching. Let us proceed to show that they are the words of Jesus Himself, and attempt to arrive at a true idea of their scope and import.

We shall consider in this chapter the first of the two conditions of participation in the kingdom of God, or, to put it in another way, the first invitation addressed to men to enter it. What is the exact meaning of the Greek word* here presented to us? The writers of our gospels nowhere pause to explain it, and the common equivalents—repentance, conversion, etc., in our modern languages do not represent precisely the same sense, or have acquired a sort of technical meaning in religious usage. Etymology and symbolism will help us to a right understanding of the original. The term in question properly marks a change in the intellectual and moral dispositions of an

* *Μετάνοια, μετανοεῖν.* These terms are not found in John’s gospel. He employs instead of them the expression *γεννηθῆναι*. [This is a misapprehension. Repentance and faith are the human conditions on which the new birth—the result of a supernatural and divine act—is dependent.—ED.]

individual; it implies the assertion of a false and reprehensible state or disposition, and the invitation to come out of it. It contains therefore a complex idea, one in which analysis at once discovers two distinct elements. This notion, again, is evidently implied in the symbol of baptism, inasmuch as it is called the *baptism of repentance*. This rite, in fact, consisting in an ablution, represents the putting away of impurity or defilement, and consequently the realization of a state exempt from these blemishes. In some passages the simple idea of repentance* might seem to be all, but in others there is a marked predominance of the positive element.

We observe at once that the exhortation in question is addressed indiscriminately to all men; we hence conclude that all are in a condition of mind which needs to be changed; that the state of all is abnormal, defective, contrary to the will of God, and of a nature to bar their access into His kingdom.

It is true that passages may be pointed out in the discourses of Jesus which seem to present exceptions to this general rule. We do not refer to the fact that certain Old Testament personages are spoken of as righteous,† because in that case it is clear that the Saviour is using the language of those with whom He is disputing, or at least the language of Scripture, which under the old economy applied another measure to the idea of righteousness. Nor do we here stay to note certain expressions designed to generalize a statement, and to mark its independence of all distinctions between individuals.‡ But there are other passages in which Jesus seems to speak of individuals actually present before Him as realizing, of themselves and independently of Him, that perfect righteousness which ought to be the apanage of all; in which He seems to admit and assert that there are men capable of attaining, without spiritual aid, to a state of perfect moral health.§ The contradiction, however, between these passages and the idea

* Luke xvii. 3, 4; xv. 10, etc.

† *Δικαιοι*, Matt. xiii. 17; xxiii. 29, 35.

‡ Matt. v. 45.

§ Luke v. 31, 32, and parall.; xv. 7.

we just described as a natural and necessary element of Gospel teaching, is only apparent. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican * makes it evident that Jesus did sometimes employ the term *righteous*, not in an absolute or ideal sense, but in the vulgar and relative acceptation familiar to Jewish morality. This is further confirmed as much by the general tenor of His teaching, as by the irony of His denunciations of the spirit of Pharisaism which reigned around Him, and which offered the strongest barrier to His influence; † but it is idle to search for proofs in detail of a fact which does not require demonstration. A single passage ‡ would alone suffice for such demonstration, since the idea of goodness is therein asserted to be so lofty that it is realized in God alone. It is evident that if Jesus, who on another occasion § is not afraid to challenge the Jews to find any fault in Him, disclaims in the passage referred to, the qualification of *good*, even for Himself, He must far more emphatically repudiate it as applied to any other man. ||

We cannot fail to notice, however, that side by side with this universal need of repentance and moral amelioration, Jesus recognizes the diversity of natural disposition in individuals; had it been otherwise, he would not have so often placed

* Luke xviii. 9, and foll.

† Comp. Matt. xxiii. 28.

‡ Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19. The parallel passage in Matt. xix. 17 (the text of which is doubtful) presents the words of Christ in another form, and seeks to avoid that which might awaken dogmatic scruples, but it is none the less apt to confirm our point. Comp. also Matt. vii. 11, and parall.

§ John viii. 46.

|| The true meaning of our Lord's words is admirably given by Alford in his note on Mark x. 18. "He was no 'good Master' to be singled out from men on account of His pre-eminence over His kind in virtue and wisdom: God sent us no such Christ as this, nor may any of the sons of men be thus called *good*. He was one with Him who only is good, the Son of the Father, come not to teach us merely, but to beget us anew by the divine power which dwells in Him. The low view, then, which this applicant takes of Him and His office, He at once rebukes and annuls, as He has done before in the case of Nicodemus."—ED.

in two classes* the men among whom He moved and taught. Still further. We call to mind the passages in which He represents children and the childlike as the natural inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.† In these passages, undoubtedly, the question is not of what may be called in philosophy innocence absolute—that is, the absence if not of the possibility of sin, at least of the tendency to it, and of the sensual impulses which lead to it. But it is none the less true that these words imply the idea that children are in a moral condition in which evil has not yet acquired over them the predominating influence, and in which there is notably the absence of that spirit of opposition of which Jesus complained in the case of adults.

Nevertheless the preponderance of evil over good in the majority of men is a fact reiterated by the Saviour on many occasions. More than once He includes the whole generation of His contemporaries in one common reprobation,‡ and this judgment is all the more impressive that it is not pronounced from an ideal standpoint out of the reach of humanity, but often with the fully declared intention to recognize even the humblest endeavours after good, discoverable in the world.

We have several images designed to depict this state of things in the most glowing colours. He who allows himself to slip just over the fatal brink, and wanders away from the father's house, to forget it in the whirl of worldly revelry, is as

* Ἄγαθοι, πονηροί, Matt. xii. 35; Luke vi. 45; Matt. xxii. 10; Luke viii. 14, and foll.; comp. John iii. 19, and foll. [Most of these passages give no sanction at all to the statement in the text about "the diversity of natural disposition in individuals." Some of them refer to those who have been made good by the power of God's Spirit; in Matt. xxii. 10, the words *good* and *bad* are used in their common popular sense, with no theological reference; in the explanation of the parable of the sower (Luke viii. 14), and in John iii. 19—21, there is more to sustain Reuss's position, but even these are scarcely pertinent. But there was really no necessity to quote a single text to show that our Lord did not regard all men as equally sinful; His whole teaching shows that He recognized the obvious facts of human life and character.—ED.]

† Matt. xviii. 2; Mark x. 13, foll. and parall.

‡ Mark viii. 38; Matt. xii. 39, and foll.; xvi. 4; Luke ix. 41; John vii. 7, etc.

lost and dead.* If he succeeds in retracing the way to the paternal home, it is like coming to life again. In general, this appellation *dead* is given to all that is alien to the kingdom of God. Those only are alive who yield themselves to the service of that kingdom, and that with a full renunciation of all worldly entanglements.†

Again, Jesus frequently represents sin as a debt contracted to God,‡ with this added but essential idea, that we are not able to pay—that is, to do anything to wipe out the debt; that therefore we can only sue for grace and clemency.§ The sinner is thus a debtor, and these same expressions are applied to the relations of man to man, inasmuch as they also present, though in a much lower degree, this fact of mutual indebtedness—that is, of failure of duty towards each other.

As to the seat of evil, Jesus points out that it is found in the very heart of man,|| or more definitely in the ascendancy of the sensual over the spiritual nature.¶ He does not anywhere affirm that this ascendancy is a matter of innate, original, primal necessity, nor is there the slightest allusion in any of the discourses of Jesus to the theological question which subsequently engaged the attention of the schoolmen and philosophers of the Church. He simply represents sin as arising from the corrupting influence of the devil and his suggestions; where God has sowed the good seed, the devil sows tares as soon as ever the field is left unwatched.** He is therefore called the devil, the wicked one.†† His power is so great in

* *Νεκρός*, Luke xv. 24, 32.

† Luke ix. 60.

‡ *Ἡ ὀφείλημα*, Matt. vi. 12; comp. Luke xi. 4.

§ Matt. xviii. 28, and foll.; Luke vii. 41; xiii. 4.

|| Matt. xv. 17—20.

¶ Matt. xxvi. 41; Mark xiv. 38.

** Matt. xiii. 19, 25, 28, foll.; Luke xxii. 31; comp. John viii. 44.

†† *Ὁ ἔχθρος, ὁ πονηρός*. This expression never occurs in the neuter, but often in the masculine. It will then be fair to suppose the masculine gender in passages where the grammatical form is indefinite, as, for example, in John xvii. 15; Matt. v. 37, vi. 13, and even v. 39, where the point in question is a wicked act inspired by the devil, and very probably opposition offered by the world to the true disciples of Christ.

this world, that he is spoken of as its prince.* His dominion, however, shall not prevail against that of Christ; nay, more, he is already virtually dethroned by the very fact that the reign of Christ has begun.†

Jesus gives no diagnosis of the nature of the devil. He uses, in speaking of him, the terms and modes of speech common among the Jews, and seems to have felt no necessity for either defining or changing them.

The fact that Jesus regards temptation as proceeding from the devil, rests mainly upon the accounts given by the first three evangelists of the temptation of the Lord Himself, a narrative which must have been received from His own lips. We shall have to refer to this subject in a future chapter. For the present, we have to explain a seeming contradiction which this point of view presents with the Lord's Prayer, in which we are taught, addressing God, to say, "Lead us not into temptation."‡ This phrase appears all the more hard to understand, inasmuch as the sense it conveys is explicitly denounced by that apostle who next to the evangelists has most exactly preserved and reproduced the words of Jesus.§ Expositors, in order to get out of the difficulty, have invented various expedients, all doing more or less violence to the text. Not content with denying any reference to the devil himself, by an interpretation strictly sustained by the grammar, they have changed the idea of temptation into that of a simple trial, or have freely translated the verb by the paraphrase, *Suffer us not to yield to temptation*. Some translations have this singularly audacious correction incorporated in the text. It is unquestionable that the word temptation is also used in the sense of a trial—a passing tribulation, serving to strengthen our faith, to exercise our patience, and to meeten us for the kingdom of God.|| But it is not just to say that the two ideas of trial and

* Matt. xii. 26.

† Luke x. 18.

‡ *πειρασμός*, Matt. vi. 13; Luke xi. 4.

§ James i. 13.

|| Comp. Luke viii. 13, with Matt. xiii. 21; Mark iv. 17.

of temptation are dissevered in the mind of the sacred writers, or in the thoughts of Jesus. The Old Testament, from which are borrowed the greater part of the terms used on this subject, does not distinguish between the two. All that happens to us is of God; were it otherwise, He would not be truly the Governor of the world and of the destinies of all His creatures; we should fall into a dualism radically opposed to the spirit of the Bible. But every event, every accident which befalls us, whether joyous or grievous, is at the same time a means of education in the hand of God, or may be an occasion of sin, if the devil succeeds in beguiling us into a false use or abuse of it. Modern religious speech, in order to prevent any confusion of the two points of view, has invented different terms to express each separately—temptation, trial; but the idiom alike of the Old and New Testament uses only one and the same term, because it was framed on the principle of an absolute monotheism, and the idea that evil might be attributed to God did not excite so much apprehension.* The need for a theological explanation was subsequently perceived;† but popular speech passed over the difficulty, and Jesus could well unite in one prayer the two ideas, which are in truth but one, that God may vouchsafe to preserve His children from positions in which they would be peculiarly exposed to the wiles of the devil.

By a metaphor already familiar in the Hebrew, the occasion to sin is called a snare spread for the feet of any one;‡ this word serves also to designate the man who incites others to commit acts contrary to the Divine will.§ To allow oneself thus to be taken,—to yield, that is, to the allurements of the world, or to flinch from duty through fear of suffering,—is to

* That moral evil could be attributed to God was quite as abhorrent to Jewish monotheism as to Christianity; the absolute holiness of Jehovah was one of the fundamental truths on which Moses and the prophets alike insisted. Reuss has given, earlier in this paragraph, the true explanation of the words on which he is commenting.—Ed.

† James i. 13.

‡ Σκάνδαλον.

§ Matt. xiii. 41; xvi. 23.

fall into the snare.* The active form has the corresponding sense—to seduce, to lead astray. So clear is the relation supposed to exist between these outward facts of sin and the influence of the devil, that in one passage the very name of the devil is transferred to the man who is reputed to be acting for the moment as his instrument.† The responsibility of man is none the less real and awful; the inevitable war waged by Satan against the kingdom of God brings with it of necessity occasions to sin, but this necessity forms no excuse for those who make use of the occasion.‡

On the other hand, the inclination and tendency to evil is also spoken of as proceeding from ourselves, from our own lusts and lawless desires. It is needless to say that this immediate cause of sin is the chief point to which moral teaching addresses itself. Thus it is said, in figurative language which cannot be misunderstood, that the eye, the hand, the foot may become the cause of our fall,§ and that it is better to lose these members than to come short of the kingdom itself, the possession of which is preferable to all that man can hold most dear in the world. This loss is specially imminent and peculiarly deplorable when Christ Himself becomes the occasion of sin;|| that is to say, when His will, words, acts, instead of being accepted by man as a precious guide to good and salvation, are first received by him with doubtfulness, and ultimately rejected. This last remark brings us back to our starting-point, namely, that temptation is the effect of a Satanic suggestion, taking advantage of our weakness in a position where we were placed by God for an entirely different end.¶

The conflict between the devil and Christ, between the power which leads astray and the power which preserves,

* Σκανδαλιζεσθαι, Matt. xiii. 21, and parall. ; John xvi. 1 ; comp. Matt. xviii. 6, and parall.

† Matt. xvi. 23.

‡ Matt. xviii. 7.

§ Matt. v. 29, and foll. ; xviii. 8 ; Mark ix. 43, and foll.

|| Matt. xi. 6 ; xxvi. 31, foll. and parall. ; xxiv. 10.

¶ Comp. Luke xxii. 31, with Matt. xxvi. 31.

strengthens, vivifies; this conflict between darkness and light,* represented now as an outward and concrete fact, now as a storm within, agitating the heart in its inmost depths, is as perilous as it is incessant. The work of Christ is to expel the demon from the heart of which he has taken possession; † but the evil one does not so readily loose his hold; he returns to the charge with greater force, and surprising the man in a moment when his vigilance is slumbering, he replunges him into an abyss deeper than that out of which he had been drawn. ‡

* Luke xi. 34; Matt. vi. 22, 23.

† Luke xiii. 32. We are aware that this is not the meaning of this passage in the mind of the narrator himself, or of most of his readers; but we cannot but think that words such as these have in the lips of Jesus a deeper meaning than appears on the surface, just as His physical miracles correspond to moral facts. Matt. xi. 5; John v., vi., ix., xi., etc.

‡ Matt. xii. 43, and foll.

NOTE.—This whole chapter is very unsatisfactory in its apprehension of the actual condition of human nature as represented by our Lord. The fundamental defect of Reuss's treatment of *Conversion* results from his superficial account of our Lord's representation of *Sin*. For a fuller and profounder discussion of the subject, see Schmid's *Bib. Theol.* (Clark's Translation), pp. 170—186.—ED.

CHAPTER V.

PERFECTION.

WE shall now regard conversion under another aspect, as we proceed to examine to what final result it should tend. The reply to this question is easy to discover; various passages, and still more the very notion conveyed by the term itself, lead us directly to it. We have already found it asserted that God alone is good.* This assertion will serve here as the starting-point of our analysis. If God only is good, it is only through Him and by nearness to Him, man in his turn can attain to goodness. Conversion will be necessarily a return to God.† This necessity for man to get free from earthly things, to rise to things heavenly and divine, is expressed repeatedly and in various ways, both in parable ‡ and without a figure.

* Mark x. 18.

† Ἐπιστρέφειν εἰς τὸν θεόν, Matt. xiii. 15.

‡ The two parables of the treasure and the pearl (Matt. xiii. 44, and foll.), as they have been handed down to us by tradition, are not perfect in form, for, according to them, the thing possessed and the thing to be sought for and bought, differ only in quantity and relative value of more or less, whereas the treasures of this world, compared with those of the heavenly, ought to differ in their essence and quality. [These two parables are "perfect" for their purpose. They are not intended to illustrate the contrast between the Kingdom of Heaven and the treasures of the world, but (a) the complete sacrifice of all inferior good to which men are called, and which they are ready to make, when they discover the glory and blessedness possible to them in Christ; (b) the different ways in which men come to know that the Kingdom of Heaven is near them—some men finding it while they are not seeking, others finding it while they are looking and longing for some great good.—ED.]

Jesus enjoins that the kingdom of God be sought first, and to the exclusion of all other anxious concern,* that treasure be laid up in heaven beyond the reach of rust or robber. He proclaims the impossibility of serving two masters at once—God and Mammon, or worldly wealth.† In His powerful and impressive language, He therefore demands a courageous heroism of self-abnegation before which our feeble natures often flinch, and He thus marks more distinctly the distance between the two ends which man may set before himself, and the necessity of turning the back on the one to fix the steadfast eye on the other. He calls upon a man to sell all his goods, so as to be no more burdened with anxious care about them; ‡ to get free without delay from the entanglements of life, without returning to take leave of any, or even to bury the dead; § to break even the closest ties of family, if they are an obstacle to free progress in the heavenly way; || to renounce the happiness of conjugal life, which has ever a tendency to multiply material demands, and thus to distract from spiritual concerns; ¶ to give up, in short, the life that now is for the life eternal.** All these words, so frequently repeated, so seldom put into practice, tend to mark the radical difference between the two orders of things, and the duty of forsaking the one for the other, where the kingdom of heaven is at stake.

From all this it follows that conversion does not consist simply in cessation from positive transgressions and palpable sins, but that it includes a new direction of the entire life, a concentration of its powers upon things above, not upon things below. It is evident that, in this aspect, the treasures of earth not only lose any sort of value as the end and chief concern of man; they are even regarded as hindrances to the attainment of the real good, inasmuch as they excite lawless desires, and

* Matt. vi. 33; *ibid.* v. 19; comp. xix. 21, and *parall.*; Luke xii. 33.

† Matt. vi. 24.

‡ Mark x. 21.

§ Luke ix. 59, and *fol.*

|| Matt. x. 37, and *fol.*

¶ Matt. xix. 11, 12.

** Matt. xvi. 24.

cause distraction of the soul from its true purpose.* By earthly treasures, we are not here to understand merely material goods, those which constitute riches in the vulgar sense of the word, but also the treasures of learning, the triumphs of reason, in so far as these treat of facts appertaining to what, in the Gospel sense, is the sphere of this world. It follows that all men, whether rich or poor in the sense indicated, will find themselves on the same level in regard to the kingdom of God; for, in truth, none is rich towards God in the commencement of his new career, and when conversion is preached to him as an incumbent duty. This is the sense in which it is said "to the poor the Gospel is preached;"† to those who heretofore had nothing, a great good is promised, not on account of their poverty, but in spite of it. Their poverty will form no ground with God for their exclusion, especially as the poor are more ready to admit that they have no claim to advance, while the rich are often prone to pride themselves on imaginary prerogatives. This latter assertion would not be strictly just if material wealth alone were in question; for there are many people who fancy they have merited heaven simply because they have been deprived of much enjoyment on earth, and we shall presently show that this notion was not unknown in the apostolic age. But there can be no doubt that intellectual wealth is also referred to. Matthew rightly understood when in explanation of Christ's saying, "*Blessed are the poor*," he added "*in spirit*." This rendering conveys with perfect truth the meaning of the Master, though very probably He actually used the shorter and more paradoxical formula given by Luke.‡ By the intellectual wealth thus referred to, we understand a leading reference to the theology of the Pharisees.§

So soon as a man has turned away from the world to draw

* Ἐπιθυμίας, Mark iv. 19.

† Matt. xi. 5.

‡ Matt. v. 3; Luke vi. 20; comp. x. 21.

§ Nothing could be much more remote from our Lord's thought than "the theology of the Pharisees." The blessing is pronounced on those who, with whatever wealth of knowledge or goodness, are conscious of unsatisfied spiritual cravings and necessities.—ED.

near to God, his actions become pleasing to Him; he sets himself to do the Divine will; conversion leads to a moral and virtuous life. It would be needless to enter here on an enumeration of the duties of the Christian, occasionally mentioned in the discourses of Jesus. Such an enumeration would be inevitably incomplete, because the true disciple of Christ will find himself in every situation, and at every period of life, face to face with duty in some form or other; and in order to know his duty in every case, he will not need to learn by heart a series of isolated and possible contingencies, but to have his whole being permeated with the great principles of the Gospel, and especially to open his heart to the regenerating and beneficent influences of the Divine Spirit, on which we shall presently dwell. We do not therefore find Christ giving to His disciples anywhere a summary epitome of duty, or catalogue of commandments. If, as occasion arises, He quotes any, they are the moral precepts of the Old Testament, familiar to all, particularly those of the decalogue, which his hearers knew by heart.* He gave in this department nothing new. At the very most, it may be said, He brought out with new clearness the moral element of the law, which had, to its great detriment, become much confounded with the ritual, and that He thus revealed it in all its native force and grandeur. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."† This is indeed the sum and substance of all morality, and this comprehensive saying, though lost amid a multitude of others, was of Moses.

But there is still another series of remarks which the attentive reader of the discourses of the Lord cannot fail to note, and which prove that the teaching of Christ goes far beyond the level of Mosaism, not only in the elevation of its principles, but also in their entire originality. We shall be careful not to recapitu-

* *Ἐντρολαι*, Matt. v. 19, xv. 3, 6, xix. 17, and parall. We shall see presently that the meaning of this word in the Gospel of John (xiv. 15, 21, xv. 10, etc.) does not differ essentially from that which we here attach to it.

† Matt. xxii. 36, foll. and parall.

late them in too systematic a manner, lest we should deprive them in any measure of their spirituality and power by subjecting them to too rigid an external method. We wish to offer only the reflections which arise most naturally out of a subject we do not pretend to exhaust.

Let us first observe that all that can be designated as the morality of the teaching of Christ is, in truth, a corollary of that religious feeling which ought to be the essential characteristic of the disciple of the Gospel, and which the Master sought first of all to awaken and keep alive. As we have already remarked, the proofs of this are so abundant that we have only the difficulty of choice. While Jewish morality rested upon the principle of legality, upon a sort of material balancing of positive and detailed requirements, a rigorous but limited fulfilment of law, and a recompense proportioned and predetermined, Jesus sought to change entirely the whole direction of the life, to substitute for all other motives this one—the love of God, a feeling which, be it observed, has nothing in common with the commercial view of religion just described. The model prayer * which He taught His disciples, and which has rightly become the daily bread of the Church, commences by saying, “Hallowed be Thy name,” a petition very inadequately fulfilled by the mere avoidance of idle or profane language. The holiness of the Most High is the starting-point, the source of the moral sentiment, as the perfect likeness of man to his Creator will be the final goal. Doing the will of God is no longer the mere carrying out of a higher will through motives of interest or fear; it is represented as the growing realization of the normal relation between God and humanity, the full happiness of the race being identified with the bringing in of the fulness of the kingdom. The duties of man to his fellows are enforced by the view of the solidarity of mankind in sin, and the common need of Divine grace. The vicissitudes of every individual lot are seen to be all tending also to bring men back to God, as to their one mighty protector, especially as all these sorrows and joys are to be considered in their relation to the

* Matt. vi. 9, and foll.

inner life. There is none even of the necessities of the physical life, the things which bind man to earth, and determine the form of his daily existence and social relations, which may not be raised into a higher sphere by prayer; while the very act of prayer prevents man from forgetting the source of all good, or becoming engrossed in those worldly concerns and cares* which are a sore hindrance to earnest labour for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

We shall find among the sayings of Jesus a large number of precepts and expressions, which can only be read and understood aright in the light of this essentially religious point of view, the centre and focus of His moral teaching. The very epithet "adulterous generation,"† which He applies to His contemporaries who manifest a spirit opposed to that of the Gospel, recalls a similar expression used in the Old Testament, and is principally designed to mark the absence of the religious element in the members of a community, which nevertheless arrogated to itself the privilege of piety.

This leads us to define more exactly the antithesis between the righteousness of the Pharisees and that of the kingdom of heaven,‡ to which Jesus adverts in the Sermon on the Mount. This is not a contrast simply between acts and words,§ but rather between the secret thoughts and motives which produce the acts and determine their moral value, and the outward result, the material fact appreciable by the senses.|| Murder is found more often in the fratricidal hate eating like a canker into the man's own heart, than in the blow struck at the heart of an enemy; adultery is more common in the look of lust cast furtively at the wife of another, than in the positive act of seduction; perjury is rather the light and irreverent invocation of the name of God to confirm a man's word, than the false oath betraying a sacred cause. In the sight of God, he is not alone

* Matt. vi. 34; comp. x. 9.

† Γενεὰ μοιχαλῖς (that is impious). Matt. xii. 39; Mark viii. 38, etc.

‡ Δικαιοσύνη τῆς βασιλείας, Matt. vi. 33; comp. v. 20.

§ Matt. vii. 16, 21.

|| Matt. v. 21, 23, 28, 31, 33, 38, and foll.; vi. 1.

guilty who actually transgresses a commandment enforced by a solemn sanction, but he also who dares to present himself before the altar, unreconciled with his brother; he who, by divorce lightly pronounced, breaks the marriage bond, and does violence to the most sacredly conservative institution of nature; nay, even he who does good on principles of calculation, vanity, or ostentation. In a word, the heart must be pure, and all the rest will follow of itself;* none but the pure-hearted can hope to see God,—that is, can hope to be counted worthy to be made one with Him for this life and another.†

The Old Testament had been arrested, in its noblest aspirations by the limitations of a national and exclusive theocracy. The universalism of the Gospel broke down this barrier, which prevented the free and healthy flow of the moral life. The Jew regarded the Jew, and the Jew alone, as his neighbour; in the Gospel, a man's neighbour is every one who has need of him.‡ The pious Israelite might say to his son, Do not do to others what you would not that they should do to you; a maxim undoubtedly good and true, and which the Gospel fully accepts, but on its negative basis it builds up an affirmative command, bidding us be the first to do to others as we would they should do unto us,§ to love our neighbour as we love ourselves, and thus turn into a spring of social virtues the self-love natural to man—an instinct so apt to become the source of self-indulgence and sin. The Israelite would say, Thou hast nothing to do with the wicked. The Gospel teaches us that we are all alike wicked, that we have no room for mutual recrimination, since God has so much to lay to the charge of every one of us;|| that our debts to Him are greater incomparably than any our fellow-men can owe to us;¶ it shows us how God diffuses His good gifts over all mankind,

* Luke xi. 41.

† Matt. v. 8.

‡ Luke x. 30, and foll.

§ Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31; comp. Tob. iv. 15, and foll.

|| Matt. vii. 1, 3, and parall.

¶ Matt. xviii. 23, and foll.

and draws from that fact the inference that we are bound to forgive one another unconditionally,* to love our very enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to those who despitefully use us and persecute us, to suffer without retaliating, to serve without murmuring, and to give as freely as we receive. Virtue which is content with limits narrower than these, is not better than that of the heathen.†

The performance of duty constitutes no claim of merit towards God. While the morality of the Old Testament rests upon a reciprocal contract (synallagmatic) between Jehovah and Israel, and establishes a sort of running account between the two contracting parties, the disciple of Jesus knows and confesses that even when he has done all that it is his duty to do, he is but an unprofitable servant.‡ So little ground for boasting will the Christian find in his own deeds, that instead of spreading them out before God, he is to be the first to forget them; his left hand is not to know what his right hand does.§

Nevertheless, in the faithful discharge of his duties the disciple of Christ has before him the prospect of the closest and happiest possible relation to his heavenly Father. He feels himself the labourer sent forth into God's field to till it and gather in the harvest. Now the workman is always worthy of his hire, providing that, having put his hand to the plough, he looks not back,|| so as to lose time, and spend his strength for nought. We find, therefore, frequent mention of reward even for what might be called the smallest manifestations of Christian charity.¶ These promises form no contradiction to the principle just laid down, since we have no claim of right to urge upon God. They are explained, on the one hand, by the

* Matt. xviii. 15, 21.

† Matt. v. 39, and foll., 44 and foll., 47.

‡ Luke xvii. 10.

§ Matt. vi. 3.

|| Matt. ix. 37; Luke x. 2, 7; ix. 62. [These references are unfortunate; they have no relation to the idea of a divine reward for earthly service.—Ed.]

¶ Matt. x. 42; comp. v. 41, v. 12; vi. 1, and parall.

grace which owns our weak endeavours; on the other, by the natural relation between a good action and its results; lastly, by the nature of the good promised. As the Gospel enhances the dignity of those who receive it by faith, so that the humblest of them becomes the object of the special care and protection of heaven,* so do we find every effort put forth by man for man, fraught with a twofold and ever-widening blessing. By letting his light shine before men, so that they may see his good works, the disciple of Christ leads men to glorify God,† and themselves to turn to Him and be saved; and this result is in itself a noble recompense to him who receives it, and fruitful in blessed consequences.

This is not the place for us to look into the prospects which Jesus opens to the eye of those who follow Him, beyond this earthly life. Of these we shall speak presently; but we may note from this point the radical change effected by conversion in the relations of men to God. Until now they had been the children of this generation, imbued with its spirit,—with the spirit, that is, of the wicked one;‡ henceforward they are the children of light or of wisdom, illuminated by the candle of truth, and finding by its aid the path of duty and life; children of the kingdom, heirs of the heavenly inheritance; children of God Himself, His dear children, loving one another for His sake, and freely as He has loved them.§ As the children of God, they are the brethren of Christ, who loved to speak to His disciples of His Father and their Father, His God and their God.||

This “enthusiasm of humanity,” unconditioned and unselfish, is the noblest and mightiest manifestation of the moral change wrought in those who listen to the voice of Christ; for by this love we are brought as near to God as is possible for human

* Matt. xviii. 6, 10, 14.

† Matt. v. 16.

‡ *Τίσι τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, Luke xvi. 8; *τοῦ πονηροῦ*, Matt. xiii. 38; comp. John viii. 44, *τοῦ φωτός*, Luke, *loc. cit.*; John xii. 36, *τῆς βασιλείας*; Matt., *loc. cit.*; *τῆς σοφίας*, xi. 19.

§ Matt. v. 9, 45; Luke vi. 35.

|| Mark iii. 35, and parall.

nature. Thus Jesus, after speaking of the universal brotherhood, which embraces even enemies themselves, adds that through it we become perfect as God is perfect.* The strict observance of the commandments of God, as given by the law, is not perfection.† It is not the sum of acts conformed to the will of God which in the Gospel sense determines our moral status; but the spirit in which they are done, the impelling motive, the cheerful obedience.

If we compare the passage last referred to (Matt. xix. 16—21) with the parallel passages, we shall find the path of perfection marked out in terms which lead us now to speak of faith.

* Ταλειοι, Matt. v. 48; comp. John xvii. 23.

† Matt. xix. 16, 21.

CHAPTER VI.

FAITH.

IN our inquiries into the nature of conversion, we have ascertained that it belongs essentially to the sphere of ethics, though characterized by a very close association with religious ideas.* If we now pass to the study of faith, we shall find ourselves upon ground essentially religious, but we shall also find the principles of religion constantly tending to a moral manifestation or application. In contrast, we may observe that, while our former course of inquiry brought us into habitual contact with points familiar to the old economy, that now before us will introduce us more directly to the ideas peculiar to the Gospel.

We shall not stay to inquire into the general and philological sense of the word faith,† and of its correlatives, as gathered from many passages in the discourses of Jesus Christ. The fact that we possess only a translation of the discourses of the Lord further greatly lessens the interest that would other-

* Conversion reveals itself in the ethical sphere, and, indeed, contains many ethical elements ; but it is essentially and fundamentally a religious process, involving the recognition of the loss of the soul's true relationship to God. A purely ethical change—a change resting on the discovery by conscience of the soul's departure from the eternal law of righteousness, but not recognizing the personal God as the Moral Ruler of mankind, and the Fountain of the soul's highest life, would not be conversion.—ED.

† Πίστις. This word does not occur in the fourth gospel. The idea itself, however, is presented in a number of precisely parallel passages ; but as we shall be obliged to revert to those presently, because of their importance in the theology of John, we here omit them.

wise attach to studies of this sort. We propose to consider the term in its specifically Christian sense, and to examine in succession the nature, source, and object of religious faith.

Faith is, speaking generally, belief in the reality of a fact,* or faithfulness in the fulfilment of a trust.† In its more peculiarly Christian use it implies also boldness in danger,‡ confidence in the veracity of prophecy,§ conviction of the Messianic dignity of Jesus.|| Jesus further speaks of faith, that is, of trust in God, or, which amounts to the same thing here, trust in His own miraculous power,¶ under circumstances in which it is impossible to introduce into the definition of the word any specifically evangelical element. Indeed the number of passages which may serve to mark the presence of the Gospel element of faith, and thus to give exactness to our definition of it, is comparatively limited. We will pass them briefly in review.

Let us notice, first, the reference to faith in connection with John the Baptist,** where it represents the will or disposition to listen to his invitation to moral amendment. More frequently, we find faith placed in relation to the miraculous healing of sicknesses.†† “Thy faith hath saved thee,” says the Saviour to those to whom He had restored health, and this expression implied the pardon of sins.‡‡ In another instance, the absence of faith hinders the performance of the miracle,§§ and Jesus withholds it on the ground of moral unfitness to receive it. Faith is, again, the source of the miraculous power itself.¶¶ This is faith fixed directly upon God, and exercised by prayer; it

* Matt. xxiv. 23, 26, and parall. ; comp. Mark xvi. 13.

† Luke xvi. 11.

‡ Mark iv. 40.

§ Luke xxiv. 25.

|| Luke xxii. 67 ; comp. Matt. xxvii. 42.

¶ Matt. ix. 2, 28 ; viii. 10, and parall.

** Matt. xxi. 32.

†† Matt. ix. 22 ; Mark v. 34, and foll. ; x. 52 ; Luke vii. 50 ; xvii. 19, etc.

‡‡ Matt. xv. 28 ; viii. 10. [These are the references which Reuss gives, but there must be some mistake.—ED.]

§§ Ἀπιστία, Matt. xiii. 58 ; Mark ix. 23 ; Matt. xii. 39.

¶¶ Matt. xvii. 20, and foll. ; xxi. 21, foll. and parall. ; Mark xi. 22.

cannot therefore be separated from its essentially religious basis. Finally, believers, those who have faith, are represented as liable to break their relation with Christ, under the seductive influence of a corrupt morality, especially when the good seed has not cast deep roots into their hearts, and their faith is thus too feeble to withstand the shock of trial and temptation.*

If we combine the various elements common to all these passages, we gain the following results : 1st, Faith is a disposition of the soul † of which the essential elements are trust, self-surrender, resignation, not a certain measure of knowledge, or activity of the intellectual faculties. 2nd, It addresses itself directly to God.‡ 3rd, It is exercised also towards those who are to us the organs or representatives of God, as was John the Baptist, and as in a still higher sense is Jesus Christ. In other words, it is the bond which, directly or indirectly, unites us to God.§ 4th, It is characterized as inseparably associated with a moral control of the life, and the pardon of sin is shown to be dependent upon actual morality,|| not on theoretic conviction, but yet more emphatically on trust in the grace which welcomes back the penitent.¶ 5th, It is characterized as an active principle, an extraordinary power in the spiritual life of man, rendering him capable of mighty efforts in the cause of God, both in the world without and the world within.

Faith is, then, essentially that element of religion which has its basis in feeling, and satisfies the needs of the soul in this direction. It is almost unknown to the religion of the old covenant,** and represents the positive side of the Gospel dispensation, as conversion represents its negative aspects.

* Matt. xviii. 6 ; Mark ix. 42 ; Luke xxii. 34, and foll. ; comp. viii. 13.

† Faith may be the result of what Reuss describes as "a disposition of the soul," but it is an act passing into a habit.—ED.

‡ Πίστις θεοῦ, Mark xi. 22.

§ We shall find this last the predominant aspect in the fourth gospel.

|| No passages are quoted to illustrate this somewhat confused statement. The faith on which pardon depends is itself a moral act.—ED.

¶ Matt. vii. 21, and foll. ; vi. 14, and foll. ; xviii. 35 ; xxv. 31—46.

** St. Paul believed that faith was the fundamental law of the Old Covenant, as it is of the New.—ED.

Christian faith—that is, the disposition of the heart to suffer itself to be led to God by Christ—might be awakened by the extraordinary and miraculous deeds of the Saviour, which were a proof of His mission, and of His divine power.* In this view of it there is no distinction to be marked between conversion and faith. Both result from the same means, whether of miracle or simple preaching.† The refusal to believe in miracles, or rather the determination to ascribe them to an impure source, is pointed out as a grave sin,‡ because of the abundant evidence of their Divine origin. The proof contained in miracles is not, however, complete and perfect,—first, because others beside Christ have been able to work miracles;§ next, because the disciples themselves may sometimes fail in endeavouring to work them;|| lastly, and chiefly, because Jesus has wrought out other far greater and more important results for man.¶ It is indeed better that the heart should be led, without any such external aid to faith, to believe on the simple word of the prophet, and to acknowledge its own sinfulness and need.** “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.” †† On this point we may refer to many sayings of the Lord Jesus, in which the believing disposition of heart, especially in its purest and strongest demonstrations, is ascribed directly to God as its author. Thus when Peter declares his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Master says that this faith he has attained, not as the result of reflection, or through the ordinary means of instruction, but by direct gift from God.‡‡ In the things pertaining to the Gospel dispensation, the wisdom of this world is unavailing, it

* Matt. xii. 28 ; John x. 38.

† Matt. xi. 21, and foll. ; xii. 39, and foll.

‡ Matt. xii. 32 ; xi. 21, foll. and parall.

§ Matt. xii. 27 ; xxiv. 24.

|| Matt. xvii. 19.

¶ Matt. xi. 5.

** Luke xi. 29, and foll.—The sense of this passage is obscured by the explanation added in Matt. xii. 40.

†† John xx. 29.

‡‡ Matt. xvi. 17.

cannot comprehend them. God alone gives the revelation of these mysteries, as Christ alone reveals to us God Himself.* Again, the attainment of salvation, so hard to men under the ordinary conditions of life, is declared to be possible, since it depends on an act of the Divine will.† Evidently the reference here is to an influence or stimulus coming from God, and it is upon this we are to fix our attention.

It will be always impossible to check and analyze all that passes in the depths of the heart.‡ This is a province beyond our powers of research, since it belongs neither to the domain of sense nor of reason. There seems to be an attraction exercised by the infinite over the finite spirit, like that other attraction, ascertained by science, which the larger heavenly bodies exert over the less. Here we discover, without being able to analyze it, the root and basis of the mystical element, as essential to evangelical Christianity as it was alien to the religion of Moses. We shall make frequent use of this expression in the course of our narrative, in spite of the disfavour which attaches to it in some religious circles. Mysticism is in religion the antithesis of rationalism. The idea of the latter is to apprehend religious truths by means of reason and reflection; to explain and define them; to determine the influence exerted in this sphere by each separate faculty of human nature; in a word, to analyze the operation of the understanding, the conscience, the will, of experience, and, in short, of all the spiritual motives, the concerted action of which is necessary or desirable in the establishment of happy relations between man and his Creator. Mysticism has quite another end in view. It regards religious manifestations simply as the results of the direct contact of Divinity with humanity. It observes these facts without discussing them; it establishes their presence in the heart, and deals with them as belonging to the sphere of feeling alone; it is therefore naturally led to regard them as the effects of causes beyond the range of human

* Matt. xi. 25, and foll. ; Luke x. 21, and foll.

† Matt. xix. 26.

‡ John iii. 8.

action; it delights to consider man as more or less passive in relation to these inner experiences, this state of passivity being one of real happiness to him. These two points of view, apparently hostile, are both justifiable, both legitimate. There is danger of losing the track of truth only when they are regarded as excluding one another. Rationalism becomes barren scholasticism when it ignores, in religion, the presence of elements beyond the range of rigid logic; mysticism becomes superstitious dreaming when it abandons itself to a contemplative habit, which stifles by mere inaction the forces of the mind. The ideal perfection of the religious conception consists in the equilibrium of the two principles. The former should never be wanting, for it alone guards fallible man against illusions born of his secret inclinations, which he is only too ready to accept as the sources of all truth; the latter must not be lacking, since it gives access to an inexhaustible treasury, into which reason has no power to penetrate.

Faith does not cease then to be a human attribute, an act of man's freedom, born and nurtured in his own spirit; but we must be careful also to recognize in it the co-operation of the Divine Spirit, which adds, so to speak, its own strength to the words and invitations of Christ. Jesus does not give any positive statement of the relative measure of these two influences, of the relation of the one element to the other. But it is very evident, from His word, that He does not regard either as nullified by the other. On this point it is sufficient to observe carefully the relation which on repeated occasions He points out between the two ideas of calling and election.

The former* is the invitation addressed by the Saviour (or by God) to all men, to draw them to Himself, to place them within the sphere of His spiritual influence. This invitation is general.† Formerly addressed to a chosen number of men, to a privileged people,‡ it is extended, now that that people has

* *Κλησις, καλεῖν, κλητός*; these terms are not used in the fourth gospel, unless we except ch. x. 3.

† Matt. xx. 16.

‡ Matt. xxii. 3; Luke xiv. 16.

refused to accept it, indiscriminately to all, good or bad, and all may avail themselves of it, first repenting,* and then sitting down at the table of the King. But the message is directed chiefly to sinners, to those who feel their miseries, to the deaf, the blind, the poor,†—to those, that is, who in the consciousness of their wretchedness and loss, are the more ready to receive the word of consolation and hope which falls with joyful sound upon their ears.

But not all hear this call, not all fulfil its conditions.‡ Among those whom the Saviour gathers around Him, whom He or His disciples—called afterwards fishers of men—drew out of the impure and troubled sea of this world,§ are beings of divers sorts, some of whom, as the parable sets forth, are rejected when the fisher comes to divide the good from the bad. The number of the called is large, that of the chosen is comparatively small.|| These chosen ones belong henceforward to God, who becomes their guardian, undertakes their cause, and makes all the great revolutions of the world work for their good.¶

Of all the passages bearing on this point, not one can be adduced, however, the tendency of which is to destroy man's freedom of action. The fault is his if he is shut out from the feast, the door of entrance to which stood open to him as to all. Election is not a decree anterior to the existence of man, but a judgment based upon his actions. If the names of the elect are written in heaven,** it must be as they earn this prerogative by the manner in which they receive their calling; and the importance attached in a hundred places to the absolute necessity of manifesting the inner spirit by the outer life, can but confirm the impression that the destiny of man is placed in his own hands.

But if, as we find in the Gospel preached by Jesus, the free-

* Luke v. 32.

† Matt. ix. 13, and parall. ; Luke xiv. 21.

‡ Matt. xxii. 11, and foll. § Matt. xiii. 47.

|| 'Εκλεκτοί Matt. xxii. 14 ; Εκλιγισθαι, John xiii. 18, xv. 16.

¶ Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31, and parall. ; Luke xviii. 7.

** Luke x. 20.

dom of man remains intact, if moral motives continue in all their force, it is no necessary inference that the Gospel leaves the sinner to his own strength, which has so often failed him, or to the simple action of a law which has already been shown so impotent to retain him in the path of right. Doubtless, those who will not hear Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded though one came to them from the dead to warn them of judgment,* else the law might be declared to be a futile manifestation of the Divine will. But when man's inclination is turned towards the law and the Lawgiver, while at the same time he is conscious both of its purpose and of its powerlessness,† then the Gospel comes in with the sure promise of help from God in his endeavours after good. The very appeal, the idea of the calling (a purely Gospel idea) is in itself a proof that God will make the first advance to His creature to draw him to Himself; or, rather, the very appearing of Christ, so long promised, confirms the fact that a new element is about to be introduced into the spiritual life of the world.

This new element, this power from on high, is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus to them that are His.‡ This Spirit is to suggest to them, on solemn occasions, what they shall say in their own cause; He is to bear witness to the truth of which they are the depositaries and organs; He is to be at the same time the prompter of their acts, the soul of their thoughts, their guide through a hostile world, the inspirer within them of love and every Christian grace.§ He is the best gift the Father in heaven can give to His children, better than the best an earthly parent can bestow.|| Like faith, He forms, finally, the closest bond between God and man, with this

* Luke xvi. 31

† Mark ix. 24; Luke xvii. 5.

‡ Πνεῦμα ἁγίου, πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς δύναμις ἐξ ὑψους, Luke xxiv. 49, Matt. x. 20, and parall.; John xiv. 26; xv. 26, etc.

§ Luke ix. 55.

|| Luke xi. 13; Matt. vii. 7—11. It may be observed that this comparison is repeated in reference to the Gospel dispensation in general, which is also called bread (*ἄρτος*) (Matt. xv. 26, and parall.; comp. John vi.), food which the faithful servant of God shall be in his turn privileged to dispense to the Lord's household. Matt. xxiv. 45; Luke xii. 42.

difference, that faith reaches upward from man to God, while the Spirit comes down from God to man.

As we have been led, almost instinctively, to use in this connection the name of Father in speaking of the Christian's God, we cannot but observe, in passing, that this name, now so familiar to us, belongs essentially to what we may venture to call *the theology of Jesus*.* It is used in the Old Testament, but in a sense closely allied to theocratic exclusiveness. Jesus was the first to raise it out of this limited sphere, to connect with it the idea of the Author and Preserver of the spiritual life, and those elementary conceptions of the providential government of the world now suggested by the name. It is in this view God is presented to men as the ideal of a perfection towards which they ought to aspire; for the very conception of a paternal and filial relation, while it exalts the courage, fosters trust, and ennobles resignation, serves also to lessen the distance between the soul and its Creator; and the love, which is at once the effect and the expression of that relation, in itself gives new powers to the soul, while the fear which is the paramount feeling inspired by the Lawgiver of Sinai, is apt rather to paralyze the powers already possessed.

Again, the promises given by Jesus to remain with His disciples to the end of the world, and to be in their midst whenever two or three are gathered in His name,† help us clearly to identify the glorified Saviour with His Spirit; and we are thus led into the sphere of that holy mysticism which many of the apostles so happily apprehended, and which has ever been regarded as the sublimest realization of the Gospel. This fact alone would suffice to establish that He who could thus offer Himself to mankind belongs not to the common race of mortal line.

* Matt. v., vi., vii., *passim*; Luke vi. 36, xii. 30, and foll.; Mark xi. 25, and foll.; John xx. 17, etc.

† Matt. xxviii. 20; xviii. 20; comp. John xiv. [This is more than a "promise"; it is the declaration of a spiritual fact. The special presence of Christ is inseparable from the meeting of two or three in His name.—Ed.]

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOOD NEWS.

WE have arrived at the third and last point to be examined in speaking of faith—namely, its object.* The title of this chapter—the Good News, or the Gospel †—gives us the basis of our analysis.

The true signification of this word appears first from the context, in which it is clear that the words *gospel* and *kingdom* are correlatives; and next from the circumstance that the Gospel is here spoken of as a familiar thing, as we found to be the case in reference to the kingdom of God. We conclude, therefore, that the Gospel can only be the announcement or realization of an expected fact. The object of faith is, then, the appearance or establishment of the kingdom. But as the kingdom cannot exist without Him who is to be its Founder and Head, and as the expectations of the Jews were specially centred upon this promised King, the object of faith must be twofold—the person of the Founder or Head of the kingdom, and the kingdom itself.

Before proceeding further, let us notice one very important point, which imparts a special character to the whole of this

* A more exact and scientific account of our Lord's teaching concerning faith would have been secured had Reuss considered, first, the condition of man as represented in our Lord's teaching; secondly, the Good News; and thirdly, the Faith in the Good News, or in Himself, which our Lord requires. The nature of faith is best determined by considering the relations between its subject and object.—ED.

† The term *εὐαγγέλιον*, and its derivatives, are not found in John's gospel.

part of the subject. If our definition of faith is just, and expresses the true idea attached by Jesus to the word, faith does not consist in a persuasion of the reality of any historical or doctrinal fact—such a conviction as would be the result of reflection or intellectual effort, but in a trustful and affectionate attachment to a person. Thus the relation of a believing Christian to the kingdom is absolutely different from that of a believing Jew. For the most exalted hope, influencing however powerfully the imagination, the will, and every other faculty of the soul, yet differs widely from that faith which is the submission of the whole inner life to an influence descending upon it from above. The Jew might believe firmly in the future of the kingdom and of Messiah, without that belief exercising a direct influence upon his feelings and effecting a religious transformation in his life. The mystical element, in a word, was wholly wanting in the old dispensation.

It is a psychological truth sufficiently well attested, that man is not carried away with more than a passing enthusiasm for abstract ideas. He may be conscious of such an enthusiasm in youth or in exceptional moments in after-life, but it is not an abiding power. He is capable of a much more sustained energy when its object is something concrete and personal. In religious matters, especially when all material questions are excluded, the ideas of good, of virtue, even the mere abstract idea of God Himself, will never so tell upon the inner life as to affect its whole character, to produce a deep, radical, durable change in masses and generations of men. The Christian faith owes its vital energy and victorious power to the fact that it connects the religious life of individuals with a Person, and that Person not merely one of the objects on which it rests, but the centre in which all meet.

In treating, then, of the object of faith, we shall be very careful not to dissociate the abstract from the concrete; the kingdom and the King will together claim our attention. We shall have to consider both, under the twofold light of the present and the future, and in the division of our materials in the following chapters we shall follow this simple order.

Jesus summoned men to repent and believe, that they might have a share in the kingdom. But He at the same time called them also to Himself. "Follow me," He said, to all who would become His disciples, not only to the twelve, in whose case the call might be supposed to have a literal and material meaning. If Jesus were only a prophet, a teacher charged with a revelation of doctrine, that call might be understood again as signifying simply, Believe that which I preach. If He were nothing more than the Founder of a religious society, it might be taken as equivalent to such an exhortation as this: Act according to my precepts; follow my commands. But we have seen, in analyzing the nature of faith, that it is rather a matter of heart-trust, of close and personal attachment. To follow Christ, then, is to enter into relation, not with His message only, but with Himself. He in His own person, not the morality He teaches, not the promises He gives, is the centre and soul of His doctrine. "He who loveth father or mother more than me," He says, "is not worthy of me." "He who receiveth you, receiveth me." "He who confesseth me before men, will I confess before my Father and the holy angels." "He who is ashamed of me, of him will I be ashamed;" and many more words of the same import.* Such expressions as these determine the true sense to be attached to the phrase "believing in Jesus." It implies necessarily abnegation of self on the part of the disciple, a surrender of the whole being to Jesus;† and if it is true to say that Jesus gave Himself *for* men, it is quite as true, and even more important for us to remember, that He gave Himself *to* men—that is, that He made His own person the object and centre of the religious life He sought to awaken and enkindle. This He Himself expresses in words as profound as they are simple: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

* Matt. x. 32, 37, 40; xviii. 5; Luke x. 16, *ὁμολογεῖν, ἀρνεῖσθαι*; comp. Matt. vii. 22; John xiii. 38, etc.

† Matt. xvi. 24.

The position which Jesus takes in regard to those whom He summons to faith in Him, is not adequately represented when it is merely said that He offered Himself as a moral example. This notion had much currency in the early part of this century. It may be based not only on the fact that evangelical theology can never attain to a more perfect ethical ideal than that realized in Jesus, but also on numerous passages in which He invites men to follow Him, and to walk in His footsteps,* words the meaning of which cannot be restricted to a mere relation of companionship. We willingly admit that if the explanation just quoted were really exhaustive of the meaning of Christ's words, we still find in it the expression of an idea which could be based only upon the fact of the absolute superiority of Jesus to all the rest of mankind, and as a model, at least, He would hold a unique position. But there is evidently another perfectly distinct element in the many appeals addressed to the religious conscience; namely, the invitation to find in the person of the Saviour the sustenance of the spiritual life. The position which He claims for Himself in His relations with men, is then that of a superiority in which He can have no compeer, which, in theory at least, could not be the case were he possessed merely of a higher morality. At the same time, He promises special aid, spiritual succour, to those who accept these relations, and recognize this superiority. This is the first result of our analysis, which we shall confirm by further quotations.

We may call to mind, first, that Jesus repeatedly declares Himself to have been sent by God for the salvation of the world.† This declaration asserts a high authority for Him who utters it, and gives a peculiar value to the aid which He comes to bring; it shows that the trust He demands from men will not be lost or disappointed, and that there will be succour adequate to all their need.

This aid, of which we may first speak more particularly, is

* Ἀκολουθεῖν, Luke ix. 57, and foll. ; Matt. ix. 9, etc. ; John viii. 12 ; xii. 26.

† Matt. x. 40 ; xv. 24 ; xxi. 37 ; John, *passim*.

designated in the Greek version, through which we receive the discourses of Jesus, by a word which is translated by the verb *to save*.* This term signifies strictly to heal, to give health; in the passive, to have a sound life; and there are passages in which this primitive sense can be retained.† It is again used as the antithesis to being lost; for example, in speaking of animals which have gone astray and need to be sought for.‡ From this point the transition is easy to moral alienation, and the recall to the true path.§ It may also be said to signify in this sense moral healing.

On a closer examination we shall at once perceive that a man thus found, healed, or saved, is the subject of repentance and faith; in other words, that these two experiences constitute the condition of healing or salvation. In fact, all these expressions represent the same moral fact under two different aspects. Salvation is the healing work of Christ (or of God); repentance and faith express the inner experience of the man entering on a state of salvation.|| And as we have seen that repentance and faith are the conditions of admission into the kingdom of God, it follows that salvation may be defined as the act of introduction into that kingdom. There are many passages which may be adduced in support of this explanation.¶ In the greater number of these texts there is a sort of play upon the double sense of the Greek word,** which signifies at once physical and spiritual life, so that the significance of the accompanying verb is more evident than in our translation.

* Σώζειν.

† Matt. ix. 21, and foll. ; comp. Mark vi. 56 ; Luke vi. 9, and parall. ; Matt. xxiv. 22, and parall.

‡ Ἀπώλλυσθαι, Luke xv. 4 (John iii. 15 ; xvii. 12).

§ Matt. xviii. 11 ; x. 6 ; xv. 24 ; Luke xix. 10 ; John v. 34 ; xii. 47.

|| These are universally represented in the teaching of our Lord as the *conditions* of salvation—not salvation itself. Faith in Himself was often the condition on which He cured men of physical disease, but the faith was not the cure, and they are never confounded with each other.—ED.

¶ Luke ix. 56 ; viii. 12 ; xvii. 33 ; Matt. x. 39 ; xvi. 25, and parall. ; Mark xvi. 16, and especially Matt. xix. 24, foll. and parall. ; John xii. 25.

** Ψυχή.

In other places,* the expression is different, but the sense is the same. "This do, and thou shalt live," said Jesus to the scribe who desired to learn of Him the terms of salvation.

The man in whom this moral change has been effected, and who is leaning with personal trust on Jesus, thus receives at the same time another benefit, which he could have obtained by no other means, namely, the pardon of his previous sins.†

The pardon of sins is explicitly stated to be a consequence of conversion. This idea appears plainly in the discourses given as those of John the Baptist.‡ Jesus also enjoins His disciples to forgive those who, having committed a trespass, repent and confess it.§ Repentance and forgiveness are also mentioned as correlatives in reference to the kingdom of God.|| Again, pardon is placed in direct relation to faith, especially in cases of bodily healing,¶ in which (as the text clearly indicates) the restoration of physical health may be regarded as prefiguring or implying that of the moral nature. The term *conversion* may be understood to comprehend the two elements of repentance and faith, when it is named as the condition of pardon.** There are passages which would seem to specify also other causes and conditions—those, for instance, in which the forgiveness of God is made contingent on our forgiving our fellow-creatures;†† and again where it is asserted that Jesus forgave the sinner because she loved much.‡‡ But it would be easy to bring the former into the category of conversion, the latter into that of faith. It is scarcely needful to add that, in our view, the two elements cannot be parted, as if each could subsist and produce its effect alone.

This suggests another remark not unimportant in defining

* Luke x. 28.

† Ἀφεσις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.

‡ Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3.

§ Luke xvii. 3.

|| Luke xxiv. 47.

¶ Matt. ix. 2, foll. and parall.

** Επιστρέφειν, Mark iv. 12.

†† Mark xi. 25; Matt. xviii. 35; comp. v. 7; vii. 1.

‡‡ Luke vii. 47.

the nature of forgiveness. In the parable last quoted, pardon is made contingent not only on our conduct towards those who may have offended us, but also on our seeking forgiveness from God with all humility and contrition.* This implies that pardon is ever an act of God's free grace. Pardon is grace; † and if it is true that God is in no way indebted to us, even when we have done our duty, it must be far more emphatically true that He owes us nothing when we have failed in that duty. Entrance into the kingdom—that highest blessedness of man—is not merited by him as a recompense due to his deeds; he can only obtain it as God is willing to deal with him not as he deserves. His admission is an act of mercy on the part of God. ‡ This view is further confirmed by the declaration of Jesus, that He has power to forgive sins.§ If pardon were a simple matter of right and justice, this declaration would have no meaning, and pardon would come in the ordinary course of the laws established by God. But clearly it is an act of grace, by which the Judge is pleased to accept certain dispositions of heart in place of and as the equivalent of acts which He might have demanded, but which man is unable to render. We must not fail to notice that all this gives fresh confirmation to the fact that Jesus assumes a peculiar dignity, apart from which His words would convey blasphemous presumption, as indeed the Pharisees thought they did.

In one passage, the pardon of sins is connected with the death of Jesus. We read, in Matthew, these words as spoken|| by him: "My blood is shed for many for the remission of sins." Mark gives only the former part of the sentence; Luke also abridges it, changing the preposition. It is true that in the two last passages no mention is made of the pardon of sins;

* Matt. xviii. 32.

† The term *χάρις*, grace, in this theological sense is not found in the synoptics, and John does not put it into the lips of Christ Himself.

‡ Ἐλεηθῆσονταί, Matt. v. 7.

§ Matt. ix. 6; Luke vii. 49.

|| Matt. xxvi. 28; *περὶ πολλῶν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*; comp. Mark xiv. 24; Luke xxii. 19, foll. (*ὑπὲρ*). The parallel passages in John are chapter vi. 51, xvii. 19.

but it is impossible not to receive from the two prepositions the idea of an end and effect of the death of Jesus, salutary to humanity, and specially to them that believe. If Jesus had only on this one occasion spoken of His death, it would no doubt be a subject of regret that His words have been handed down to us in three different forms, the more so that one of the two prepositions is very vague, that theologians have always found two modes of explaining the other, and that the fourth gospel omits them entirely, with the whole scene in which they were uttered.

Jesus, however, speaks repeatedly of His death, and we shall find no fitter occasion than the present for bringing forward the passages bearing on this subject. The greater number simply proclaim the necessity of His death, and we may therefore conclude that in other places, where that necessity is not explicitly stated, where Jesus speaks in the language of prediction only, it is no less present to His mind. We lay stress upon this point, because many theologians in our day have maintained that the words of Christ contain no more than a simple prevision of a catastrophe to which He must fall a victim sooner or later, because of the bitter hostility manifested towards Him by the men of His generation. The necessity to which we referred is everywhere based upon Scripture prophecy.* These passages do not at all explain in what that necessity consisted, or how the death of Jesus could have a special significance, a theological importance for mankind. But as that death was made the subject of prophecy, and prophecy is of Divine inspiration, it follows that the death itself formed a part of the purposes and revelations of God.

There are other passages in which the duty of renouncing the world, of denying self for the cause of God and His kingdom, is placed in direct relation with the suffering of the Saviour.† These passages lead us to regard His death in the

* *Δαι*, Luke xxiv. 26, 44, and foll. ; xxii. 37 ; xviii. 31, and foll. ; xvii. 25 ; Matt. xvi. 21 ; Mark viii. 31 ; ix. 12 ; xiv. 49, and parall. ; John xv. 25 ; xvii. 12.

† *'Απαρνεῖσθαι ἑαυτόν*, Matt. xvi. 21—25, and parall.

light of a sacrifice made for the realization of a higher good, and at the same time as an example to men, to be followed in analogous circumstances. To follow Christ, and to take up the cross, are expressions, if not absolutely synonymous, at least frequently associated;* and whether the latter was already in use among the Jews, or was subsequently originated in the Church to represent a Hebrew equivalent, it must be quite evident that the disciples, in reproducing and using it, must have taken the view just given of the death of their Master, and of the significance He Himself attached to it.

The discourses of Jesus which we have in the fourth gospel, allude more frequently to His death, and are more definite with regard to it, without however sustaining the theory that they are rather the reflections of a more advanced theology than genuine recollections of the discourses themselves. We shall dwell more in detail upon this point in our analysis of the gospel of John; we only advert now, as coming within the range of our present subject, to the passages in which Jesus represents His death as a proof of His love for His people, and as the sure and necessary condition of the success and prosperity of His work.†

We refer, in conclusion, to two passages standing almost alone in the synoptical gospels, but which have ever been regarded as the most important and explicit on the subject before us. The Son of Man, it is said, is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.‡ This figurative expression at once sets before us the idea of a bondage and a deliverance. It also suggests the idea of a necessary act, as the means to a certain end, that end being, as we can readily conceive, deliverance in a moral and not in a political sense. But the text does not carry us beyond this general idea; it gives us no light on the question how the death of Jesus has effected, or does effect, this deliverance.

* See also Matt. x. 38; Mark x. 21; Luke xiv. 26, and foll.; John xii. 26.

† John x. 15; xv. 13, xii. 24, 32, etc.

‡ Matt. xx. 28: Mark x. 45, *λύτρον*.

The other passage to which we would again point the attention of our readers, we have already quoted above.* We refer to the words instituting the Lord's Supper, given by the four evangelists with differences which very slightly affect the meaning of the sentence. As we have already spoken of the significance of the prepositions employed, we may pass at once to the idea of the new covenant, here placed in close relation with the death of Jesus. "This," said He, "is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, shed for many;" or, as we have it in the other narrative, "This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you." It is impossible not to recognize here the idea that Jesus shed—and as we have shown above was under the necessity to shed—His blood to establish and cement a new covenant, destined to replace the covenant inaugurated on Sinai. The Sinaitic covenant had also been sanctioned by sacrifices of blood, which were repeated year by year, as a perpetual remembrance; its end was to assure the favour and protection of Jehovah to the chosen people. We dwell the more unhesitatingly upon this parallelism, because it was one which very forcibly impressed the minds of the disciples, and gave, as we shall find, a decided bias to their theology. Religious speculation may undoubtedly raise many questions on this capital subject, to which our texts do not yet enable us to reply, but from this point we foresee the difficulties we shall soon have to encounter. For the present, we return to another question, which in several respects bears upon that we have been considering, and the study of which will further enlighten us on the nature of faith and the object of the Gospel.

* Matt. xxvi. 28, and parall. ; comp. 1 Cor. xi. 25.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SON OF MAN AND THE SON OF GOD.

THE remarks we have already made on the preaching of Jesus cannot but suggest an important question, to which the text we have been analyzing gives no direct reply, but of which we are bound now to seek the solution. Who is this who thus comes to mankind with the offer of succour and salvation? What idea must we form of His person and dignity? We have shown that in shedding light upon man's duty and man's future, He preaches Himself; we have recognized the necessity of assigning to Him a place far above the ordinary level of mankind. Let us now seek in His own words for the elements of a fuller conviction, a more exact conception of His person and position.*

We are naturally led to look first at the passages in which Jesus directly or indirectly alludes to Himself as the Christ, the promised Messiah. It must be remembered that this term is sacred in Jewish theology to designate the long-expected King who is to set up and rule the kingdom of God. But as the Jewish schools had not given any uniform and exact definition of the person to whom this term should apply, the use of the name, with a simple allusion to the offices associated with it, is not alone sufficient to decide the question before

* We pass by the passages (Luke iv. 24, xiii. 33) in which Jesus speaks of Himself as a prophet in popular proverbial expressions; and others in which He speaks of His miracles as wrought by the Spirit (Matt. xii. 28), by the finger of God (Luke xi. 20). They are of minor importance for our present purpose.

us. Thus, when Peter, in the name of his fellow-disciples, acknowledges his Master as the Christ of God, and Jesus accepts the declaration, while enjoining them not to repeat it before others,* this fact does not teach us what we want to know. It only shows that Jesus feared that the Jews, under the influence of their own political hopes, would form a false idea of His mission and designs. The same apprehension of mistake is conveyed in the answer given to John's disciples, in which, while clearly accepting the title and offices of the Christ, Jesus repudiates and guards against the notions popularly associated with it.† It is not necessary to quote here all the passages in which this distinction is set forth. We notice it especially in the frequent prohibitions to spread abroad the fame of the miracles wrought, lest an excitable populace should be led into acts of political rebellion.‡ This is the negative aspect of the question, but we seek the positive.

We find very frequently in the gospels another term applied to Christ, by which we may hope to gain the clue we seek, since it is evidently chosen by Jesus Himself, and by preference used by Him to designate His person. This name is the *Son of Man*,§ which occurs so repeatedly in the four gospels, that we cannot attempt to enumerate all the passages. Now it is beyond a doubt that this expression should be taken as a proper name of Messiah, a title belonging to Him only.|| But why had Jesus so strong a preference for this

* Mark viii. 29, 30 ; Luke ix. 20, 21 ; Matt. xvi. 17, and foll. ; comp. John vi. 69.

† Matt. xi. 5, 6, 11, 14.

‡ John vi. 15.

§ Ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

|| Matt. x. 23 ; xiii. 37, 41 ; Mark ii. 28, etc. We do not enter into the patristic explanation, which sees in this name the assertion of the human nature of Christ ; or into modern interpretations, which represent the term as a mere periphrasis of the personal pronoun, or as indicating the temporary humiliation of the Son of God. The first is inadmissible, because Jesus never found any necessity to convince the world that He had a human body ; the second is excluded by Acts vii. 56, and is also contrary to the usage of the Hebrew language ; the third is set aside by many passages, in which the name is applied to Messiah glorified.

name? Why did He use it so habitually, that the Church itself afterwards adopted it,* though during His lifetime, as we gather from our gospels, it was not used by any, either in theory or as applied to Him? We can hardly suppose the phrase to have been altogether new and unknown, for it appears to have been understood; the idea may have been traced back to a familiar passage of Daniel,† on which scholastic Christology was then founded; but even this does not give sufficient explanation of the fact. It is untrue to say that of all the names of Messiah then in use, that of Son of Man was the least glorious, the most humble, and that it was on this account chosen by Jesus in order not to startle His hearers. If Messianic dignity was implicitly asserted in the use of this name, its etymological value was of little importance; the claim remained the same; He who assumed the name asserted for Himself the honour attached to it.

All these considerations lead us to conclude that Jesus, in adopting this distinctive name, under circumstances in which He did not hesitate to separate Himself from the common race of man, to assume a place apart in the family and city of God, had in view a meaning which would not have been conveyed by any other term currently used to designate Messiah. We shall not then seek the explanation of this name in any of the views bearing on the future which were uppermost in the Jewish mind in connection with Messiah's coming and kingdom, but in those doctrines of salvation which were peculiar to the Gospel. In truth, if the highest result which the Gospel proposes to man is his elevation to moral perfection and happiness by means of repentance and faith, it is evident that He who is the producer of that repentance and the object of that faith, should be recognized as realizing in Himself a perfection as yet attained by none beside. When Jesus says, Believe in me; grasp the hand I hold out; cast your burden upon me; when He promises pardon of sins to those who trust in Him and follow Him, He implicitly presents Himself as the normal or model man, the ideal of

* Acts vii. 56.

† Dan. vii. 13.

humanity.* He who is not willing to admit this, must regard as false and presumptuous all the words in which Jesus blends His own personality with the moral and religious instruction He imparts to the people. If we are not strangely mistaken, it is neither the material fact of the incarnation, nor the theological fact of the Messiahship, which is declared by the name Son of Man, but the fact, at once ethical and evangelical, of the realization of the moral ideal in the person of Him who assumed such a name. We are well aware that there are many passages in which the name is used simply as a synonym for the Messiah of the last day; but we know also that the evangelists used interchangeably expressions which they regarded as synonymous, as is sufficiently proved by the parallel passages, in which they employ different terms for the same statement. Further, the point here is not to ascertain if they had fathomed the depth of an expression which had grown familiar to them, but to establish what was its real significance in the lips of Jesus Himself.†

Let us now observe that Jesus nowhere explains His titles to the position which He assumes in reference to humanity; or, to be more exact, let us remember that the proof He gives consists essentially in His assertion that the closest examination of His own life, and the inner experience by which every man might test his doctrine, would harmonize and confirm each other.‡ In most cases, however, He offers Himself directly to the souls who come to Him with trust, knowing that the peace thus obtained will soon convince them better than any arguments, that they have found the true way to God and His righteousness. We may add without hesitation, that if theology was constrained to investigate the origin of such a relation, as we shall see as we proceed, history for its part bears

* It must always be borne in mind that in Hebrew the word Son serves to designate the quality, and that in the phrase before us, which frequently occurs in the Old Testament, it has no specific value.

† We shall return to this subject when we come to study the theology of John.

‡ John vii. 17 ; viii. 46.

witness that the benefits flowing from it to men of all ages, have been independent of the theories of science.*

We now come to a third name given to the Saviour, but less frequently used than the former, that of the Son of God.† This name is not used by Jesus Himself except in some passages of His discourses inserted in the fourth gospel,‡ which will have their theological explanation given elsewhere. In the mouth of the Jews, it is certainly equivalent to the title of Messiah,§ and we shall presently inquire further what would probably be the meaning they attached to it. In any case, their views with regard to it cannot determine for us its significance in the Gospel teaching. Jesus did not by accepting their homage affix any special value to the form in which they tendered it.

He not unfrequently, however, calls Himself simply the Son, in phrases in which it would be impossible not to add the same genitive, and that not in parable only, but in direct teaching.|| To these may be added the passages in which He calls God His Father, and which are so numerous that we do not attempt to quote them. Undoubtedly He speaks of God as the Father of

* This is perhaps the occasion for saying a word more on the history of the temptation (Matt. iv. 1, and foll. ; Luke iv. 1, and foll.), since that may and ought to be referred to a communication addressed by Jesus to His disciples. What we have to do with here is not the material fact recorded in the letter of the text, and to which we shall presently recur, but the teaching intended to set forth the contrast between true and false Messianism. From this point of view, this narrative, so variously explained, conveys to us the idea that the soul of Jesus was inaccessible to all that could lead it to deviate from the path, which, by keeping unbroken His relation with the Father, led Him to His purposed end—the salvation of mankind.

† *υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.*

‡ John x. 36 ; xi. 4 ; xvii. 1, etc.

§ Matt. xvi. 16 ; xxvi. 63 ; comp. Mark xiv, 61 ; John i. 49, etc.

|| Matt. xxi. 37 ; xxii. 2 ; xi. 27 ; Mark xiii. 32 ; John v. 19, and foll. ; vi. 40 ; viii. 35, etc. ; comp. Matt. xvii. 24, and foll. ; xxvii. 43. We have no hesitation about these texts, nor in general about any which we quote on this subject. It may undoubtedly be supposed that the ideas diffused throughout the primitive Christian society may have coloured the version we have in our gospels ; but we think that in accepting this version as it is, we take our stand on firmer ground than by opposing to it the objections of a criticism which, while it may be negatively justified in its reserve, has no positive support.

all men, of the just and the unjust, the evil and the good, and thus introduces an idea foreign to the old economy. But from the Gospel point of view, it is only by repentance and faith men become truly children of God ; in other words, only as they prove themselves worthy of the relationship.* Now, after what has been said in the foregoing chapters, and again in this, on the position assumed by Jesus in relation to men in a moral point of view, it is impossible not to recognize that it is not in this latter sense, and by these means, that He claims to have become the Son of God.

Without doing any violence to the texts, without introducing into them any ideas from without, not really conveyed by them, we cannot fail to perceive that, as spoken by Jesus Himself, they contain the positive affirmation on His part of a higher position, an exceptional prerogative,—a unique place, in fact, to which others can aspire only through Him. For He says that men become His brethren, sons of God like Himself, by doing the will of His Father.† Now, in order to do that will, it must be known, and He alone is able to give that knowledge, since He alone is the Revealer of the Father to men,‡ as He is their representative with the Father, their advocate or accuser according as they stand towards Him in a relation of submission or rejection, of trust or enmity.§

In all these expressions, and therefore in the religious ideas they represent, we find the conviction, as deeply felt as it is clearly conveyed, of the close and exalted relationship to God in which *He* stands, who could thus offer Himself to mankind, as its Comforter and Redeemer. If we find Him speaking elsewhere of His obedience to God in the accomplishment of His self-sacrificing work ; if in the sore anguish of the last conflict, His soul becomes exceeding sorrowful, though His purpose of love never falters ;|| if we even see that unflinching as is His pro-

* Matt. v. 9, 45 ; Luke xx. 36.

† Matt. xii. 50, and parall. ; comp. John xx. 17.

‡ Matt. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22.

§ Matt. x. 32 ; Luke xii. 8.

|| Matt. xxvi. 39.

phetic gaze, His knowledge of events is not absolute;* these facts, so far from shaking our faith, should only strengthen the bonds that draw us to Him, since they bring Him more within the reach of our common sympathy, while they detract nothing from His sublime perfections.

As the result of all the testimony thus borne by Jesus to His own special relation to God, there remains upon our mind the fixed conviction that this relationship rests upon an essentially moral basis. This, at least, seems to be the conclusion to be derived from the passages we have examined. It will be at once perceived that this fact, otherwise sufficiently established by an honest exegesis, contains in itself much matter for further reflection, apart from its interest as a subject of speculative study. In other words, this moral relation, if it is really such as we have just described, does not explain itself, nor is it explained, by any analogies supplied by the history of man. We are necessarily led to regard it as the manifestation of a metaphysical relation of a much higher order, and absolutely beyond the reach of any analogy our world can furnish. From the narrative of our three synoptical gospels, we gather that Jesus sought to awaken towards Himself the faith of the heart, not staying to satisfy even the lawful curiosity of the intellect. From the fourth gospel, we judge that He said more on this subject, even at the risk of not being completely understood. However this may be, the religious convictions of the disciples on whose records we are dependent (since it is by them we come to know their Master and ours,) were very early formed from the point of view given in John's gospel, a view which predominates generally in the apostolic theology. We have endeavoured not to mingle two things which are really distinct, namely, forms of speech moulded by reflection on given facts, and the simple and primitive recollection of the facts themselves, uncoloured by any school of theology. We shall however, as we proceed, carefully draw attention to all which has since been made use of by ecclesiastical theology, as the starting-point for its own speculations.

* Mark xiii. 32.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCH.

ALL the features specially characteristic of the teaching of Jesus, to which we have called attention in the preceding chapters, may be described as purely subjective and individual. We have seen all that is essential in the work of salvation wrought by God upon the human soul, through the mediation of the Saviour and the communication of the Holy Spirit.

But the new religious life which Jesus came to awaken in the world, was not to be confined within these narrow limits. Man, who, in all the varied spheres of his intellectual activity, loves to have the fellowship of his kind, to unite their strength with his, to satisfy, in short, the craving of his spirit for association, cannot remain isolated in the highest, noblest sphere of his being. Jesus, who so well knew human nature, the tendency of its instincts, and the measure of its powers, would not fail to give a new impulse to it in this direction, both to ensure the success of individual efforts and to facilitate the attainment of the great end He had in view for humanity. The religious life, founded and fostered by Him, must have its social aspect.

Those who have experienced the great spiritual transformation of which conversion and faith are the elements and the signs, naturally stand in a much closer relation to each other than to the world without. The new principle which animates and directs them is the same for all, and the spiritual communion of all with Jesus implies necessarily a communion of all among themselves. This fellowship with each other entered as certainly into the purposes of Jesus as their fellowship with

Himself, and the very idea of the kingdom of God, which we have seen taking precedence of all other Gospel ideas, necessarily anticipates this second phase of the new order of things.

Jesus designed to found a Church. The object of this institution could be no other than to preserve and strengthen the new life in individuals by mutual contact and reciprocal influence, and to diffuse it in new and wider spheres.

We find very few passages in the discourses of Jesus in which allusion is made to this aspect of His work. This fact must not be supposed to indicate that the Saviour attached a lower degree of importance to it, or that tradition capriciously passed it by. The essential work of Jesus was to cast the seed into the heart, that there it might germinate and fructify, according to the natural course of things, and by its own inherent vitality. He knew well that the husbandman has but to deposit the good seed in ground well prepared, and in the appointed order of nature's working the germ will spring, the blade will appear, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, without further aid on the part of man.* At length the harvest will be ripe, the kingdom of God set up, the Church organized. We purposely use this last term, though in a sense different from that commonly attached to it. We have endeavoured to impress the fact, that the Christian Church, in the idea of its Founder, was to be an organic product of the religious germ which He Himself had deposited, growing and developing spontaneously by virtue of what we may call, by analogy with that which we find in the physical world, the formative instinct. Only too frequently in the history of the Church have artificial forms and violent means been used, where the result would have been much happier had the Church been left to her own free and natural development.

We can show, however, by more than mere inference, that the idea of a Church, a religious association of Christians having a special end and appropriate means, was present to the mind of Jesus Himself. He not only foresaw it as a natural consequence of His principles, He willed it as a condition of their

* Mark iv. 26, and foll.

success ; He laid down its laws and limitations, and Himself chose and appointed its symbols. We shall dwell for a moment on these details.

It is easy to see, in the first place, that Mosaism, as an institution external and positive in its forms and ceremonies, was virtually abolished by the process of spiritualization to which it was now subjected. Its ritual worship, circumcision, sacrifices, fasts, all which had up to this time sustained its existence, lost their value in the new order of things, and unless these old forms were to be replaced by new,* the disciples of Jesus, accustomed by use and education to associate the religious idea inseparably with its outward manifestation, would have found it exceedingly difficult to grasp that idea, and to maintain it, though in its very nature there was much self-sustaining power. Jesus certainly did not break abruptly with the synagogue, and for this simple reason, that He did not intend to set His Church in opposition to the synagogue, but, on the contrary, to retain while He transformed that institution, to infuse into its enfeebled frame the pure and vital marrow of His Gospel, and thus to raise it to a new life of youth and health.

If we now proceed to seek in the discourses of Jesus for the idea of a Church to be founded by and for believers, we notice first a passage † in which the name itself is used, and where a community is spoken of, in presence of which, in certain cases, a brother who has failed in his duties is to be reprovèd. We do not hesitate to declare that this passage yields us no direct service here. A moral principle like that thus referred to, ought to be capable of being applied as soon as stated. But in order that this might be the case here, it would be necessary that the Church should have been already formed, organized as a regular association, and invested with privileges and official functions. Now there was no such organization during the lifetime of the Saviour, nor is there any indication that He undertook formally to create an institution of this nature. We conclude, then, that the discourse in question has not been

* Matt. ix. 17, and parall.

† Matt. xviii. 17, *ἐκκλησία*.

handed down to us in its original form, and that the word *Church* crept in at an after-period, when it represented something actual and positive.* We shall not seek to gather from it more than the idea of a close brotherhood among all those who desired to order their life according to the maxims of the Master. There is a considerable interval between this and a constituted Church, and we have no authority for supposing that Jesus sought to cross the gap at a single step.

We arrive at the same result by analyzing the figure of the shepherd and the flock, which was undoubtedly the adequate expression of the primitive idea of the Church, and which Jesus employs repeatedly to set it forth. It is evident that the relation of the sheep to each other rests upon their common relation of submission to one shepherd, and not upon any social organization which would assign different positions to the individuals composing the flock.† After proclaiming Himself the Shepherd, Jesus commits to His disciples the trust of guiding the sheep as His representatives.‡ The flock, therefore, is to be still one after His departure, and is to be always His, and always kept distinct from all that does not belong to it; but the image goes no further, and does not speak of the influence to be exercised by the individuals composing it, upon the development of its forms.

There is again another passage which expresses the idea of the Church in a manner apparently more exact and complete. We refer to that in which Peter, who on this occasion represents the disciples, is invested with what was afterwards called the power of the keys—that is to say, with the right to refuse or grant admission to the Christian community, and, consequently, a share in the hopes of its members.§ It is

* Why may not the term *ἐκκλησία* have been applied by Christ *untechnically* to the informal association of His disciples during His life?—ED.

† Matt. ix. 36; Mark vi. 34; Luke xii. 32; Matt. xxvi. 31, and parall [The first two passages referred to in this note are not pertinent.—ED.]

‡ John x. 1, and foll.; xxi. 15, and foll.

§ Matt. xvi. 19; comp. John xx. 23; Matt. xxv. 10. *Δέειν* and *λύειν*, to bind and to loose, are words explained by the peculiar mechanism of ancient locks.

evident that the Church appears here as a close society represented by the figure of a habitation, the door of which is opened only by the will of those who, in the social organization established among its inmates, have received the right of giving access to others. Considering only the passage first quoted, we might suppose this privilege to be conferred exclusively on Peter. But such a supposition is set aside by the parallel passage in the fourth gospel, and still more emphatically by the consideration, that it would circumscribe within very narrow limits the provisions made, and the institutions appointed by Jesus. We shall soon see that His prophetic vision embraced, on the contrary, a boundless future, and the necessities of remote generations far beyond the scope of the direct labours of His first disciples.

There are many more direct evidences that this government of the Church was not designed by Jesus to be a hierarchy having at its head a visible chief. Through all time He Himself would be alone the chief Shepherd and Bishop of His flock, supreme both in the instruction they were to receive, and in the control of their destinies.* They have, therefore, nothing to fear from the world.† But God has need of labourers for His harvest; He calls many to come and work in it; He distributes to them goods to use in His service, talents to employ and make fruitful for the general welfare.‡ He commends and rewards each of His servants according to the measure of faithful effort put forth, and of result achieved, and the recompense consists in an increase of the trust committed, in the opening of a wider sphere of activity, and more extensive opportunities of usefully serving the cause of God. “Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things.”§ This is the “recompense of the reward.” If there is privilege here, it is not arbitrarily conferred, but is attached to efforts made, and the wholesome emulation by which the zeal of the

* Matt. xxv. 32; Luke x. 22, and parall.

† Luke xii. 32.

‡ Luke x. 2; xix. 11, and foll.; Matt. xxv. 14, and foll.

§ Οἰκονομία, Luke xii. 42; comp. xix. 17.

workers is to be sustained, tends constantly to extend the prerogative to a growing number.

Lastly, we gather the intention of Jesus to found a Church,—that is, to bind together in close fellowship all His disciples,—from the institution of the two rites, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism was practised before Christ. We are not called to enter here upon the much-controverted question of its origin. We freely admit that the form in which it is known to us in the history of the New Testament cannot be traced back further than John the Baptist. The religious idea connected with it is of more importance to us than the question of antiquity. Now the gospels contain a saying of John the Baptist which may help us to ascertain what that idea was. He is reported to have said, "I indeed baptize you with water, but He who cometh after me . . . shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."* It is evident that by this antithesis the baptism of Jesus is represented not only as of a higher order, but as alone possessing essential and indispensable virtue, while that of John had but a relative value. And as the difference is ascribed by the prophet who points it out, not so much to the respective positions of the persons conferring the baptism as to the objective nature of the baptism itself, "of water" and "of the Spirit" (the fire being only the symbol of the Spirit),† it follows that in the Christian Church, also, this distinction between the two baptisms, the one material, the other spiritual, must be maintained, the former being never accredited with more than that relative value of which we just now spoke, and beyond which the baptism of John never rose.

This relative value might be more exactly defined as symbolical—that is to say, as representing in an outward and visible manner an outward and spiritual fact. Perhaps, even in this aspect of it, we may note a gradation from the baptism of John

* Matt. iii. 11, and parall.

† See Acts ii. 3; Rom. xii. 11; 1 Thess. v. 19; 2 Tim. i. 6, etc. It is a very unskilful exegesis which takes $\pi\upsilon\rho$ in the passages quoted in the preceding notes, to mean the fire of hell torment.

to Christian baptism; the signification of the former was restricted to the idea and fact of repentance, which in itself contained nothing more than a resolution to change the life, and a declaration of such a resolve, in connection with which was the immersion in water, representing ablution, the purification of past defilements. Associated with this was the idea of a preparation for the kingdom of God, of a fitness to be included by the coming Messiah among those who should compose His people. For it must not be forgotten that custom attached to the word baptism the general notion of an intimate relation between the person baptized and some fixed order of things, the idea of a destiny to be fulfilled, of a sort of initiation, preparing man to enter upon a new phase of existence.*

It is not difficult to show that Christian baptism embraced far more than mere repentance.† It was to be conferred only when faith had been already manifested as the result of preaching. So soon as a confession of faith is made, baptism is added, to seal and confirm it in a positive and, so to speak, official manner. If this baptism were intended to be anything more than a symbol, we cannot comprehend how it could be placed after all the rest. Clearly it is not baptism which produces or ensures the pardon of sins. Repentance and faith must first be actually present; forgiveness, their necessary and direct consequence, is then bestowed; and baptism is the outward and material representation of a spiritual fact already consummated in the soul.

Thus baptism is the external and symbolical act of admission into the community.‡ It is based upon the three

* Luke xii. 50; Mark x. 38.

† Mark xvi. 16.

‡ In this paragraph Reuss adheres to the Baptist theory of the rite, which limits its administration to those who on profession of their faith and repentance are admitted into the *Church*. The great text in Matt. xxviii. 19, however, connects the command to "Disciple all nations"—under which "baptizing" and "teaching" are included—not with the *Church* of Christ, but with His regal authority over all men. This favours the theory that baptism is the formal claim of Christ on the allegiance of those who are His subjects, and that it is a rite relating to the *kingdom*

fundamental ideas of the religion of Christ, the religious and moral trinity of the Gospel, which must not be confounded with the metaphysical and speculative trinity of theology. It supposes, 1st, Confession of faith in God the Father holy and merciful, the two attributes upon which morality and evangelical religion rest; 2nd, Communion with the Son of God, which is the seal of pardon for the past and the pledge of triumph for the future; 3rd, Fellowship with the Spirit of God, by which the new relation between man and his Maker is nourished and sustained, so as to bring forth fruit unto eternal life. This is the meaning of the well-known words in Matt. xxviii. 19, which, thus understood, are no longer open to the reproach of being a scholastic formula borrowed from another age, and inexplicable as uttered by Jesus. Even if we suppose the succinct and, so to speak, sacramental form of words to be due to an ecclesiastical usage of earlier or later date, the idea which it contains and expresses may unquestionably be regarded as belonging to Jesus Himself, since it characterizes the whole of His teaching.

If baptism is the rite symbolical of the introduction of the believer into the Church, the Lord's Supper is that which symbolizes the abiding fellowship of the members with each other and with their Head. It may be regretted that the account of its institution has, from its very brevity, become an apple of discord in the Church, rather than a symbol of unity; but the texts quoted enable us to ascertain beyond a doubt what was the intention of the rite. We have already had occasion to consider it in its relations to the fact of redemption; we have yet to complete the analysis from other points of view.

The first two gospels say nothing as to the object of the institution of the Lord's Supper. The words of Jesus reported by them, simply set forth the purpose of His death, and desig-

of Christ rather than to the Church. Of course where the rite is administered to those in whom intelligence and moral freedom are developed, their submission to it necessarily implies their acknowledgment of the validity of Christ's claim to have received "all power—in heaven and on earth."—ED.

nate the bread and wine which He gave to His disciples as His body and blood. They give us no authority for so combining these two facts, that there should result from them the idea of a bond of causality between the material participation of the elements and the forgiveness of sins. In this respect, we should be unquestionably wrong to adopt here an explanation which has been found inadmissible in reference to baptism. Matthew in adding the express charge that *all* the disciples should drink of the cup, and Mark in relating that they actually did so, seem to convey the idea that in the mind of the Saviour this common participation was one of the elements in the significance of the rite; in other words, we hold that the communion of believers with each other, so naturally and aptly represented by a brotherly meal consecrated by the remembrance of the Master, entered essentially into the choice of the form of the sacrament. So, at least, the apostles seem to have understood it.*

But this is assuredly not all; it is not even the principal end in view. The two other narratives add these words of Jesus: "This do in remembrance of me." The meaning of this saying cannot be restricted to a mere retrospective and verbal commemoration. Jesus had not to fear being forgotten by His disciples. Beyond doubt the words institute a closer bond between Himself and them, a bond of personal attachment which did not and could not belong to the sphere of memory alone, as the brotherhood of which we just now spoke would not be adequately represented as a mere association of benevolence and mutual help. Unless we are strangely mistaken in the meaning of the Saviour's words, He instituted the Lord's Supper as a permanent symbol of the faith which should unite His disciples to Himself in the closest and strongest of bonds. Just as baptism has especial reference to the first elements of the new life, repentance and conversion, while recognizing also the crowning necessity of faith, so the Lord's Supper stands in especial relation to the latter, while implying that it also rests upon the indispensable basis of conversion. Each believer thus appro-

* 1 Cor. x. 17; xi. 25.

priates the benefit obtained by the death of Christ, and of which mention is made in the words instituting the ordinance. This benefit is an abiding grace in the soul, and realization through faith of abiding union with Christ; and this inward reality is to be outwardly witnessed by a participation, constantly renewed, of the memorials of the Lord's death till He come. If it should be thought that we crowd too much meaning into the simple words of the gospels, we appeal to the testimony of Paul, who himself gives the same interpretation. We are at least assured that we have not passed by any important part of their meaning.*

* We cannot attempt to criticize ecclesiastical formulas. But lest we should be thought to be evading hard questions, we remark: 1st, That Jesus, when he said *τοῦτο ἐστὶ*, was sitting in living form with His disciples; 2nd, That the formula employed by Luke (verse 20), and Paul (verse 25), does not agree with the mystical interpretation of the word *ἐστὶ*; 3rd, That numerous passages (as Matt. xiii. 37, and foll.) prove that such an interpretation is not needed; 4th, That in verses 29 in Matt. 25 in Mark, and 18 in Luke, we read that Jesus Himself drank with His disciples, and called that which he drank *γένημα τῆς ἀμπέλου*, "the fruit of the vine." We know also that the fourth gospel gives no account of the institution of the Supper. Nevertheless, many exegetes are of opinion that the sixth chapter of that book, may and ought to be regarded as an indirect but authentic explanation of the nature and object of this rite. We think there is much in favour of such an opinion, and beg the reader to note what we shall say on this subject in the exposition of John's theology, marking especially ch. vi., v. 63.

CHAPTER X.

THE FUTURE.

HITHERTO we have found the positive teaching of Jesus, as supplied to us by the tradition of the early Churches, generally clear and exact. We have indeed met with some points on which we should have desired to learn more, or which open wide fields to theological speculation, but the main features of the doctrine are unmistakable. We come now, however, to a subject which entered necessarily into the sphere of the religious conceptions of the Master, and must inevitably also have formed a part of the communications made by Him to His disciples, upon which, nevertheless, there seems, as far as we are concerned, to rest a thick cloud of doubt and obscurity. We refer to His revelations on the subject of the future.

If we yield to the first natural impressions which we receive from the most striking and explicit passages of the synoptics on this matter, we gather from the lips of the Saviour the following series of predictions.

The existing order of things in the world and among men will come to an end, and that very speedily, before the then existing generation shall have passed away.* It is distinctly stated that among the persons listening at that moment to the words of the prophet, there were some who should not die till the things spoken of had come to pass.

This end of all things will be a tremendous revolution, preceded by terrible calamities, comparable to the pangs of child-

* *Αὐτὸν οὗτος—συντέλεια*, Matt. xiii. 39, 49; xvi. 28; xxiv. 29, 36; x. 23; Luke xxi. 31.

birth, and heralded by extraordinary natural phenomena.* When it shall arrive, Christ will appear† in His glory on the clouds of heaven, proclaimed by the sound of trumpets, surrounded by His angels, and proceeding at once to open the graves, and judge the quick and the dead.‡

In this judgment, men will be divided into two classes, rigorously severed from each other according to their deeds in life.§ The one class will be rewarded, the other punished. These rewards and punishments will be external and material, as will be the judgment itself, and all the other events just described. The blessed shall enter into a happy garden, shall be admitted to a feast presided over by Abraham, and shall take their honourable place by the side of the patriarch.|| The apostles especially, as a recompense for their devotedness, shall sit as judges judging the twelve tribes of Israel,¶ and then the kingdom will commence. The cursed will go into Gehenna,**—that is, into a place of darkness, and yet of fire,—where they shall be delivered to the tormentors, and the never-dying worm shall feed on them. The pains of the one class and the pleasures of the other will be alike eternal.††

All these representations are clear and simple; they have nothing equivocal about them; there is not a word to suggest that there is any hidden meaning, any mental reservation, reducing their value merely to that of parable or figure. It is evident that the narrators who serve as our guides took every

* Ὁδῶνες, Matt. xxiv. 8, 23, foll. and parall.

† Ἀποκαλύπτεται, Luke xvii. 30.

‡ παλιγγενεσία, Matt. xix. 28; ἀνάστασις, Luke xiv. 14; Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 30, and foll.; xxv. 31; xxvi. 64, and parall.

§ Matt. xxv. 33.

|| Matt. viii. 11; Luke xvi. 22; xxii. 30; xxiii. 43 (παράδεισος); comp. Matt. xxvi. 29.

¶ Matt. xix. 28.

** Reuss should at least have considered whether the metaphors under which our Lord describes the punishment of the wicked—metaphors which in nearly every case involve the idea of destruction—were intended to affirm the doctrine of eternal torment.—ED.

†† Γέεννα, Matt. v. 22; viii. 12; x. 28; xiii. 42, 50; xviii. 8; xxiv. 51; xxv. 30, 41; Mark iii. 29; ix. 43, etc.

word literally, and had not a shadow of doubt in reference to the matter.

And yet these pictures, this series of predictions generally, suggest to our minds very grave doubts, and become to us so many enigmas by their very simplicity. Can it be that Jesus, who in every part of His teaching had so much that was new to reveal to mankind, who opens to our gaze in every direction such strange and surprising vistas of vision, whose lead we follow marvelling through the mazes of Divine Providence,—can it be that on this subject He should merely have repeated that which the most ordinary rabbi had long preached in the synagogue? Did He thus lend the sanction of His name to a doctrine which, as it was completely unknown to the prophets of the Old Testament, and certainly anterior to the prophets of the New, must have been of mere human origin? Can His religion, else so pure, so spiritual, so essentially free from all alloy of earth, have been consummated by an eschatology so grossly material? The works of man—for be it noted *works* alone are here mentioned, those works so universally imperfect and defective—shall cause such a separation, that the least guilty of the reprobate shall be severed for ever by an impassable gulf from the least deserving of the elect! The sins of the soul will issue in the torments of the body, torments on the model of those invented by the worst of tyrants. The simple performance of duty, from which man is ever so prone to shrink, but which Jesus sought to lead him to regard as the one thing in itself natural and desirable, has here appended to it the promise of such carnal enjoyments as the very pagans had banished from the Elysean fields—the promise, namely, of a never-ending feast. The same Jesus who knew so perfectly the heart of man, the dispositions of the age, and the ways of God, who in all else showed Himself so deeply versed in the decrees of Providence, whose judgment was never warped by fanatic fervour, His eye never dazzled by the false glamour of a heated imagination, seems here suddenly to give expression to the most visionary hopes as to the immediate future, hopes based not upon an estimate of the natural pro-

gress of events, but upon the wildest dreams of fanatic patriots among His countrymen. Do we really find, side by side with predictions ratified by the event, and signally proving the exactness of His knowledge of the future, an error so monstrous, that the lie direct is given by history to the most solemn promise of the Saviour?

This last fact especially has caused embarrassment to the theologians, though it is not the most inexplicable. They have taken infinite pains to get rid of it in a more or less plausible manner, and, as always happens, compliant exegesis has discovered various irreconcilable expedients to remove the most embarrassing features of the text. We shall not stay to examine or refute them in detail. Historic science, true to itself and to the facts with which it deals, does not stop to contend with such unworthy adversaries. None of the expedients suggested will bear a true test or prove adequate really to remove the difficulty. We are still conscious, after every attempt to explain it away, that such a climax is not in harmony with the rest of the sublime teaching of Jesus, and the moral instinct refuses to admit that He can have been mistaken to such a degree in His estimate of the probable success of His work. We must further note the very remarkable circumstance, that the fourth gospel contains not a word of all these things, and does not record one saying of the Saviour's confirming the discourses we have just analyzed.

This being the case, it is incumbent on us to inquire whether there are not present, in the discourses attributed to Jesus, other materials beside reminiscences of Judaism, indications by the aid of which we may divine or show that His teaching, with regard to things to come, had a meaning different from that which at first suggests itself. Let it be observed that, in making this inquiry, we do not enter upon a criticism of that which we have just stated as a result of exegesis, on any preconceived philosophical system. Our course will be to proceed historically, and not to rest satisfied with first impressions, if there appears a possibility of discovering, by deeper research, truth not apparent on a superficial glance.

Jesus was never for a moment misled by any false estimate of the relation existing between His purpose and teaching on the one hand, and the dispositions of men on the other. He was far from expecting a rapid and dazzling triumph brought about by a miraculous hastening of events; but He was none the less fully assured of the ultimate issue of the conflict commenced by Him between the good and evil principle in the world. We have in these two facts proof, first, that He was wholly free from all fanatic enthusiasm, and entertained no idea of employing violent or revolutionary methods; and, next, that He carried in His deepest soul the profound and immovable conviction of the origin of His doctrine, and the harmony of His design with the general purposes of Divine Providence.

He foresaw discord and strife as the result of His preaching. The first effect of His gospel of peace was to unsheath the sword, to divide men, to break the tenderest ties;* but He foresaw also a rich and glorious harvest, and the destruction of the dominion of the wicked one.† Between the actual state of things and the ultimate issue, He contemplated a long and gradual process of fermentation, purification, progression. He knew and loved to reiterate that an almost imperceptible grain cast into prepared ground grows to a mighty tree, without the help of human power, solely by the action, as sure as mysterious, of the natural forces placed by God in the seed and in the soil, and watched over unceasingly by His good Providence.‡ He knew that a little leaven in the end leavens the whole lump. The idea of the slow and progressive development of humanity under the healthful influence of the Gospel element, is represented under these two emblems in a manner so clear and so transparent, that they alone prove that He who employed them cannot have cherished the hope of a sudden revolution, destined to change in an abrupt and violent manner the condition of human kind. Such is not the order of Providence; so far from contemplating the immediate uprooting of the tares

* Matt. x. 34; Luke xii. 49; John xvi. 2; xv. 18, and foll.

† Luke x. 18.

‡ Matt. xiii. 31, and foll.

while the wheat plants, yet tender and delicate, might be in danger of perishing through the process, the husbandman patiently waits the full maturity of his crops, of which he alone is the judge, and withholds his labourers from touching the tares till he gives the signal.*

This progressive development, this growth so sure, though so quiet and imperceptible, leads to a twofold end, the one absolute or general, the other relative or individual, which two have often been confounded, and were so especially by the first hearers of the Saviour and their immediate successors. This confusion resulted partly from a certain natural analogy apparent between the two spheres, but in a still larger measure from the influence of popular prejudices over the minds of the disciples, which Jesus judged it not well directly to combat. These two spheres, with their respective crises, are the career of every man, terminating in his physical death, and the fixing of his final destiny in relation to the kingdom of God; and the progress of humanity toward its great end, namely, the realization of the kingdom of God.

The hour of death is uncertain; it comes without warning like the thief in the night; but it will surely come. The Lord will visit His own; happy they who are found ready to receive Him!† Death strikes now one, now another; no human calculation can determine the order in which each shall be called before the Judge. The outward condition of two individuals may be alike in every particular,‡ but the similarity in life gives no assurance that the mode or moment of their death shall be the same. "One shall be taken and the other left." "Watch ye, therefore," is the repeated exhortation of the Saviour;§ have your loins girded about and your lights burning, and be ye yourselves as servants that wait for their lord, that when he cometh and reckoneth with you for the talents committed to your trust,|| you may receive him with

* Matt. xiii. 30.

† Luke xii. 37—39.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 40, and foll.; Luke xvii. 34, and foll.

§ Matt. xxv. 1, and foll.

|| Mark xiii. 34; Matt. xxiv. 45, and foll.

joy, and not with grief. This charge is addressed to all,* and not specially to the men of one generation.

The life to come is no less certain than death, and in reality it is not death which is to be feared, but the Judge who will fix the nature of the life after death.† Belief in a future life was deeply enrooted in the minds of most of the contemporaries of Jesus, even those who were not Jews. His task was not to teach or prove that such a life there was, but to free the conception of it from all impure and material alloy, and to raise it to the height of a truly spiritual and evangelical idea. Once only does He give a direct proof of the continuity of human existence.‡ This proof is of the highest importance to us, since it presents the question of the resurrection in a light altogether new. Moses, He says, calls God the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Tested by simple exegesis of the words, this is but an argument *ad hominem*, which by its very simplicity seems strikingly to show how devoid was the sacred code of the Jews of any reference to the future, and which would have evidential force at most to a very limited circle of readers, and those convinced already. But on a closer examination we find in it the most sublime demonstration ever given by philosopher; for it proclaims the indestructibility of all life which continues in communion with the source of life, that is with God;§ it says that every man will rise again who is conscious of this source of his life, and who does not voluntarily repudiate it; in other words, that the resurrection is the consequence or effect of faith. We shall meet with this great principle again in the theology of the apostles.

On this same occasion Jesus also expresses Himself on the nature of the future existence of man.|| It is evident from what He says, that it is not a question of the mere renewal of

* Mark xiii. 37.

† Luke xii. 4; Matt. x. 28.

‡ Luke xx. 37, foll. and parall.

§ πάντες γὰρ αὐτῷ ξῶσι.

|| Luke xx. 34, and foll., ἀναστροφῆς υἱοί; comp. John xi. 25.

the actual conditions of life, of the resurrection of the *body* strictly so called. The idea of the resurrection here is yet more exalted, and the term employed in a more exclusive sense, since those who have a part in it are thus declared to be children of God, which amounts, in fact, to saying that a man must be a child of God in order to have a part in the resurrection. This view is abundantly confirmed by other passages, in which the idea of the resurrection and of salvation are connected together so intimately, that the former apart from the latter may be said to contain no positive elements. The way to life is rugged; the gate to it is narrow; there be few that find it.* It is necessary for the Gospel's sake to drink, as the Saviour drank, the cup of bitterness, and to be baptized with the baptism of sorrow.† All earthly good, the very ties of family, all that tends to make this life happy, must be deemed a sacrifice not too great; life itself must be laid down if need be for life eternal.‡ The cares of this life, worldly interests and pleasures, choke the good seed and make it unfruitful.§ In compensation for all temporal good forsaken for the service of the Saviour or of humanity, there shall be given wider fields to cultivate, a larger family to love, brethren to cherish, children in multitudes to nurture for the Lord.||

It is easy to see that according to all these passages, which in their doctrine, are peculiar to the teaching of Jesus, and do not belong to the popular ideas of His time, the notion of the resurrection or of the future life (for this is one and the same thing), applies exclusively to the sphere of the Gospel. It follows that we must not take literally, figurative expressions borrowed from the common parlance of the people, and the spiritual meaning of which is readily discerned. Who, for instance, ever attaches a literal significance to the words in Matt. v. 29, etc., which speak of entering into life with one

* Matt. vii. 14; Luke xiii. 24.

† Mark x. 39.

‡ Luke xviii. 29, 30.

§ Matt. xiii. 22.

|| Mark x. 30.

hand, one eye, and so forth?*" On yet stronger grounds, the other figures, borrowed from the entirely material theories of final events entertained by the Jews, and repeatedly introduced, cannot be supposed to enter as essential elements into the framework of the Gospel. The fire, the feast, the seats of honour may well be dismissed from the dogmatic explanation of the Gospel prophecy, and the practical interpretation, if it be not itself Judaized, will be always capable of a Christian application. Fulness, possession, consolation, joy, the sight of God, sonship to God,† are all terms more or less figurative, borrowed from various sources, but which in their conjunction are manifestly so many attempts to bring within the reach of human intelligence, that of which the mind of man could not conceive without such aids.

A natural consequence of what has been said as to the intimate connection between faith and the resurrection, is that there can be no interval between the present life and the future, between death and the resurrection,‡ in the Gospel sense of the latter. If faith is the cause of life, the effect must follow wherever the cause exists and operates. If the bond between the cause and effect could be broken, the cause would remain for ever dead and barren. It is not mere parable,§ therefore, which proceeds on the assumption of the continuity of the conscious existence of the human creature. On a far more solemn occasion,|| the dying Saviour proclaims, for our consolation and hope no less than for His own, that the gate of heaven opens even before the grave closes over us.

With referencet o the judgment, it is equally evident that this term can have only the value of an anthropomorphic

* Matt. v. 29, and foll. ; xviii. 8, and foll.

† Matt. v. 3, and foll. ; xxv. 21, etc.

‡ The continuity of life is essential to participation in the resurrection, in which the completeness of life will be regained and glorified ; but it does not follow that our Lord taught that the resurrection follows death immediately. There are passages in which He taught the contrary.—Ed.

§ Luke xvi. 22, and foll.

|| Luke xxiii. 43.

image.* Judgment is to be given, not in view of what every man has done, but of that which he might have done with the measure of talents entrusted to him.† These talents, which are a gift, or rather a loan from God, ought to be made, like the banker's gold, to augment the capital by bearing interest.‡ This does not imply that God will reap where He has not sowed; but the least talent, the smallest trust committed by the Dispenser of all good, ought in the hands of His servants to produce something beyond itself.§ For such is the providential law by which the world is governed. Reasonable creatures ought to contribute to the purposes of God even more than those who are the passive instruments in His hands. He endows them with moral and intellectual powers, assigns to them a task proportioned to their means, and blesses their efforts. All that they do for the good of others, is reckoned as done to God.|| To stand still in idleness is as much failing in duty as to act directly contrary to the will of God.¶ This work of theirs is not measured, like that of the day labourer, by the mere external gauge of time or quantity; ** it is the nature of the work done, and the spirit of its accomplishment, which determine its value; it is the goodness of God which fixes the recompense. This recompense is not, could not be, mere repose, inert enjoyment. All the images that seem to convey this idea belong to the category of popular and Jewish figures of speech. The Gospel could not, from its very nature, hold out the prospect of a selfish felicity. Wherever we turn our eyes, we see the kingdom of God not yet perfected and fulfilled; there is work, then, everywhere, and for every man. The recompense of the good servant consists in a yet enlarged capacity and field of service.††

* *κρίσις*, John iii. 18; v. 22, and foll., etc.

† Luke xii. 47, and foll.

‡ Luke xix. 16, 21.

§ "*Be good bankers,*" a saying of Jesus quoted by the Fathers.

|| Matt. xxv. 17; contrast with vii. 22.

¶ Matt. xxv. 30.

** Matt. xx. 1—15.

†† Matt. xxv. 21; xxiv. 47; Luke xix. 17; xii. 44.

Such is the positive teaching of Jesus as to the future open to individual members of the family He came to found, and as to the course they must pursue to realize that future. But He did not stop at individuals. His gaze, sweeping over the whole human race, sharers in the benefits of Providence, embraced the destinies of men far beyond the period which the partial reckoning of the enthusiast, or the delusive imagination of the prophet,—always impatient to hasten the close of the great drama of history,—regarded as final. Individuals pass away, humanity lives on; men stop short at a greater or less distance of their respective goal, the world steadily progresses towards the goal set before it. This goal is the establishment of the kingdom of God, and nothing short of it. The first steps towards this end were taken when Jesus went about the cities and villages of Galilee. If you had eyes to see, He exclaims, you would discern that the kingdom of God is already in your midst.* But this great work requires time; the education of the world progresses slowly; Divine mercy still lengthens out the day of grace that the lingerers † may be gathered in, and that time may be given to all nations to join the company of His chosen, each in its own order. Such was the meaning of the injunction of the Saviour to His disciples, as He sent them forth: Go not to strangers before your neighbours are brought in; preach not to the Samaritans and to the Gentiles, ‡ before you have sought and found the lost sheep of the house of Israel. “Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine. § This was not an absolute prohibition, an exclusion of all but Jews; it was only the expression of confidence in the sure progress of the Gospel, through all ages and among all peoples, in due order. The time of the Gentiles was also to be fulfilled; || to-day they will burn to the ground the visible temple at Jerusalem; to-morrow they will

* Ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐστὶν, Luke xvii. 21; comp. Matt. xi. 12; xii. 28.

† Luke xiii. 6—9.

‡ Matt. x. 5.

§ Matt. vii. 6.

|| Luke xxi. 24.

crowd into the sanctuary not made with hands,* which is its antitype, and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.† The victory is sure; the foe has already fallen from heaven, and has no power to stay the movement which will end in his ruin.‡ In their progress, as brilliant with victories as beset with difficulties, the disciples of Christ, strong in their faith, shall tread upon serpents and scorpions, and nothing shall by any means hurt them. The mountains which seem to bar their way, shall become plains before their strong will based upon trust in God; and the ills of humanity shall strangely disappear under their healing touch.§

It is very pardonable that man should inquire with eager curiosity the time of this happy consummation. The more vivid and brilliant the ideal colouring in which the future presents itself, while the reality is so dark and dreary, the more natural and lawful is it for the disciple to address to the Master the question: "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming?" || But this question is not to receive a reply. "It is not for you," Jesus says, "to know the day and the hour, which the Father hath put in His own power. And of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."¶ There is but one thing, He implies, which you must learn and not forget; namely, that this Gospel of the kingdom must be preached through all the earth, before the end can come,** and that to this end you will receive the power of the Holy Ghost, to bear witness of the truth, and to teach men "all things whatsoever I have said unto you. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." ††

* Mark xiv. 58.

† Matt. xvi. 18.

‡ Luke x. 17, 18.

§ Mark xi. 23; Matt. x. 8.

|| Matt. xxiv. 3; Acts i. 7, and foll.

¶ Mark xiii. 32.

** Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xiii. 10, and foll.

†† Matt. xxviii. 20.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOSPEL AND JUDAISM.

HAVING placed before our readers the two pictures of Judaism and the Gospel, viewed not through the prism of tradition, but in the mirror of historic study, no remarks are needed to draw attention to the strongly marked difference between them. Superficial knowledge and interested prejudice can alone be blind to a fact so patent, or hope to reduce it to unimportant proportions. It is a fact now generally admitted that Jesus did not belong to any of the party schools described in our first book. His teaching and the position He assumed towards the men of His generation remain enigmas, just because the attempt is made to explain them as the natural result of some anterior influence at work; or as a simple reaction against some such influence; or, lastly, as the consequence and product of an eclectic study. The most important and essential elements of His ministry were at the same time the most novel, and did not belong, as such, either to His own age or to an earlier period of the national development of the Jewish people.

In closing this part of our work with the parallel contained in the heading of this chapter, it is not our design to plead the case from a point of view now abandoned, or to combat that view as if it were still seriously defended. The following pages have been suggested by two considerations. In retracing the history of Judaism, we have found ourselves confronted with so many errors and false notions circulated in books and in schools, that it seems to us necessary for the completeness of our picture to throw yet a little more light upon the subject

by bringing the facts grouped around each principle into contact with the main fact, which to the Christian historian will be always the measure of the judgment to be passed upon anything connected with Christianity. On the other hand, the application of this test is in some sort a duty incumbent on any one who desires to write a history of the Church. In fact, the different phases of religious and national development among the Jews, have ever exercised a certain influence upon the development of Christian theology, which we shall have now to study. We shall soon see a vast number of men, of various origin, thronging the gates of the Church, and bringing into it ideas and opinions still more diversified, without always taking into account the bearing of these preconceived ideas on the new principles embraced. We shall see this influence, sometimes injurious, sometimes innocuous, assuming the form of popular prejudices, or appearing in theological formulas, or dividing Christians into parties and controversial schools. And these influences will be felt even more strongly beyond the limited sphere of the apostolic Church, in the wide world which opened by degrees to the Gospel, and in embracing which the Church lost in unity what it gained in extension. It is important for us, then, to note the points of contact which each convert might find between the new doctrine and his old convictions, and which may explain, while they cannot justify, the admixture of incongruous ideas which history discovers to us among some sections of the Church. But it is of much greater importance still for us to define the reasons why this admixture could be but partial, and not in itself legitimate. It is in this twofold aspect that we propose to submit to the consideration of the friends of history some brief remarks, designed rather to form the framework or outline of the parallel in question, than to exhaust a subject as fertile as it is interesting, and beyond doubt greatly neglected.

Of all the schools existing, and exerting an influence over Jewish society at the time of the first preaching of the Gospel by the disciples of Jesus Christ, that of the Pharisees was by far the most widespread and deeply rooted in the life of the nation ;

it was at the same time that which possessed the strongest affinity with the new doctrine. This assertion may appear paradoxical and startling, but we believe it may be fully vindicated. There are especially three important points in regard to which the teaching of the Gospel and that of the synagogue met on the same ground. These are the law, history, and the hope of Messiah. On the first and third we need not dwell again here. We have shown that Jesus did not teach His disciples to break abruptly with the law, since He Himself recognized its divine origin, and set the example of submission to it. We have seen also that He was ever ready to direct the gaze of the people towards the future, and to confirm the national hopes by giving them a direct and concrete application. In another aspect, He explicitly recognized the special position assigned by Providence to the people of Israel, making it the depository of the precious germ which, after ages of preparation, was to produce the spiritual regeneration of mankind. In all this, the Gospel did not place itself, directly and at the outset, in opposition to the errors of the Pharisees. While it idealized the picture of the coming age, while it spiritualized the letter, while, in a word, it raised Judaism above itself, it accepted its sacred traditions, took up the chain of its ancient revelations, proclaimed the true inspiration of its prophets; and upon this basis Jesus laid the foundation of His Church. Across the gulf which divided the rabbi from the apostle, there stretched many a promontory from either shore. But the dividing gulf was none the less real, and would baffle every attempt to fathom or bridge it over. For while the Pharisaic spirit had changed religion into a narrow and barren formalism, the Gospel carefully distinguished the form from the essence in things religious. Its estimate of man's true worth and of the certainty of his hopes, rested not upon the outward conduct of the life, but upon the inward direction of the heart and the feelings. It sought not so much to fashion individuals after the pattern of the community, as to form the community by the education of all its individual members. In points like these, it was not only in advance of Pharisaism, but even in contra-

diction to it. And as, even in things of this world, the spiritual always in the end triumphs over the material, and bursts through impeding forms to create for itself others more homogeneous, so the real and fundamental divergence between these two principles could not remain long concealed under a resemblance which was external and partial only.

The position of Sadduceeism in relation to the Gospel may be defined in very few words. It is at most from the political point of view that any analogy can be discovered between this school and the principles of the Saviour. He did indeed teach that men should give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and thus repudiated the patriotic radicalism of the Pharisees. But this analogy was only on the surface, and was based upon widely differing principles. Christian universalism was not a self-interested compromise with the world, and did not sacrifice to advantages of position the most precious things of life. It had its source in the constraining necessity and desire to enrich all mankind with a new treasury of blessings, far higher than those which the opponents of the Sadducees claimed as the prerogative of one privileged people. Between Sadduceeism and Christianity, there was the widest possible interval. Thus its adherents remained completely outside the evangelical movement.

We find a far greater affinity, and points of contact much more numerous, between Christianity and Essenism. Here the analogies are so striking, that for a long time, and especially towards the end of the last century, it was a favourite theory in certain literary circles, that the one was an outgrowth of the other. A closer examination of facts has compelled science to abandon this hypothesis, once advocated with a sort of romantic enthusiasm. In fact, the resemblance is chiefly in matters of detail, and thus caught the eye of the superficial observer. In the spirit of the two schools, the greatness of their ends, the nature of the means employed,—in all, in short, that is of most importance,—they differ broadly and deeply. To appreciate with accuracy, we will not say the possible connection between these two phases of religious development,

but the significance of the relations discoverable at first sight, we must not examine special points alone. Thus, for example, it is ascertained that the Essenes forbade oaths, attached peculiar sanctity to celibacy, despised riches; and as it was easy to point out principles or precepts in the discourses of the Saviour which seemed identical or analogous with these, especially in the application they received in the Church, it was too hastily concluded that the one was derived or borrowed from the other. But it is essential to trace back a doctrine to its source and inmost intent, in order truly to estimate its precepts and formulas. The Gospel comes to restore man to himself, to turn away his eyes from the world of sense, to fix his gaze on another world, and to teach him to purify and sanctify himself, never shrinking from the sacrifices and self-denial which necessarily await him in such a course. In all this, no doubt, it worked in the same direction as Essenism, and might readily attract to itself those imbued with the spirit of that sect. But it must be observed that it attaches no inherent value to asceticism, to the outward means of sanctification; it nowhere enjoins upon its disciples to separate themselves entirely from the world, nor does it declare such separation desirable; on the contrary, its aim is to purify and save the world, by introducing into it the element of good, mixing the leaven of the kingdom in the lifeless or corrupt mass. It teaches its disciples to know the nature and the remedy of sin, in a manner very different from and far more true than the doctrine professed in the desert retreats of the Essenes; by initiating them into the mysticism of grace and of love, it leads them towards perfection by a much surer and more accessible path than that of theosophy and self-mortification.

It remains for us to consider the relations existing between the Gospel and the scholastic and philosophical theology of the Jews of the age. When we come to speak of the various forms which Christian teaching assumed in the Church, we shall often have occasion to note the influence exerted by earlier ideas and methods. Not only will the nature of the

dialectic reasoning and especially the rules of demonstrative exegesis recall to us those of the synagogue, but we shall find certain dogmas, which did not belong to what may be called the religion of the Old Testament, nor had been taught directly by Jesus, but which had firmly laid hold of the popular imagination, and which became incorporated with the Gospel to the no small risk of deteriorating its spirit. But it is not of this subsequent fact we intend to speak here. We design to show, on the contrary, that from the commencement the Gospel bore no resemblance to a new system of Jewish theology, differing more or less from the systems adopted at Jerusalem or Alexandria, yet more or less analogous to them both in substance and form. Science is under no necessity to seek remote proof of this assertion, for the artless astonishment of the people of Capernaum and of Nazareth* proclaims it more eloquently and unmistakably than any other evidence. We will endeavour, however, to show in a few words some of the grounds on which this judgment must rest. It would be superfluous to recapitulate the principles we have already noted in the discourses of the Saviour, in order to compare them here with the traditions of the rabbis. Let us only contrast the spirit of the Gospel with the tendency of Jewish teaching, as manifested in two striking phases. The former appeals first of all to the soul of man, to his religious feeling, to the inner yearnings of his heart; it seeks to regenerate and to bring him thus to God, the sole source of all happiness. Now this end and the means which lead to it are the same for all men; all are found in the same condition of estrangement from good, in the same state of misery and peril; the Gospel is then equally needful for and equally within the reach of all. The case is altogether reversed with the theology and philosophy of Judaism. The very terms thus used indicate that we have here a privileged class, claiming to rise to a higher degree of light and knowledge than can be shared by the common world,—illuminati who will naturally be prone to look with contempt on the masses. Then this teaching addresses itself by prefer-

* Mark i. 22; comp. Luke iv. 22, 32; Matt. vii. 28, 29.

ence, and often exclusively, to the intellect, the speculative faculties, or to mere memory, and makes religious knowledge consist either in hollow forms which mould the outer without nourishing the inner life, or in cold, dazzling abstractions, lofty but unsubstantial. Thus the Gospel prevailed to establish the Church and change the face of the world, while Jewish theology allowed the synagogue to perish, and produced only the Talmud and the Kabbala—a code for monks, and a philosophy for dreamers or magicians.

It must not be forgotten, however, that Christianity also is and claims to be a philosophy,—that is to say, instruction for the mind, food for the reason; and that it does not forbid, as it has no reason to dread, the exercise of the intellectual faculties. While bringing the most sublime religious ideas within the range of the common mind, it opens to thinkers inexhaustible subjects of meditation, even on points apparently most simple and most generally received. So far from repelling philosophy, it attracts, stimulates, feeds it. But at the same time it seeks to guard it against the vagaries of imagination which would lead it to abandon the fruitful field of practical life, the moral and social application of philosophical principles. Thus the Gospel, like the Hellenist philosophy, claims to discover a deeper meaning in the ancient forms of religious life and thought. But it does not use this new insight as an excuse for an apostasy of soul from religion, as a reason for making a jest of sacred things; it regards the old as the prophetic symbol, the interpretation of which was reserved for an after-age to discover, and the secret wealth of which is entrusted to one generation, that it may become finally the common heritage of all mankind.

The most striking result of all these partial analogies is not the verification of essential differences between the Gospel and the various forms of religious thought antecedently existing in Jewish society. These we were prepared to discover. There is another fact implicitly conveyed by the parallel just established, and of far greater interest for Christian theology, namely, that the Gospel, in diverging from one school, never identifies itself

with its opposing rival. That which distinguishes it from the one does not constitute a resemblance to the other. It cannot be said that it is adverse to Sadduceeism, because it makes common cause with Pharisaism. It is no more akin to the spirit of the Talmud for being alien to the Alexandrian school. It was not homogeneous with any phase of Judaism; new and specific elements kept it radically distinct from all existing Jewish systems and schools. Whatever of truth and goodness these by inheritance of tradition possessed, the Gospel sanctified, spiritualized, raised into a higher sphere; and nothing is a stronger proof of its originality than the powerlessness of Judaism to follow an impulse which could not have failed to lead it on to perfection, if there had not been a radical incongruity between the two.

B O O K T H I R D .

CHAPTER I.

THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLES.

Two characteristics, at first sight opposed to each other, mark the teaching and doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is distinguished first by a clearness and inimitable simplicity, adapting it to the apprehension of every mind which does not of deliberate purpose refuse it, and commending it to all hearts not stonily insensible; and next, by an incomparable depth and inexhaustible wealth which satisfies all the cravings of the human soul, and offers ever fresh food for the boldest and loftiest speculation. We are only asserting a fact which has been proved a thousand times, when we say that the reason of man has discovered no truth of morality or religion which was not comprised implicitly or explicitly in that teaching, and that there is no lawful aspiration of the human heart which the Gospel has not anticipated. Has humanity, with all its toilsome struggles along the path of progress, and with the united strength of all its faculties, ever gone beyond the mind of Christ, or been able to enlarge or elevate the sphere filled by His thoughts? Has it been able to pass the limits God has been pleased to put to His revelations? Has it discovered a single duty not already prescribed, which it might fulfil? Has it ever attained, or does it even prospectively discern the possibility of attaining, to the height to which the Saviour seeks to raise it? The unhesitating answer must be, *No*. It is still in arrear of duty; it has still to study inquiringly the words of

the Master; for, sad to say, it has not yet arrived even at a true interpretation of their meaning.

This incontestable fact is, in the eyes of the Christian thinker, the fullest and most convincing proof of the Divine origin of the teaching of Jesus Christ. For if, with such potent aid, humanity is yet unequal to its task, it is obvious that it must have been incapable itself of laying down the law of the higher life. But this very fact will also explain why human reason has always found it so hard to grasp this treasure of truth, imparted by the hand of a gracious God for the welfare of His creatures. All may have attempted to appropriate their part; each may have succeeded in the measure of his particular capacity and of the means employed. The education which each had received, his special experiences external and spiritual, his readiness to receive new impressions, the fetters of habit, the force of prejudice, the preponderance of one mental faculty over the rest, the bias to reflection, the strength of the moral consciousness, the sensitiveness of feeling,—all these elements combining to produce the infinite varieties of individual character among men, have in the same manner modified indefinitely their apprehension of the thoughts and facts of the Gospel. According to their own peculiar receptive power, men have been impressed, convinced, affected by them in a thousand different ways, none probably without attaining to some measure of theoretic and practical truth, but none certainly achieving complete exemption from error and imperfection. We say error and imperfection, for Christianity is not merely a doctrine to be studied intellectually, and which it may be possible, therefore, profiting by the toil of preceding generations, to acquire and learn by heart; it is primarily an element of new life, both for mankind as a whole and for each individual man, who must mark out his own course of effort and failure, sure to feel himself at last—if we may use such a paradox—so much the farther from the goal set before him, as in reality he has approached the more nearly to it.

We do not touch, however, at present on this part of our subject, though it is the most essential. We are writing now

the history of Christian theology in the first period of its development; we must therefore confine ourselves to that which belongs to the sphere of intellectual labour. But even in this narrower circle, the observations we have just made find full application. The more theology, religious feeling, and the gratitude of the world assign to Jesus Christ a place apart, pre-eminent above all of mortal race, the less can they expect that He should be fully apprehended by lower intelligences, too happy if they may catch but a ray of His unsullied brightness. Once again, we repeat, had He been a mere teacher, had His mission been only to promulgate a system, it might have been naturally argued that He should have left disciples competent, in their turn, to be the perfect organs of His inmost thought. But such was not His mission. Never in Christianity is the idea divorced from the life; and never in history has the life realized the idea. For this single reason, no Christian teaching, in any age, among any people in any Church, has ever been the adequate expression of the Christian thought, that thought in its quality of absolute truth belonging at once to the domain of reason, of feeling, and of action, and being everywhere the reflex of the Divine perfections. Just as the goal which Jesus Christ sets before humanity is ever in advance of man, while yet it appears not unattainable, so the treasure of wisdom on which He invites men to expend their powers of thought, is inexhaustible, while it is not inaccessible. Experience proves that the longer and deeper men search, the more they discern of the unsearchable; that the horizon of knowledge and of truth widens as they advance, courageously and perseveringly, in a career which appeared at first short and easy. The ultimatum of truth is by finite minds never attained. To use a figure: The traveller hastens on to reach the crest of the hill that bounds the landscape, eager to gaze on the broad plain he expects to discover on the further side. But when the easy hill is climbed, he sees before him crest after crest piercing the very clouds. Such unlooked-for difficulties only quicken his courage and stimulate his curiosity. The purer air he breathes gives

new vigour to his limbs. Panting, but patient and resolute, he climbs again, till he stands but just below the lofty ridge, men with their common cares and wants and ways left far beneath; he fancies himself almost in heaven; yet another step, and he will enter on the new world about to open on his astonished gaze. Mystery of mysteries! he is farther than ever from the goal; as if by enchantment, new mountains rise from an impassable ocean of ice, and close in the new horizon. Precipices yawn at his feet; his head grows dizzy; he dare climb no further, dare no longer stand even where he is; he is only too happy to regain the valley, and return to the humble surroundings of his common life.

That which is true of all the generations of Christians who have succeeded each other for eighteen centuries, is no less true of the first generation. This had undoubtedly a great advantage over all its successors, an advantage which it could well appreciate, and in which it gloried with just pride and humble thankfulness. It had enjoyed the bodily, human presence of the Lord. It had been privileged to look upon His living face, to listen to the tones of His voice; it had been enchained by His sweet and grave discourse, had felt the fascination of His calm, penetrating gaze, had been thrilled by the strange power of His unlaboured eloquence. It had caught His simple, homely parables as they first fell from His lips, had seen His miracles of mercy, had been instructed by His sermons, edified by His example, comforted by His very presence; it had sat at His table, lodged beneath His roof, had walked, suffered, prayed with Him; and all that is to us a lesson first to be learned in order that it may afterwards be practised, was to that generation a memory of bygone hours of blessedness, when conviction grew out of the life. Conviction thus born might well prove mighty and immovable in the decisive hour, ready for conflict with the world, if the world preferred resistance to submission, strong and sure of victory despite all the weapons wielded against it by passion and prejudice, and safe from any access of weakness which might paralyze its efforts and compromise the cause of truth.

But this inestimable advantage was counterbalanced by another influence which prevented it from producing its full effect. Jesus Himself compares His work in the world to a germ deposited in the earth, and the kingdom He came to found, to a tree growing out of it. Now the grain of mustard seed does not reach its perfect development in a day, nor could the first generation of Christians rise at once to the height of the Master. Alas! after so many ages, our own generation still falls lamentably below that lofty standard. The gravest impediments to progress in the sphere we are about to study, arise not from the absence of conviction in the mind, from doubt, hesitation, or distrust of self; all these only tend to stimulate the spirit to sterner labour. The obstacles arise from the presence of certain anterior convictions, from the dominion of prejudice, and a habit of thought which constantly misleads. Now we must not forget that Jesus, in His sublime wisdom, did not follow the common method of men, who begin by destroying that which they deem erroneous, before they show that which they intend to substitute. He reversed the process. He established the principles of evangelical truth, without attacking rabbinical formularies or customs consecrated by the practice of the synagogue, unless they were directly contrary to the law of God, or perverted the consciences of men. He built up His Church without first demanding the destruction of the Temple. He had so much confidence in His work, He was so sure of His means and His end, that He was not afraid to leave to the combined action of true principles and of time, the dissolution of all that did not bear the impress of eternal verity; and history has fully justified the course He pursued and His confidence in its result.* If we were to sum up the history of Christian theology from its commencement to our own day, and to predict its future destinies, we should say that it has undergone and is undergoing one long metamorphosis, disengaging slowly but surely the Gospel idea from the foreign alloy which, through the imperfection of the human

* He also knew and promised that the Spirit would dwell in the Church to lead it into all the truth.—ED.

conception, has been mingled with it from the first. This transformation or purification, which is yet far from complete, is the living commentary on the words of the Saviour, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;" words as sublime as a prophecy, as they are profound as a rule of history and law of Providence, and which we have placed in the very forefront of this work, in order to give our readers a true idea of the principles which guide us in our task.

As we prepare to write the first annals of the long travail of the human spirit over the Christian idea, sown first as good seed in the fields of Palestine, we are struck at once by a fact which will occupy the larger portion of our narrative, and which seems a divergence from the track marked out by the ordinary laws of history. After the remarks made above, we might be prepared to find in the mass of the individuals composing the first Christian society, prejudices and various misconceptions blending with their happy memories, ardent feelings, and pious dispositions, and so beclouding their perceptions, that they could only gradually rise to a purer conception of the theoretic truth of the Gospel. Such is undoubtedly to some extent the fact, but it must not be hastily concluded that this is the only fact to be ascertained with regard to these primitive times, and that from this point history shows a uniform and continuous course of advance. The history of the generations succeeding the first, gives an emphatic denial to such an assumption.

Another fact strikes us still more forcibly in relation to the same era—namely, that from its earliest introduction into the young community of Christians, the science of the Gospel found some interpreters of so exalted a type, that their successors would have deserved our highest eulogiums, had they but sustained the same standard. We find in these privileged men—unhappily few in number—such elevation of view, purity of intention, power of thought, freedom of judgment, strength of will—so many rare qualities, in short, both of heart and mind, that so far from being surpassed by any who have come after them, we have to mourn perpetually that they have been so barely

understood, so rarely imitated.* Even in our own day, their words remain the fountain-head of theology, their lives the models of Christendom. Clearly the finger of God had touched them in a peculiar manner, and if we sought to add another to the many attempts to construct a system of evangelical theology, we should, in reasonable distrust of our own powers, turn primarily to them for the indispensable light and help. But since our task is to write a history, we may not neglect any part of the great scroll of facts unrolled before us, and must take note of the shadows, which after all only intensify the lights.

We shall not further preface our narrative: we have already explained its plan in our general introduction. The exposition of the facts will be the touchstone and the demonstration of the justness of our point of view, and more conclusive against our opponents than any mere argument. Let us give one instance of what we mean. The generally received and time-honoured opinion in the Church is that the disciples of Jesus remained under the influence of prejudices and even errors until the day of their Master's resurrection; but that by a special dispensation of Providence they received miraculously, at the time of the next Pentecost, all the extraordinary gifts they lacked, especially a perfect comprehension of the Gospel, infallibility, and the privilege of direct and continuous inspiration. These gifts, however, were exclusively reserved to the Twelve, who from that time formed a completely separate class of Christians, with this single exception, that their number was subsequently raised to thirteen by the addition of Paul. From the time of Pentecost, and of the miracle on the road to Damascus, not only were there no more changes, no further progress or development in them and among them, but there remained an infinite distance, a great gulf, a specific distinction, so to speak, between them and all other Christians, contemporary or following. Such is the system adopted by the great

* It is difficult, after reading the writings of the apostolic fathers, and comparing them with the writings of the apostles, to resist the conviction that the spiritual illumination granted to the apostles was unique.—ED.

majority of theologians. We shall make no attack upon that system. We shall simply set forth facts as we find them in the documents which these same theologians acknowledge as authentic, and this exposition of facts will convey our judgment of the currently received opinion.*

* On the subject discussed in the latter part of this chapter, see *Bernard's Development of Doctrine in the New Testament*.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCHES OF PALESTINE.

WHEN Jesus left the world, His disciples were already numbered by hundreds;* within a few weeks after that event they had increased to thousands.† This fact, which is very commonly disregarded in the history of Christian doctrine, is well worthy of note. It alone suffices to show that the centre of gravity of the early Church, and of its spiritual development, did not reside in a few individuals. If the twelve occupied, in consequence of their peculiar relations with the Saviour, a place apart in the midst of this rapidly increasing company of Christians, their influence must still have been counterbalanced by that of others, possessing the advantages they lacked, of a systematic and high education. The new community soon comprised within it a large number of priests‡ and Pharisees,§ whose minds had been too long cast in another mould to yield readily to influences originating in a sphere so alien to their ideas. We have no evidence that the apostles exercised over all these men an exclusive ascendancy so strong as to mould them at their will;|| least of all, have we any proof that they possessed from the

* 1 Cor. xv. 6. It is unnecessary to go back further in the history, and to trace a similar proportion at an earlier period. (Luke vi. 13 ; viii. 2 ; x. 1, etc.) From the narrative of Luke, at least, we cannot but suppose that the Seventy and the Twelve were placed on the same level.

† Acts ii. 41 ; comp. v. 47 ; iv. 4 ; xxi. 20.

‡ Acts vi. 7.

§ Acts xv. 5.

|| See, however, the remarkable passage : ,“And of the rest durst no man join himself to them.” (Acts v. 13.)—ED.

outset, ideas and views more or less unknown to those around them, and by virtue of which they became the leaders of the thought of their age. The facts we shall presently adduce argue in part the contrary.

The Gospel was not to the first disciples a new religion opposed to Judaism; it was the fulfilment of the old; the more impatiently they had awaited it, the more eagerly did they embrace it. Those fishermen from the shores of the Galilean lake, those repentant publicans, those many sufferers to whom Jesus restored health, those pilgrims from all parts who lent an ear to His discourses when they came up to Jerusalem to keep the feast, those families who received Him gladly as their guest, and whom He blessed with His friendship, all the men who wept at His cross and gloried with hopes revived in His resurrection,—all, in short, whom the Gospel shows us gathered around the Lord watching in eager expectation, sought, not some new doctrine, as has been gratuitously supposed, but a new and marvellous manifestation of His power and glory. That which was lacking to the piety of these Jews, was not, as we have already said, a new article for their creed or code, but the advent, the manifestation, of One who should put, as it were, the keystone to the arch founded on Sinai.

Thus, from the beginning, and long before any question of dogmatic speculation had arisen in the Church, Christianity was not so much an epitome of the teaching delivered by Jesus, as a new form of the doctrine concerning Messiah. All the theology of the primitive Church was at first summed up in this statement, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ.* To preach the Gospel and to preach Jesus was one and the same thing in the beginning. This simple statement was new only as regarded its subject, not at all in that which was predicated of Him. The apostles were to proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand,† and to declare the conditions of

* *Ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός*, Acts ix. 22; comp. ii. 36; viii. 4, 5, 35; xi. 20; xiii. 32, 33; xvii. 3; xviii. 5, 28.

† Matt. x. 7; xxviii. 19; Luke x. 9.

entrance into it.* Now a kingdom could not be conceived of without a king; it was needful, therefore, to establish the title of Jesus to that Messianic dignity,† the conception of which had long been wrought in the popular mind. It is easy to note that in the theological point of view, which is the main subject of our remarks, this thesis itself contained two elements, two ideas, which might become, and did actually become, the fruitful germs of the ultimate development of Christian thought. On the one hand, in the idea of Messiah lay the centre and focus of a hope which, while at first more or less fanatical, more or less coloured by earthly considerations, was destined to rise by degrees to the purest and most spiritual conceptions. On the other hand, in the place assigned to the person of Jesus, there was the foundation of faith, of a trustful and childlike attachment, more or less under the influence of these same pre-conceived ideas, but adapted to rise gradually above them, and, taking possession of the heart, to become the motive force of the entire life.

The task of the apostles consisted, then, primarily in inculcating these two elements or principles; or rather, since the first was already widely diffused, in giving it definiteness, power, and a distinct direction, by the addition of the second. The theories and expectations already cherished, needed to be established on the immovable basis of fact‡ and prophecy,§ and expectations were changed into direct certainty, by the preliminary and partial fulfilment already received and containing the pledge of what lay beyond. It follows from the very nature of things, that this was not a task of great difficulty; were we disposed to think otherwise, the truly colossal scale of the results of primitive apostolic preaching would be decisive on the point. Never in the whole course of His

* Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; v. 31.

† Acts ii. 36; iv. 10; v. 30; ix. 20; x. 38—42; xiii. 23; Rom. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 3, and foll.

‡ Acts ii. 32; iii. 15; v. 32; x. 39, 40; 1 John i. 1.

§ Acts ii. 29, 36; iii. 22; viii. 36; x. 43; xiii. 33; xvii. 28; xxviii. 23, etc.

ministry had Jesus obtained such amazing success, or, to speak more exactly, He had never sought in the same way to augment the number of His disciples. He was satisfied with depositing the seed of truth, the regenerative germ, in the hearts of those who heard Him; He was never in haste to record statistically the results of His preaching. He knew only too well how many erroneous and alien ideas grew up along with the good and true seed scattered by Him. He was far from closing His eyes to the diversity of result obtained, as one and the same seed fell into ground variously prepared. We shall find the apostles, at the outset of their ministry, taking account of the progress of the kingdom of God, by a method altogether different. After Peter's first sermon,* thousands of converts were baptized and received into the Church, on the same terms of fellowship as the apostles themselves. And what, then, was the strain of this sermon? It commenced by explaining to the astonished crowd a new and unparalleled psychological phenomenon, and showing by a prophetic passage that this phenomenon was one of the characteristic signs of the latter days. It went on to proclaim Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had crucified, to be the promised Messiah, and proved the assertion by His resurrection, a fact attested by many eye-witnesses, and declared by the testimony of Scripture to be a necessity. As a practical consequence of thus convicting his hearers of sin, He preaches to them repentance and baptism. We may therefore suppose that the three thousand persons who then sought baptism, and all who soon after followed their example, had accepted the facts we have just stated; but we have no means of knowing what religious notions they brought to bear on those facts; or, rather, we may affirm, without fear of error, that these notions varied greatly, and depended, not on a course of Christian instruction, which those thus baptized certainly had not received, but on the Jewish education through which, in one form or other, they had all passed. We are very far, once again we repeat, from calling in question the numbers given; on

* Acts ii. 14, and foll.

the contrary, we accept them as establishing the fact that the basis of theology, with the greater part, if not with the whole of the first Christians, was Judaism, with the exception of one single doctrine, belonging primarily rather to history than to theology, which was however to change the whole face of religion, of theology, and of the world itself.

We repeat it, the task of the apostles, as they understood it, was not difficult at first: public opinion was prepared for their message, and men were sure to receive gladly as an accomplished fact, that which they had long cherished as a hope.* The attitude of mind and the influences at work in the higher spheres of Jewish society were no less auspicious. We have already observed that the views of the Pharisees were at this time altogether dominant, if not in political society, at least in the schools and in practical life; and, as we have also noted above, the apostolic preaching coincided with Pharisaism on the ground of history, of the law, and of Messianic hopes. When the Jews caused Jesus to be condemned as a politically dangerous person, the Sadducees alone were sincere in their accusation. With the Pharisees, it was a hypocritical affectation, dictated by malice. Motives of an entirely different nature led them to make common cause with their adversaries, and among these motives, spite at seeing Jesus found innocent of the crime imputed to Him, was not the least. After His death, it was again the Sadducees who persecuted His disciples and the daily increasing company of His followers, because this swelling wave of the Gospel seemed to them to menace the public peace, and to bear in its bosom a political crisis, a conflict of nationalities, which they were supremely anxious to avert.† The Pharisees, the secret foes of the established order of things, favoured every movement likely to result in changing it. They regarded the Christians as the devoted supporters of a hope which could alone give the nation strength to shake off the foreign yoke, and hence it is we find them espousing in the midst of the Sanhedrim, the

* Acts ii. 47; v. 14. See on this point Book I., chap. x.

† Acts iv. 1; v. 17.

cause of the sect attacked by their opponents.* They might even regard Christianity as realizing their conception of the religion of the future; they therefore became its adherents in large numbers.† These favourable relations were continued so long as Christian preaching did not come into direct collision with the synagogue, and do violence to its most cherished principles. Up to that point, the Christians might be regarded as, and virtually were, a Jewish party‡ (not a heretical faction§), and this party was more closely assimilated to Pharisaism than to any other contemporary school, both in its theological views|| and its practical principles, in its morality and its attachment to the law.¶

We have spoken of the rapidly increasing number of the first Christians, as a fact worthy of note, in any attempt to understand and appreciate the development of religious ideas in the infant Church. There is another fact, of the same class, which should not be lost sight of, and on which we lay the more stress, since it has been completely misrepresented in the legendary tradition of later ages. The apostles did not begin their labours on too large a scale. They had, indeed, their eye fixed upon a future rich in great and brilliant results, but they rather awaited these results in passive trust, than sought to realize them by direct and personal effort. The more vivid was their hope of a speedy triumph, the less did they seem to expend their energies on the preliminary labour. They remained at Jerusalem, abandoning for ever their former calling, and drawing yet closer the bonds of fellowship with all who shared their convictions. They soon formed a community of their own, not in the sense of a separatist organization, but bound together by the particular direction of their thoughts and wishes, and of their whole life. They cherished

* Acts v. 34 ; xxiii. 6, and foll.

† Acts vi. 7 ; xv. 5.

‡ *Αἰρεσις*, Acts xxiv. 5 ; xxviii. 22.

§ Acts v. 17 ; xv. 5 ; xxvi. 5.

|| Acts xxiii. 6, and foll.

¶ Acts xxi. 20.

the memories of their intercourse with their Master—brought to so bitter and premature a close ;—and these memories, perpetually fostered and revived, gained strength by repetition, and spread to a wider and wider circle of believers. Social prayer and the community of goods drew still closer a union already cemented by the most sacred bonds,* and the feeling of brotherhood, so far from becoming weakened by the influence of numbers, went on to express itself in social relations which religious enthusiasm may extol,† but which prudence does not approve, and experience seems not to have justified.‡ Their humble and unassuming virtues, the exemplary practice of all the duties held most sacred in the estimation of the people, and, still more, the possession of that gift of healing, which had first glorified Jesus in the eyes of the multitude,—all these things won for the Galileans the favour of the many,§ and gathered around them a circle over which they exercised that attractive power, the Saviour's promised gift, which they were the last to claim as due to any merit of their own. Within this primitive Church, so closely circumscribed on every side, there slept as yet, as in an infant newly born, not only the various phases of thought and influence which might one day manifest themselves in forms of heresy, but also the consciousness of a high destiny, and of the possession of the power which was to subdue the world, not by patience only, but by action and by progress.

To the material facts just pointed out, we may add one of a more directly theological character, but which is really a corollary of the former. It had not occurred to the mind of this primitive community, that it need stand to the synagogue in any different relation from that of the great body of Israel. The disciples of Jesus might, and must, have something more than the mass of their Jewish co-religionists—a more personal faith, a more defined and certain hope ; but they did not as yet deem

* Acts i. 14 ; ii. 42.

† Acts ii. 43, and foll. ; iv. 32, and foll.

‡ Gal. ii. 10 ; 1 Cor. xvi ; 2 Cor. viii, ix.

§ Acts ii. 43, 47 ; iii. 11 ; iv. 21 ; v. 12, foll., etc.

that, without prejudice to their salvation, they might also have something less than other Jews, that the old sacred forms of worship, the appointed fasts and sacrifices, and the ordinance of circumcision, might cease even before the return of the Saviour.

Jesus had spoken on this point with sublime wisdom and extreme reserve. He had not attempted to subvert convictions and change the established order of things by trenchant words or abrupt innovations. He preferred to place side by side with the old institutions the vital and generative seeds of the new, and to leave it to time to develop the germ, and to familiarize men with that which at first could not but appear to them strange. His often-repeated saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," conveyed clearly the fact that His instructions contained hidden mysteries of truth and life, for those who had the faculty to receive them. We shall see presently that this intimation was understood by many of His hearers.

But this was not the case with all. The greater number paid no heed to it, and after the death of Jesus, the majority of those who continued to hope and believe in Him, remained as they had always been, pious Jews submitting to all the traditions of the synagogue. Nothing was further from their thought or purpose than to leave this hallowed track. Their Master had given them no such command; and if He had done so, they would possibly have been almost more willing to diverge from Him than from it. The liberty which He had proclaimed was not precisely that which they sought; and His words about the demolition of the old and the building of a new temple, had been perhaps better understood by the suspicious vigilance of His enemies, than by the slow comprehension of His friends.

Thus while the first Christians met together constantly to edify one another by prayer and praise and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and while the interchange of happy memories and the meals taken in common drew ever closer the bonds of brotherhood, they still continued to attend the religious services of their nation both in the temple and in the synagogue. They

observed with scrupulous exactness all the prescriptions of the law touching forbidden meats.* They kept the fasts appointed by the law or by traditional usage, and other fasts self-imposed, according to the pious wont of their people.† They offered their prayers regularly at the accustomed hours, whether in their own homes or in the holy place where the great body of faithful Israelites then assembled.‡ They subjected themselves to vows of abstinence and of sacrifice on those graver occasions, when fear and danger called forth a more fervent expression of their devout feeling.§ They celebrated the national festivals and holidays, because they never ceased to regard themselves as members of that great family whose union was to be cemented by these national solemnities.|| Finally, for the same reason, they administered circumcision to their children, a fact which, had we no other testimony, is placed beyond doubt, both by the example given by Paul himself,¶ and by the general practice of his opponents,** to which we shall presently advert. In a word, these primitive Christians were devout, according to the law,†† zealous Israelites, attached to the law, and believing in Christ.‡‡ They gloried in the name of Jews,§§ and refused it to those who did not practise the same rigidity of legal observance.|||| They regarded themselves as the true twelve tribes,¶¶ thus claiming as their own all the privileges and blessings annexed to that name, which thus became the ideal and symbolic title for the Church,*** just as the sacred

* Acts x. 14.

† Acts x. 30 ; xiii. 2, 3.

‡ Acts ii. 46 ; iii. 1 ; v. 42 ; x. 9.

§ Acts xviii. 18 ; xxi. 23.

|| Acts ii. 1 ; xviii. 21 ; xx. 6, 16 ; Rom. xiv. 5 ; Col. ii. 16 ; Gal. iv. 10.

¶ Acts xvi. 3.

** Acts xv. 5 ; Gal. v. 2 ; Phil. iii. 2.

†† *Ευσεβείς κατὰ τὸν νόμον*, Acts xxii. 12 ; xxi. 24.

‡‡ *Ἰουδαῖοι πεπιστευκότες ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου*, Acts xxi. 20. *Christum deum sub legis observatione credebant.* Sulpic., Sever., ii. 31.

§§ Acts x. 28 ; comp. xxi. 39 ; xxii. 3.

|||| Rev. ii. 9 ; iii. 9.

¶¶ *Δώδεκα φύλαι*, James i. 1.

*** Rev. vii. 5, and foll. ; xii. 1 ; xxi. 12.

ark, miraculously saved from the conflagration of the first temple, remained as its palladium.*

The first members of the Church of Jerusalem, and those of other evangelical communities which quickly arose in Palestine, thus naturally started on a basis of Judaism. The idea never occurred to them that others, not Jews, might possibly enter their society.† There is even ground for supposing that they professed in this respect principles more rigid than those adopted by the other Jews, in the admission of Greeks to the assemblies for prayer in the synagogue. We shall, at least, find that, at the commencement, pious men not circumcised, who were wont to attend in large numbers the Sabbath assemblies, were not invited to join the gatherings of the Christians, nor were admitted without opposition, even when they sought such admittance of their own accord.‡ That which we are told of the evangelization of Samaria§ may help us to a still more exact idea of the views entertained by those who then had the direction of Christian work. The Samaritans, although circumcised, were schismatic Jews, whose hostile sentiments towards the orthodox (repaid by these with usury) are well known through various scenes in the life of Jesus.|| The narrative in the Acts appears to suggest that the apostles were greatly surprised to learn that the Samaritans had embraced the faith, and sought from God a miraculous manifestation to convince them that He accepted these new converts on the same ground as the other disciples. With regard to the pagans, the process was more difficult and prolonged. Every one is familiar with the detailed account of the conversion of Cornelius the centurion,¶ and can call to mind the very explicit mention there

* Rev. xi. 19 ; comp. 2 Macc. ii.

† The expressions used in the early sermons of Peter, Acts ii. 36, iii. 25, 26, must unquestionably be explained in accordance with the facts about to be noticed.

‡ The deacon Nicolas, Acts vi. 5, was evidently a proselyte of righteousness, that is to say circumcised, otherwise Luke's narrative is but a tissue of contradictions.

§ Acts viii. 5, 14.

|| Luke ix. 52 ; John iv. 9 ; viii. 48 ; comp. Matt. x. 5.

¶ Acts x.

made of the scruples of Peter, and the necessity of a special revelation to remove them. The first impression of the Christians who witnessed this scene was one of profound astonishment.* The news of it was received at Jerusalem with disfavour; the apostles themselves appear not to have understood at first the step taken by their colleague;† they thought that he had compromised himself by holding familiar converse with men uncircumcised, and it was only after full explanations that they yielded to the evidence of the facts.

This event seems to be recorded as the first of its class. We might be tempted, however, to believe that it had had precedents. At least the history of the conversion of the Ethiopian officer by Philip the Deacon‡ might well support such an opinion. It is true that Luke does not say that this personage was not a Jew; but if he had been one of that nation, we fail to see why so direct and marvellous an interposition of the Spirit of God should have been required in this particular case, or why the history should attach so much interest to details which must have been of frequent recurrence. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the reading of the prophet do not peremptorily settle the question; we do not insist, however, on the view thus thrown out, since the evidence is incomplete.

However this case may be, it remains well attested that circumcision was regarded at first as an indispensable condition of a participation in Messianic hopes, even from the Christian standpoint. We shall see, further, that if one part of the members of the Church, and notably the apostles themselves, modified their opinions on this point, the mass of the faithful did not share in the change, but adhered to their first convictions. This respect for the letter of the Mosaic law is one of the distinctive characteristics of the spirit of the Palestine Churches. It may appear to us in our day a sign of weakness and want of intelligence; it was thus judged from the first, by those who had risen above the same narrow conceptions.

* Ἐξέστησαν, Acts x. 45.

† Διεκρίνοντο, Acts xi. 2, 3.

‡ Acts viii. 26, and foll.

But we are by no means prepared to conclude that this imperfection of theory must needs have exercised a pernicious influence on the moral teaching, or on the practice of the Churches, to whom it seemed the expression of the truth. On the contrary, we at once recognize that morality in this sphere was as severe in its principles as in its application. But it rested on a purely legal basis; it was founded on the same commandment of God which had been proclaimed on Sinai, and preserved by letter and tradition, and according to which the rites of worship were placed on the same level as all other duties. It was pure enough, elevated enough, to make all men feel their need of repentance and reformation, and that there was none righteous, no not one; but it said so in the same terms as John the Baptist had used, and Christ appeared in this view not as a new lawgiver come to change the very relation between man and duty, but rather as a pledge of the fulfilment of eternal righteousness brought in to stimulate the laggard efforts of the sinner and to revive his courage. Let us add that which is indeed the natural consequence of the foregoing remarks, that this morality had a very decided tendency to the most rigorous asceticism, and that it eagerly laid hold of and interpreted literally certain principles laid down by Jesus, which seemed to favour this tendency. The ideas previously diffused through Jewish society by the influence of Essenism thus found fresh food, allying themselves to Messianic hopes. We may refer to the contempt of riches, in regard to which the warnings of the Saviour were translated into very positive assertions. Combining, on the one hand, with a lively feeling of brotherhood and devotedness to the members of the community, on the other with the belief in the speedy end of the world, this disposition manifested itself by those acts, at once generous and imprudent, to which we have alluded above, by that system of community of goods, which failed to accomplish its immediate end, but which was no less honourable in motive and purpose.*

* It is not clear that what has been inaccurately called "the community of goods" in the Church at Jerusalem was suggested by a rigid and formal interpretation of our Lord's precepts. It came from the strength of the new spirit of brotherhood.—ED.

Again, men soon began to exalt the sanctity of celibacy, a tendency which may be traced in very varying shades through the whole moral teaching of primitive Christianity, from the words of Jesus and of Paul,* based upon considerations of prudence and devotedness, to the Gnostic theories,† which embodied the principles of dualism. Thus we see Christians recommending virginity,‡ and imposing continence upon themselves even in the marriage state.§ The abstinence from wine and meat may also have been enjoined on ascetic principles.||

The mode of life of the Christians thus outdid in rigidity even Pharisaic precepts, or rather it was Pharisaism itself carried into the Church, but only in its elements of honesty and sincerity, without its pride, without its hypocrisy, so that it was compatible with the practice of essentially Christian virtues. We might add many expressive traits and throw many stronger shadows into the picture we have just traced, if we could accept with perfect confidence the portrait drawn by a writer of the second century** of the apostle James, the illustrious head of the Church at Jerusalem, whose name still formed the rallying-point of that primitive and particular form of Christianity, even two centuries after the destruction of the temple, and whose example, perhaps idealized by posterity, shows at least the current estimate of the virtue of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. "This James," says Hegesippus, "has been generally denominated the Just, to distinguish him from the many others of the same name. He was holy from his birth. He never drank wine or other spirituous liquors, and never ate meat. His hair was never cut, and he never used oil at his toilet nor took a bath. His garments were never

* Matt. xix. 12 ; 1 Cor. vii.

† 1 Tim. iv. 3.

‡ Acts xxi. 9 ; 1 Cor. vii. 37.

§ 1 Cor. vii. 4, 5 ; Rev. xiv. 4.

|| Rom. xiv. 2, 21 ; 1 Tim. v. 23.

¶ The greater part of this paragraph rests on citations which hardly sustain it.—Ed.

** Hegesippus cited by Eusebius, "H. E." ii. 23.

made of woollen stuffs, but always of linen ; therefore he, and he only, was permitted to enter the temple. There he was accustomed to pray on his knees for the sins of the people ; the skin of his knees thus became callous as that of a camel. For this extreme righteousness he was called the Just," etc.

If the features of this portrait do not resemble the original, the painter has erred through exaggeration ; assuredly he was not drawing a merely imaginary picture. Doubtless, in order to know the truth of the matter, it were safer to consult the outlines which the apostle himself has traced in purer colours in his epistle. But if the other portraiture does not represent accurately one particular historic personage, this by no means proves that it is not true to the general characteristics of the age.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCHES OF THE DISPERSION.

CHRISTIANITY, as we have just watched it, taking form in the religious creed, and embodying itself in the practical life of its disciples, unquestionably carried within it that regenerative element, which was sooner or later to change the face of the world; but this element lay shrouded and confined, and hindered in its wider operations, beneath the superannuated forms of Judaism, and was neutralized by the attitude of passive expectancy assumed by its apostles.

It may then fairly be said that this Christianity was not the adequate expression of the mind of the Saviour. In proof of this, we do not need to refer even to the teaching of the Lord Himself, or to that of His disciples, who have become in a still larger measure the formers of our theology; a simple appeal to our own religious consciousness will suffice. We cannot therefore be surprised to meet in the history of the apostolic Church itself, and at a very early period, with a progressive movement, a crisis, we might almost say a revolution in Christian thought, a more fully developed apprehension of that which constitutes the essence of the Gospel, and a consequent change notable in the relations between the Church and the Synagogue.

But if we may give credit to the memories of that primitive age, as they have been preserved in the only authentic documents now within our reach, the merit and glory of this advance do not belong to the Galilean disciples. The honour of the initiative is claimed by history for strangers, Hellenist Jews,* who may have been themselves among the Lord's own hearers,

* Acts vi. 8; xi. 20.

or had derived their convictions through a comparatively transparent medium. In the latter case, they must have received their instruction from some Christian whose name history has not preserved; for we should seek in vain for a teacher of such liberal and enlightened views, among those whose ideas were still taking form slowly and laboriously, at the time when the pioneer of the new school had already sealed with his life a faith more in harmony with the deep mind of Christ, and more adapted to the widening necessities of the coming age.

In whatever school they may have been trained, these Hellenist Jews were the first to grasp that which was essentially new in the Gospel, while the Hebrew Jews, those especially who were most under the influence of Pharisaic teaching, had been content with making the Gospel harmonize as closely as possible with the ideas received by tradition. At the head of these Hellenists, history places Stephen, lately chosen deacon of the Church at Jerusalem, but concerning whom we know absolutely nothing which could enlighten us as to the course of his Christian education. He preached at Jerusalem, in the synagogues where the Greek tongue was used in exhorting the faithful.* His preaching was the first to arouse the animosity of the Jews, the discourses of the apostles having been apparently, until now, listened to with favour. There was indeed a radical difference between the two. The apostles were held in honour because of the rigour of their ascetic Judaism; Stephen was charged with speaking against the religion of his fathers, against the holy place, and the Mosaic rites. It is a circumstance worthy of remark that the accusation in this case takes absolutely the same form as that brought against Jesus Himself;† and in this as in that instance it might be shown to be true or false according to the interpretation put upon it. It was false, if it was supposed to cover violent and revolutionary designs, which assuredly would not have won the eulogiums bestowed on him by ecclesiastical tradition,‡ and for holding

* Acts vi. 11, and foll.

† Acts vi. 14; Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58.

‡ Acts vi. 5.

which the members of the community at Jerusalem would have been the last to confer on him honourable distinction. But in another sense the charge was true. For what was indeed the meaning of those words for which they stoned him, and which after all he did not deny? Is it not easy to see that he had discerned the hidden significance of many of the sayings of Jesus relative to the law and the Gospel, and most of all of that famous saying, so ill understood by the other disciples, that He would destroy the old and build a new temple? * Can we doubt that he had become convinced of the incompatibility of the Mosaic institutions, considered as conditions of the Church and of the kingdom of God, with the spiritual and expansive ideas of the Gospel? Is it not the aim of the apologetic discourse which Luke puts into his mouth, to make his hearers comprehend, that God had revealed Himself independently of the ritual forms of the law and the synagogue? Does he not bring into prominence the progressive character of revelation? Do not his words point to a direct repudiation of the outward and temporary form which revelation had assumed under the empire of the law? Never, according to the testimony of the book of Acts, (which thus accords perfectly with the natural progression of ideas as we have been trying to trace it in the previous chapter,) never had such doctrine been taught by any of the twelve. When these were persecuted, it was because they preached Jesus and the resurrection, and called upon His name as that of Messiah; † not because of attacks, overt or covert, on the religious traditions of the people. Had it been otherwise, their cause would soon have been decided, and assuredly Gamaliel, the oracle of the Pharisees—whom the exegetes by a singular caprice persist in regarding as secretly a Christian—would have been the last to wrest them from the hands of their cruel enemies the Sadducees, who sought to kill them on the very ground of their attachment to the beliefs and hopes of the Pharisees.

* John ii. 19.

† Acts iv. 17, and foll.; v. 40.

It is then evident that Stephen suffered martyrdom only because he had publicly proclaimed convictions hostile to the religious feeling of the masses—that is to say, anti-Pharisaic, anti-legal. It is a Pharisee, a disciple of Gamaliel, who presides at his tumultuous execution. A still more significant circumstance is that the last honours were rendered to Stephen, not by circumcised Christians, but by proselyte strangers,* who were therefore already to be found even in Jerusalem, and who, doubtless under the influence of the preaching of this first martyr, had entered into direct relations with the Church, if not with the whole community. The twelve, whom the entire city knew to be the heads of the Christian party, are in no way inculcated. If the martyrdom of Stephen is followed by a general persecution, under which many other members of the Church suffer, it is that the passions of the populace, once stimulated by blood, are never satiated with the first victim. Popular favour is as easily lost as it is quickly gained, and men who saw further than others might in their cruel calculation try to use the excitement of the moment for the complete extermination of the evil.

The persecution which threatened to destroy the newly commenced work, only served to settle it on a basis at once surer and wider. The Christians, driven out of Jerusalem, sought a refuge in the midst of less fanatic populations, and soon found not only more security for themselves, but a broader field to cultivate; and, what was yet more important, with a fuller consciousness of their mission, they gained a stronger assurance of success. The Gospel spread rapidly in the various provinces of Palestine, and even beyond the boundaries of that kingdom, without the active and immediate interposition of the apostles; but these watched the movement with attentive eyes, and accompanied it with their benedictions.† We have seen already how within the narrow circle of the primitive Church, more than one individual, not belonging by birth and religious nationality to the Jewish family, was brought into contact with the new ideas, and sought for baptism; but we

* *Ἄνδρες ἐλλαβεῖς*, Acts viii. 2; comp. x. 2.

† Acts viii. 4, 14, 25; ix. 32.

have also shown that it was only hesitatingly, and almost against their will, that the heads of the mother Church advanced in this direction. It was only yielding, as it were, to a higher power, by which they felt themselves drawn on alike unwittingly and unwillingly, that they had gone so far as, if we may not say to enter on this entirely new path, at least to make individual exceptions to that which they had until now regarded as the natural law of their work. But these scruples, which by the admission of history required no less than new and special miracles, visions, and revelations to remove them, had no existence in the mind of those who, removed by birth and education from the more direct and potent influence of Pharisaic exclusivism, had been brought into acquaintance and sympathy with the Gospel, principally through its essentially new universalist and humanitarian element. Persecution had carried some Christians into Phœnicia, into the island of Cyprus, and as far as Antioch, the brilliant capital of Greco-Asiatic civilization; and while some among them still confined themselves timidly within the humble and narrow sphere of the synagogue,* others, boldly preached the Lord Jesus to the Greeks—that is, to the Gentiles. They would undoubtedly address themselves first to that numerous class of the city populations which had abandoned the mythology of an earlier age and the worship of the Olympic gods, and were seeking better food for their spiritual hunger, whether in a philosophic deism, or in the pious exercises of the synagogue. “The hand of the Lord was with them,” it is said, and a great multitude of the people were turned to Christ. A simple chronological calculation, founded upon the exact indications we have given us in the history, leads us to place this fact prior to the conversion of the centurion of Cæsarea, and it is at all events quite independent of that circumstance. To some obscure Cyrenians and men of Cyprus, friends of the illustrious proto-martyr, justly belongs then the honour of having been the first to break down the barrier which limited the word of God within the sphere of the Israelitish nationality. In their case, no visions, ecstasies,

* Acts xi. 19—21.

or celestial voices were needed to enable them to receive the positive and repeated assurances of the Saviour. Happy themselves to have found the way of salvation, they were eager to make many others partakers in their blessedness, and could not conceive any enhancement of their joy by narrowing the circle of the elect. The effect of this glorious initiative was marvellous. Not only were Christian communities rapidly formed in districts remote from the metropolis, and of which the apostles had had no time to think, but success gave courage to the missionary volunteers. Their religious horizon widened with the geographical; that which had at first been done occasionally and instinctively, was soon carried on with deliberation and method; regular missions were organized,* and true apostolic activity began to develop itself, instead of the mere patient waiting for that which God might be pleased Himself to do. Doubtless the preaching did not lose sight of the Jews; to them first it was everywhere addressed;† but it was nowhere withheld from the Gentiles, who were ever found in the synagogues, and who generally proved the more receptive hearers. This Gentile element soon formed what we may call the centre of gravity in the new Churches, and this may help to explain the growing antipathy of Judaism to a work which it had formerly regarded with a less jealous eye.

In thus receiving Gentiles uncircumcised into the Christian community, a profession of their faith in the person of Jesus Christ was all that was required.‡ There was no idea at first of imposing on them any other conditions. The religious element so far predominated over all other considerations, that the differences of nationality, of ritual practice and social tradition, were all merged in the new principle of unity. In truth, we do not know exactly what were the relations of social life

* Acts xiii. 4; xiv. 27.

† *Ἰουδαίῳ πρῶτον*, Acts xiii. 5, 14; xiv. 1, etc.; comp. Rom. i. 16.

‡ Acts viii. 37. This verse is suppressed in modern critical editions, but it is highly illustrative of the point we are here establishing, and is certainly not untrue to the narrative in which it occurs, though it is very probably not really part of the genuine text.

established in primitive times between the circumcised and un-circumcised members of each community; the one indication given us, namely, that they were accustomed to take meals in common,* is very significant, if we consider the religious practices of the age, and suffices to show that the difficulties of the situation were not insurmountable.

When this state of things became known at Jerusalem, it naturally caused some surprise in that city, and a trusty deputy was at once sent to Antioch to watch the progress of events. Barnabas, who was chosen for this mission, was one of the most distinguished and devoted members of the Church at Jerusalem. He was highly esteemed as a preacher and benefactor of the community; † as a Levite and a man of Cyprus he would naturally inspire confidence both in those who were most strongly attached to the national traditions, and in those who had followed the expansive movement. He repaired to Syria to watch this movement on the spot; ‡ and soon, far from being alarmed by it, supported it with all his strength, stationed himself at Antioch to organize and direct this promising work, and sought as his associate in it a friend who had till now remained in the background, and whose energetic and intelligent co-operation soon caused it to assume extraordinary dimensions. We need not say that we allude to Saul of Tarsus, that Pharisee of the Pharisees, lately miraculously converted to Christ, and destined to occupy so large a place in the history before us. The results of their associated labours were such, that the people of Antioch—that section particularly which was of Latin origin—had their serious attention drawn to it, and the two parties existing within the Church became for the first time clearly distinguishable. The name *Christians*,§

* Gal. ii. 12.

† Acts iv. 36.

‡ Acts xi. 22, and foll.

§ Acts xi. 26. The form of this name, which in its origin must have been a popular *soubriquet*, is clearly Latin, not Greek. [“It is a solemn hour when a new creature receives its name; for the name is the definite sign of existence. It is by its name that an individual or collective entity becomes itself, and is separated from everything else. The formation of

given here to the new sect, which had from this time an existence visibly separate from the body whence it sprang, is alone proof of the change which must have passed over the relations between the disciples and the Jews. The Church, in opening its doors to men uncircumcised, had necessarily closed the doors of the synagogue even against those of its members which had originally belonged to it.

the word "Christian" marks, therefore, the precise date at which the Church of Jesus separated itself from Judaism. For a long time still, the two religions will be confounded; but the confusion will exist only in those countries in which, if I may venture so to speak, the growth of Christianity is arrested."—Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. 236.—ED.]

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONTROVERSY.

AT Jerusalem, at the very gates of the temple, there was as yet no idea of breaking with the past. That which Peter had done at Cæsarea had been sanctioned as an exceptional case, and even thus not without reluctance ; but the mass of the believers saw in that circumstance no ground for a change of conviction as to the obligatory character of the law. In that city there were numbers of men belonging to the Church, all attached to the traditional forms of the religion of their fathers, and cherishing a profound antipathy to the uncircumcised, as an article of their creed no less sacred than the rest. No principle incompatible with this point of view had been presented to them on their admission into the Christian community, and since then no openly universalist preaching had troubled their conscience in relation to it. Nay, more ; in their eyes, the certainty of the fulfilment of the hopes they cherished, and which formed, in fact, the substance of their religion, rested essentially on the legal purity of their individual life and of the particular society to which they had united themselves. They gloried in being the chosen ones of Christ, but they gloried also in being circumcised. This latter glorying was of an older and even more sacred date than the former, and they could not conceive the possibility of the one apart from the other. The smallest relaxation of the Levitical discipline was therefore in the eyes of the Jewish Christian an apostasy.* In this respect, all the rites consecrated by the tradition of the synagogue were of equal value.

* Acts xxi. 21.

The leaders preached by example, and, so far as their influence extended, carried the observance of the prescriptions of orthodox piety even into the most common social relations.* It must be further observed that the question of the connection subsisting between the law and the Gospel, had never been stated or solved from a purely theoretic point of view, for the simple reason that in this sphere it had not been suggested by any requirements of practical life, and the solution which Stephen had been bold enough to give was at once blotted out in his blood.

We can well understand, therefore, that the events transpiring in Syria would excite much attention on the part of the Jerusalem Christians, and would inevitably call forth a protest from them. If it were now deemed right, they argued, thus to ignore the fundamental laws of the holy faith of Israel, while still maintaining the claims and prerogatives of the disciples of Jesus, the Sanhedrim had been justified in crucifying the false prophet.† The Gentiles could not become Christians while refusing to be circumcised; and the Christians, who in spite of that refusal accepted them as brethren, ceased to be Jews—that is, heirs of the promises made to their fathers, and which were the first pledge of salvation. It was necessary formally to break with such a school or to bring its partisans back to other views. The latter method was essayed. Some Christians from Judæa came to Antioch, and sought to enforce there, as a principle, the obligatory character of the law.‡ Their claims were repudiated by the heads of the Hellenist Church. These felt bound to defend their principles, which they knew to be in harmony with the true spirit of the Gospel, and they did not intend to have their work destroyed. As the point under debate was matter of conscience and conviction on both sides, the dispute waxed high and warm. The Christians of Jerusalem found partisans more or less numerous at Antioch, while the heads of the party of innovation necessarily had on their side the proselytes from

* Gal. ii. 12, and foll.

† Comp. Gal. ii. 17.

‡ Acts xv. 1.

paganism. Up to this time, under the intelligent direction of men as enlightened as they were devout, a happy harmony had reigned throughout the whole community. Now the peace of society and of conscience was suddenly disturbed by the preaching of a new doctrine. To the uncircumcised it was said, "You are mistaken in supposing yourselves Christians, the chosen of Christ." To the circumcised it was said, "You compromise your hopes by associating with unbelievers." The Jews, as we can easily conceive, might be very ready to listen to such suggestions. It was certainly not religious indifference, impatience of the legal yoke, which had brought them to the feet of the crucified Saviour; an appeal to the memories of the schools would awaken a ready echo in their hearts, and call forth a serious struggle between the old and the new belief, the divergence of which had not previously struck them. But the Gentiles might well be alarmed. They had embraced Christ in the hope of sharing the promised salvation, and now they were told that they had missed their way; and this decision was pronounced in the name of that which might well appear to them the highest authority in the Church. The ardent defence presented by their leaders doubtless checked defection, but it at the same time provoked passionate and personal recriminations. The dispute might shake the faith of those who had not advanced far enough to weigh for themselves the merits of the case, and to corroborate from their own inner experience, the truth of one or the other statement.

Under these circumstances, it is a good sign that, instead of coming to a violent rupture on the impulse of the moment, the Christians of Antioch conceived the idea of making one last effort to preserve or re-establish peace and unity, by addressing themselves to those who had been Christians long before their own conversion. They desired to know what was the opinion of the apostles at Jerusalem on the matter. Some regarded this simply as the surest and most direct solution of the difficulty; others perhaps attached to it a graver legal importance. Public opinion demanded peace for the community and tranquillity for the conscience. It looked to Paul and his friends, who were at

that time the chief speakers, as the men most capable of securing both, and delegated them to Jerusalem for this purpose. Paul, on his part, acknowledged that the desired end might and ought to be reached by a decision arrived at in Jerusalem. He felt and knew that he was the man to bring matters to a happy conclusion. It was to the interest of the Church and to his own interest that he should go, or rather it was to one and the same interest, that of the truth to which he had devoted himself. His resolution coincided, happily, with the general desire. But we must not for a moment entertain the notion that he went to the metropolis for the purpose of submitting, as to a supreme and final tribunal, the question whether or not he might be permitted to go on receiving Gentiles not circumcised as legitimate members of the Church of Christ. The idea of a human hierarchy, established in the Church to regulate the faith of some by that of others, was altogether alien to his spirit. But the more plain it is that such was not his intèntion, the more obvious is it, also, that he had no fear of being gainsaid by the heads of the mother Church. Had it been otherwise, he would certainly not have taken a course which in such a case could not but make the rupture open and the evil incurable. He cherished, on the contrary, the hope that a personal conference with the apostles would smooth away difficulties, silence objections, and remove doubts. Convinced of the lawfulness of his own views, he could not suppose that the immediate and intimate disciples of Jesus would be found in opposition to him on a question so vital, and that if they had hitherto done nothing to encourage directly the principle he was anxious to assert, it was less from want of will than lack of occasion. This hope, however, was not yet a certainty. The apostles had given no positive declaration which might make it possible at present to prejudge their decision; the persons recently come from Jerusalem spoke and acted as if they were certain not to be disavowed by the Church of that city. It was necessary, therefore, to decide the question; the apostles must be led to declare themselves categorically on the point. The event proved that Paul was not mistaken in the hope that his

colleagues would stand by him; but it also proved that the uncertainty from which he longed to be freed at any cost, had a real foundation, and that, if he had not taken this step, a very grave peril would soon have arisen in this direction. Long after, he speaks of that uncertainty, and narrates in one of his epistles* how a secret apprehension troubled him as he made his journey. He does not intend to say that if the Twelve had declared against him, all his work would have been destroyed, and must have been repudiated, as it were, by its author; but if things remained in the state into which the intervention of the Pharisees at Antioch had brought them, or if the opposition of these men were upheld by the heads of the Church at Jerusalem, it was to be feared the Churches of the Dispersion might be completely overthrown by a schism which could no longer be avoided, and the labour Paul had expended in founding a truly universal Church might be lost, or rather might end in the creation of two rival Churches. Nor was this at all an imaginary possibility.

Paul therefore went up to Jerusalem, with a few of his most intimate associates, to have an interview with the men who exercised at this period the predominant personal influence over the Christian community of that city, and who were generally regarded as the pillars of the Church. He contemplated simply a private interview.† It would never occur to him that he should plead his cause before a great popular assembly, constituted as the competent and legitimate judge in such a matter. We know well that many superficial readers of the apostolic history choose to speak of such an august assembly as a sort of democratic council, supposed to have been held on this occasion, and before which the apostles delivered themselves, in due course, of learned arguments adapted to carry the vote in favour of their own principles. We have elsewhere proved ‡ that such a course of proceedings was absolutely impossible, and is directly contrary to the testimony of the witnesses

* Gal. ii. 2.

† *Kar'idlav*, Gal. ii. 2.

‡ "Nouvelle Revue," Dec. 1858; Jan. 1859.

appealed to in its support. We shall not enter here into a critical discussion of the facts, but confine ourselves to that which bears most directly on the history of theology. The interview took place, but not as Paul had desired or expected. He could not come to an understanding with the principal personages without the interference of others in the matter. Nor can we wonder at this. The arrival of the deputation from Antioch was immediately known throughout the Christian world of Jerusalem. It was understood that the visitors would make some stay in the city, and many hastened to bid them welcome. They were the objects of general interest and curiosity, and this curiosity was not untinged, on the part of the strictly orthodox, with a shade of suspicion and even hostility. When Paul and Barnabas spoke of the success of their labours, there were some who, holding the rigid principles of Pharisaism, remonstrated against the reception into the Church of men uncircumcised.* The innovating strangers were jealously watched, pursued, and mobbed. The interviews they repeatedly held with the apostles were disturbed and constantly interrupted by the intrusion of visitors whose presence could have been well dispensed with. Paul with one graphic touch sets before us the whole situation.† The apostles, he says, were easily led to share my views. "I had with me Titus, a Greek and a pagan by birth, and not circumcised." They did not require him to be circumcised. But there were false brethren who crept in unawares and without being summoned to our conferences. It was these intruders who made the discussion hot and prolonged. They came in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ, that they might bring us into bondage to their legalism. Let us note well the very expressive word used by the apostle: "They came to *spy out*"—they came to see what was passing between the apostles and the strangers; they were suspicious; some plot was in process; they must be on their guard against novelties, and prevent any resolution being carried by which the Church might be compromised. They were

* Acts xv. 4, 5.

† Gal. ii. 3, and foll.

evidently distrustful of that Peter who had already once taken a false step. The debate waxed warm, for these intruders made peremptory demands, and laid down their injunctions with a tone of authority. They claimed obedience pure and simple, and they knew that Peter was a man who might be intimidated by the violence of party spirit.* The contest was protracted, for Paul hints that he had to withstand long and steadily; he boasts that he did not yield for an instant, which proves that the struggle itself was not over in a moment, and was not confined to an objection modestly made and easily removed. The event indeed proves that Paul was right in repairing himself to head-quarters, for Peter and James, left to themselves under the pressure of such influences from without, might have jeopardized the cause of the Church at large, in a conjuncture the full importance of which they did not as yet realize. The Spirit of God and of Christ, watching over His Church, made use at this time of the mouth of the youngest disciple, to quicken the memories and principles which lay dormant as yet in the minds of his elder brethren. The apostles, whom Paul hoped to have with him, and desired to call his friends, were not altogether free in their movements. However deeply we may suppose them to have been imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, it was yet scarcely possible for them to exert the controlling influence over bodies of men accustomed from their very childhood to follow the lead of the legalists, the men of form and tradition. On questions of theology, too, the latter were more than a match for them, and the artless simplicity of their faith was soon outstripped and entangled by the vigorous logic of the Judaizing schoolmen. The powerful utterances of Paul, however, brought to bear on the cavillers of the synagogue, soon carried conviction to all who listened to his appeal with an enlightened judgment and an upright heart.

So far, our remarks on this first controversy commenced at Antioch and carried for decision to Jerusalem, must have tended to give our readers the impression that it was not, strictly speaking, a theological question under debate, but a social and practical

* Gal. ii. 12.

point at issue. At Antioch and elsewhere it was said to the Gentiles, "You need not receive circumcision in order to share in the benefits of the new covenant." This was said in repeated instances, freely and as a matter of course, while at Jerusalem it had been said but once, and then very reluctantly. Doubtless the principle was there surely underlying that single fact, and it would infallibly assert itself; but this does not prove that everywhere and always, and in the minds of all men, the isolated instance would be accepted as the assertion of a general principle. The historical accounts which we possess of what transpired at Jerusalem fully justify the impression just conveyed. At Antioch, the community of *Christians* consisted in great part of men not circumcised; at Jerusalem, all were of the circumcision. These are the facts. What are the true relations between them? This is the question, and for the time the whole question. We shall see that it might be answered without going back to what we now call, following Paul himself, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and especially that there was not even any suggestion as yet of proclaiming the law to be obsolete. He who should have raised this question at Jerusalem, even only in the form of doubtful inquiry, would have called forth a general cry of indignation, and drawn upon himself the charge of apostasy.* If Paul had had any idea of promulgating such principles, he might have spared himself the toil of the journey. But, we repeat once again, the question was not a theoretical one having reference to the law, but simply the practical one of deciding whether circumcised Christians should accept uncircumcised believers as brethren, or whether the latter must be constrained to receive circumcision before being admitted into full fellowship with the Church.

Paul, in his narrative, is so fully impressed with the thought that at Jerusalem this was the sole point under deliberation, and that the fact in question presented no difficulty at all to the one party, while to the other it was full of stumbling blocks, that, strictly speaking, the larger part of his discourse refers not to the point itself, but to the person of Titus, his companion,

* Acts xxi. 21.

who was the living expression of the point at issue. "*I went up to Jerusalem . . . and not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised*"!* Not even the man whom they had within their grasp, whom they could have compelled to submit, or expelled him at once from the Church! Reasoning *à fortiori* then, the apostles could not have passed more coercive measures upon Christians a hundred leagues away than upon Titus in their midst! We see and feel at once that the discussion between Paul and the apostles cannot have encountered any very grave difficulties. They came at once to a practical understanding on the matter of fact. Here was Titus, the Greek, Paul's disciple and fellow-labourer, a man devoted heart and soul to the cause of the Lord, whose efforts had been visibly blessed, and whom they could not refuse to receive as a brother. The case was parallel with that of the centurion of Caesarea. But because of false brethren who crept in to spy out their liberty in Christ, there ensued a hot and unhappy discussion, which brought out the deep-rooted antipathy of a certain school, for all that did not come within their own narrow sphere. "*But the apostles . . . those who seemed to be somewhat, (Paul being still the speaker) laid nothing more upon me.*" "I might therefore be satisfied," he implies, "that circumcision was not imposed upon the Gentiles as a condition additional to baptism; on the contrary, it was expressly agreed that I should continue to do as I had done." The apostles are thus clearly distinguished from the *false brethren*. The latter had not given way, and their persistent opposition would continue to agitate and trouble the Church by word and deed. But those at least whom opinion held in highest esteem were happily agreed upon the possibility of remaining a united body, without the exclusion of any.

It is important for us to understand the grounds on which Paul sustained his demand, and the motives which decided the apostles to fall in with his views, to recognize his work, and to give it their good wishes for the future. Our information is very explicit on this point. The question had presented itself

* For an excellent discussion of this rather difficult passage, see *Jowett* on Galatians, *in loc.*—Ed.

as a matter of fact ; the evidence brought forward was historical, material, circumstantial, not theological. Paul does not read his colleagues a lecture on theology ; he simply narrates his labours and successes ; * he gives them an account of the extraordinary events which had taken place in the latter days in various provinces, more or less distant from Jerusalem, where none of the apostles had dared to set foot. He tells them of his journeyings, his preachings, his adventures, the miracles attending his course, of the eagerness of the Gentiles to receive the Gospel, of the hostility of the Jews, of the Churches founded by him, of the retrograde movement of polytheism,—things for the most part new and unheard-of to men who remained quietly at home, waiting the second coming of the Lord instead of going forth to meet Him on the grand highway of human history. Such a picture, painted with the vivid colours of enthusiasm, and presented with the eloquence of a generous devotion, could not but produce a great impression upon all,—even upon those who had come with anything but a favourable predisposition towards Paul. This impression would be deepened by the position in which the Church at Jerusalem found itself at the time ; the surrounding population began to manifest a jealousy and more or less overt hostility towards it, which rendered its standing in the city much less easy and assured than it had once been. There could not but be consolation and encouragement in the thought, that the extension of the cause of the Gospel without, would balance the growing resistance at its centre, in that domain of Judaism which the Church had formerly hoped to assimilate completely to itself, but over which it seemed already to have lost its attractive power. On these considerations, the apostles, seeing by unquestionable evidence that God sanctioned and blessed the work of missions to the Gentiles, held out the hand of fellowship to Paul, and left him free to carry on his work without restriction. In all this there is no trace of a discussion of principles, or of a debate on the binding force of the law in connection with the Gospel.

But, it is said, is not such a discussion clearly contained in

* Acts xv. 12 ; Gal. ii. 7, and foll.

the discourse which the author of the Book of Acts puts into the mouth of Peter? * It is true that the speaker commences by placing himself at the standpoint which we have described as common to all the members of the conference. He simply recalls the conversion of the centurion Cornelius, in order to vindicate in a general manner the baptism of Gentiles not circumcised. But he subsequently characterizes the law as a yoke which none even of the Jews themselves had been able to bear, and sets in contrast with it salvation by grace through Jesus Christ. Have we not here an exposition of the Gospel principle, an essentially theological discussion? Such it must indeed appear, since modern criticism has discovered in it a palpable proof that the history has been tampered with by the narrator, who has attributed to Peter words which could only have been spoken by Paul! But, on a closer examination, we fail to find in these words of Peter any declaration of the decadence of the law in the sense of the Pauline theology, as we shall come to apprehend this presently. What, in effect, does he say? Affirmatively, his words assert that salvation is by the grace of Christ; negatively, they maintain that it would be wrong to exact from others that which even the Jews found hard of observance. Faith in Christ is thus made the condition of salvation, but this declaration Peter had made continually from the very commencement of his ministry, † without any consultation with Paul, and not one Judæo-Christian had parted from him on this ground. With reference to the law, he does not say a word here or elsewhere to mark its transitory character. It would be even easy to show that no such thought was in his mind. In fact, the words of Peter are a reminiscence of a saying of the Lord Jesus, ‡ in which He characterizes the precepts of the law and of tradition as burdens heavy and hard to bear, which the Pharisees were eager to impose on others, but not at all anxious to carry themselves. Jesus however adds the counsel, "Do ye after their words, and not after their works."

* Acts xv. 7, and foll.

† Acts ii. 36, 38; iii. 19, and foll.; iv. 11, and foll.; x. 42, 43.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 4; Luke xi. 46.

Peter, having in his mind the warning words of the Master, cannot have meant to say that Jesus Himself released His disciples from the fulfilment of legal duties. Nay, more; he affirms that *our fathers*, the Israelites of preceding generations, were not able to endure the yoke of the law. Does he intend at all to imply that these might therefore have dispensed with its observance, and would he thus contradict the express language of Scripture, which in a hundred passages blames them for their disobedience? No; his words convey only the consciousness of constraint and oppression, of weakness and fear, under which the pious Israelites always groaned in view of the numberless duties of ritual observance and of minute detail, which they felt to be necessary, and yet were in constant dread of neglecting. This burden, this constant pressure wearied them, and impeded their realization of the holy joy of heart, which should be the heritage of every faithful servant of God. Paul in many a passage, recalling his past experiences, describes this feeling in a manner deeply pathetic and profoundly true. It is of this he is thinking when he speaks of the *bondage* of the law, and makes it the basis of one of his most beautiful and suggestive Gospel teachings. Now Paul was not the first or the last to experience this feeling, he was only the first to bring it into direct and close relation with a theological principle, of which we find as yet no trace in the discourse of Peter. Peter has no thought whatever of shaking off the yoke of which he speaks; he bows under it, and will continue to carry it. He feels, indeed, that he cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, but he does not therefore hold himself absolved from its full observance. Now the law was at the same time essentially a national institution, and the idea that it could not well be imposed on strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, is not so singular that we should be startled or surprised to find it expressed by an Israelite convinced of the Divine origin of that law, and of its perpetually binding character. After all, Peter, in speaking as we believe him to have spoken, does not say one word which he had not already said after the conver-

sion of the centurion of Cæsarea. He had baptized Cornelius without circumcising him, and yet he had no thought at that time of repudiating altogether the law of circumcision. He is still faithful to his antecedents. Since God, he says, by many evident signs and tokens, has marked His willingness to admit into the kingdom and into the peace of Christ, not only circumcised Jews, but just and devout men of other nations,* what are we that we should resist God,† by imposing on these converts, conditions which God Himself does not demand?

* Acts x. 34, and foll.

† Περᾶξετε, Acts xv. 10.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONCILIATION.

WE have shown in the previous chapter that the apostles, in endeavouring to solve the difficulty arising out of the presence in the Churches of a growing number of uncircumcised strangers, did not appeal at all to what we, in our day, should call abstract principles. They did not start from the great axioms of evangelical theology, as we shall find them shortly after defined by some of their number, but rather confined themselves to noting carefully the intentions of Providence, as evidenced by facts of which they had been the witnesses and in part the instruments. These purely practical lessons, grasped and interpreted by the spirit of piety and charity which the Saviour had instilled, and which was powerful enough to overcome national prejudices, sufficed to lead to a provisional solution of the question, which they might regard as at once the easiest and most legitimate. They gave the hand of fellowship to Paul and his companions, and parted in peace, dividing the work between them, and agreeing that the mission to the Gentiles should be carried on, as before, by the already existing organization at Antioch, subject only to some reservations to which we shall presently allude. This result of the conferences deserves our thoughtful attention, specially on account of its extreme simplicity, and the absence of every theological element, properly so called, whether in the motives which led to it, or in the arrangements to which it gave its sanction.

That which first of all strikes us is the division of labour agreed upon among the apostles. They will continue to devote

themselves to the work of evangelization, with this understanding—that while Paul and Barnabas shall go to the Gentiles, Peter and John shall carry on their labours among the Jews. At first sight we might be tempted to think that this arrangement was made on simple geographical considerations, for the more rapid and effective extension of the work; and it has been often so regarded. But this supposition is untenable in view of the actual facts attested both by tradition and by the text of the New Testament itself.* We very soon perceive that the division of labour is made exclusively in consideration of the religious sphere to be brought under operation. The one party were to evangelize among the Gentiles, the other among the Jews, without distinction of place.† The motives assigned for this arrangement forbid any other explanation. It was acknowledged that God had specially committed to Paul “the gospel of the uncircumcision,” as to Peter “the gospel of the circumcision.” This was testified by the success obtained in the two spheres, or, as it is said again, by the “grace given to Paul,” that is to say, by the special mission which he had received, and his peculiar aptitude in its fulfilment.‡ All were not conscious of the same calling, or the same fitness for it; they did not feel themselves moved by inspiration, so to speak, to found unhesitatingly entire Churches of men uncircumcised. A secret repugnance kept the apostles at Jerusalem, away from the tables of the uncircumcised; they were not prepared even to eat with them; how, then, could they have found moral courage to preside over Churches formed of this section of the population? They would not indeed rebel against the manifest will of Providence, but they were nothing loth to admit that to Paul, and not to them, was given the call to go to the Gentiles. The fact that Paul constantly speaks of himself as the apostle of the Gentiles,§ would alone prove, if proof were wanting, that

* See, for example, James i. 1; 1 Peter i. 1; and Rev. i. 9.

† Gal. ii. 7, and foll.

‡ Comp. Rom. i. 5.

§ Rom. xi. 13; xv. 16, and foll.; Gal. i. 16; Eph. iii. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 1, etc.

this diversity of vocation was fully recognized. It became, then, a settled and acknowledged thing, that the Gentiles should be received into the Church without circumcision, while the Christian converts from Judaism should continue to observe the rites and precepts of the Mosaic law.

This is the second important point arising out of the conferences of which we have spoken. The Gentiles were indeed exempted from circumcision; they were not to be troubled by having any burden laid upon them; * but it was well understood that this exemption referred to the Gentiles only. Not a single Christian at Jerusalem dreamed of claiming for himself, or his, the benefit of a liberty which he would, on the contrary, have rejected with horror, † even had it been offered him. On this point James, the most influential leader of the Church at Jerusalem, speaks with perfect clearness his own mind and that of his colleagues, who were disposed to enter into fellowship with the faithful of other communions. Of the circumcised Christians, he says, in effect: On these we have nothing to enjoin, ‡ for Moses is read in the synagogues every Sabbath day; they know therefore what they have to do. Thus the obligation of the law on Judæo-Christians is expressly maintained. § For the Gentiles, there might be a new commandment; for the Jews, there was still the law of Moses. If there could be the slightest doubt of the justness of this interpretation, the course of the history would dispel it. ||

We have spoken of the arrangement made by the apostles as one of separation. This it really was, not only because separate spheres were assigned to each party, but also because, as a natural consequence of this fact, and of the ascetic or ecclesiastical conditions accepted on either side, the two ele-

* Παρενοχλεῖν—ἀπιριθεσθαι, Acts xv. 19, 28; Gal. ii. 6.

† Acts xxi. 21.

‡ Acts xv. 21.

§ Or might he not have meant that to enforce the obligations resting on Jewish Christians to observe the law of Moses—if those obligations still existed—was not the concern of the Christian Church, for *Moses is read*, etc. ?—ED.

|| Acts xvi. 20, and foll.

ments of the Christian society would not readily intermingle. That which Paul had anxiously sought to avoid, became inevitable in the future. When it had been once formally recognized that the Gentiles should be released from an obligation which remained sacred to the Jews, there was no means of bringing about a perfect union, a real fusion of the two nationalities. The compromise was inadequate and fruitless. It must soon yield to the pressure of positive principles, because principles, even if mere prejudices, are stronger than partial accommodations. Every one at the Jerusalem conference had the most honest wish for peace and concord; but sufficient account was not taken of the difference between five devout men, all united in the essentials of their piety, and *all circumcised*, (not arousing, that is to say, any timorous scruples among themselves,) and the mass of their followers somewhat less zealous perhaps on essential points, with whom the observance or the absence of circumcision turned the scale. The effect would have been the same if, according to traditional opinion, the apostles had only designed to maintain circumcision provisionally, and in order not to shock Jewish prejudices. In any case, the separation was inevitable, if, as we gather from the texts, circumcision was expressly declared still obligatory upon the Jews.

But if the Jerusalem conclave explicitly maintained the compulsory character of the law as far as Jewish Christians were concerned, not merely as an outward and temporary concession, until their religious education should be completed, but as a dogmatic truth and for an unlimited time, how could they absolve the Gentiles from its observance? Or, if these could be exempted from it without detriment to their character and their hopes as Christians, why hold the Jews bound by it? We see that the partial dispensation thus decided on was not the carrying out of a definite principle, but an accommodation to circumstances, a middle way out of the difficulty—an expedient, in short, necessitated, on the one hand, by the evidence of facts, or by an instinctive feeling not yet fully confessed; on the other hand, by the ascendancy of a prejudice so much the

more irresistible on the lips of some, that it was latently present in the minds of all.

This leads us to say a word on the subsidiary conditions imposed, by the advice of James, on the Gentiles who desired baptism, conditions which were designed to be a sort of counterpoise to the dispensation granted.* They referred, as we know, to abstinence from meats offered to idols and from blood, from the flesh of strangled animals and from *fornication*. What was involved in these injunctions? why were these points and no others insisted on? why was there this tenacity about things which appear to us in our day perfectly indifferent, while circumcision and other fundamental laws of the traditional faith of the Jews were abandoned? What weight must be attached to such a decision? Again, how comes a moral precept of the highest importance to be thus placed on a par with prescriptions which the Christian conscience has long since ceased to hold binding? All these questions are capable of a ready reply if we examine them by the torch of history. The proposition of James and the resolution of his colleagues amounted simply to this—that the Gentiles should be placed on the same footing as those who were called *Proselytes of the Gate*. These were persons who, without undergoing circumcision, attended the synagogues and took part in the religious exercises of the Jews. To admit of their entrance, and yet not to run any risk of defiling themselves by contact with them, the Jewish doctors had established certain rules or conditions,† which were called the *precepts of Noah*, referring to a humanitarian and universal code anterior to the special law of Israel. The number of these precepts had been finally fixed at seven, namely, the prohibition of idolatry, blasphemy, bloodshed, uncleanness, theft, and of flesh eaten with the blood, with submission enjoined to the Jewish authority. It was obviously not needful for the apostles on this occasion to go through the whole enumeration of these precepts. For instance, it was

* Acts xv. 20, 29.

† These are found enumerated and discussed in the Talmud, “Sanhedrim,” vii., foll. 56; and in Maimonides, “Tract. Melachim,” ix. 1.

superfluous for them to forbid to Christians idolatry strictly so called, blasphemy, murder, and theft. Nor was there any need to speak of deference to Jewish authorities, to men living in a sphere altogether apart from the political society of Judæa. On the other hand, the precept concerning idolatry had received in practice a more rigorous explanation, and now included the prohibition of meats that had been used in a pagan sacrifice, even though those partaking of the meat had had nothing to do with the idol service; it was under this form that this article was severely observed in the apostolic age.* In the same way, the prohibition of eating with the blood was more rigorously defined by its express application to the flesh of animals, with the blood in them at the moment of death. Lastly, there remains the article touching fornication. On this point, the rabbinical texts do not allow us to suppose that the apostles, having in view the extreme looseness of morals in pagan society, thus sought to impress upon their new brethren the truth that from the Christian point of view, chastity is a cardinal duty. It has been repeatedly remarked that between this precept, thus understood, and the rest, there is a radical difference, and a difficulty has always been felt about this seeming disparity. It should be borne in mind, however, that the apostles were not presenting here a full catalogue of Christian duties, but that the points before us were decided upon by the legalists of the synagogue. It is obvious, then, that the matter must be regarded from an essentially Jewish standpoint. Now paganism was not so severe and exclusive as the Mosaic law upon the definition to be given of fornication, and within certain degrees of consanguinity the conjugal relation was permitted by the Gentiles, while it was prohibited as an abomination by the Jews.

In view of these facts, established by the history of the Judaism of that time, we find it impossible to admit that the resolutions passed at Jerusalem were designed by their authors only to meet a temporary necessity; we maintain that the

* 1 Cor. viii. 10, 11; Rev. ii. 14, 20.

apostles had no option but to lay down such principles and declare them absolutely binding.* There is not a word in all that they say on this occasion to make us suppose they spoke with mental reservation as to the future. The fact is that their successors for generations shared their views and held themselves bound by their decision. The usages of a part of the Christian Church relating to blood and the flesh of strangled animals, and the regulations of the canon law, indeed of the civil legislation, as to forbidden degrees of consanguinity in our own day, prove that a very serious view has been taken of what some theologians have been pleased to regard as a passing compromise, a concession made to a prejudice with which there was no real sympathy.

On the other hand, we shall have much difficulty in discovering in a system of evangelical theology the point or the principle on which the prohibition of the use of certain meats could be sustained. There is no sequence, no theoretic connection, between the declaration that men can be saved without circumcision, and the aversion manifested towards those accustomed to eat the flesh of strangled beasts. The method adopted at Jerusalem for cementing a union between heterogeneous elements, in which the traditional ideas still predominated over the new views, was then the natural result of the actual condition of things, not the conscientious expression of a principle arrived at by reflection or sustained on a higher understanding of the Gospel. But if Judaism thus kept its hold in the heart of the Church, we have yet no sufficient ground for characterizing as Judaizers the authors of the plan of conciliation; we rather find in it a fresh reason for exonerating those who could not, with the measure of power possessed by them, accomplish that which even the genius of Paul failed fully to achieve. If the latter, whose purpose was always steadfast from the day he first discerned the end to be attained, could not succeed in directly implanting evangelical truth in soil not as yet sufficiently prepared for it, and was compelled to leave to future ages the task of dis-

* *Ἐπιναγκες*, Acts xv. 28.

covering the breadth and length of its application, we have certainly no right to reproach those who went before him in the work, that in their simple piety, itself circumscribed within a narrower range, they should have failed to raise the views of their contemporaries even to their own standard.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RISE OF THEOLOGY.

THE course taken by the apostles with a view to preserve harmony among the various elements composing the Church, was therefore based rather upon considerations of social expediency than upon theological principles. They yielded to the current of events, and obeyed a sort of moral necessity. They could not but recognize instinctively that it would be rebellion against the will of God to persist in excluding from the community those whom the Lord had so manifestly called and owned. But this conviction was rather forced upon them by facts, than arrived at as the result of reasoning and examination of the essential principles of the Gospel; it was not yet *theology*. We must again beg our readers to bear in mind the true meaning of that term as defined in the earlier pages of this volume. Theology is a scientific estimate of religious facts; it deals with principles, weighs arguments, deduces consequences; it does not create ideas. The religion of Christ is anterior to Christian theology. We have hitherto examined the former only; we have not yet entered upon the latter, though the history of theology forms the real subject of our book. We shall therefore now call attention to its commencement, for we have reached the age, or, to speak more accurately, the stage, when Christian thought began to develop itself, when intellectual effort was added to the simple faith of feeling and conscience, and men sought to render an account of the spiritual facts to which experience testified, and of the historical facts which formed their basis.

No attentive reader of the New Testament would now dispute the fact, almost ignored by our fathers, that Christian theology originated in an examination of the relations of the Gospel to the law, that it was born, so to speak, out of the inevitable conflict between the old ideas and the new. In its essence this antagonism was as old as the teaching of Jesus, which perpetually came into collision with the spirit of the synagogue; and if the disciples had been able to rise at once to the level of their Master, that which we may call the task of theology would have commenced with the first days of the Church. But we have seen that their views and their apostolic activity were directed first of all to another point of the religious horizon, which permitted them to strengthen their convictions and exercise their new ministry before entering on a path for the duties of which their strength would have been at first inadequate. Providence, in its benign wisdom, would give the young Church the time necessary to prepare it for an ordeal as difficult and trying as that of weaning a child. Nay, more, it led to this ordeal by means of a series of concrete facts, that could be apprehended by the least cultivated minds, and appealed to the feelings and to common sense, rather than by means of theoretic teaching, which would have had no more chance of success, than had the pathetic, practical words of the Lord Jesus Himself.*

Let us now enter into some detail to show how theories came to be unconsciously built upon facts, as minds which had originally no inclination for more or less abstract reflection, were led as a matter of necessity to sift and weigh both that which they had accepted as simple matter of faith, and that which presented itself now for the first time on their mental horizon. Some have disputed our right to speak of theology within the sphere of the apostolic teaching; and undoubtedly if theology is regarded as a purely theoretic study of tran-

* Every new movement of Divine revelation has taken its departure from concrete facts. The "idea" is present in a Divine act, before it is the object, through the illumination of the Holy Ghost, of human intuition.—ED.

scendental truths, we should be the last to say that the apostles and their contemporaries were theologians. But if it is allowable and even necessary to take this term in a wider sense, as we defined it at our outset, then not only shall we discover in the inner circle and surroundings of the men (whose immortal work we are considering) the beginnings of Christian theology; but, what is more, we shall find there models which the Church has too often neglected while wandering in the maze of sterile speculation, and placing a deep gulf between the general interests of the community and the concerns of scientific theology,—two elements which in apostolic Christianity were never disjoined.

We have just seen how the apostles assembled at Jerusalem sought to satisfy at once two opposite requirements, two demands apparently incompatible. One of these demands was made on behalf of the law and of its absolute authority, as recognized by all those who had been brought up within the sphere of Judaism; the other was a claim for emancipation from that same law, made on behalf of those who had never hitherto been subject to its yoke. A way out of the difficulty was found, not by laying down in the name of the Gospel one uniform principle for all believers, but by sanctioning the division of Christians into two categories, according to their origin, granting to each party the privilege it claimed. As a practical expedient, this decision might suffice for the moment; but as a matter of principle it became the starting-point of further and far more important discussions. In fact, in admitting that the law was still obligatory on some, there was an indirect confirmation of the opinion that it ought to be so on all, since Messianic hopes rested on the law as their basis and premise. The claims of a consistent and rigorous Judaism were therefore in no way lowered by this compromise, dictated by the love of peace. On the other hand, the same hopes being recognized as legitimate and just, in spite of the dispensation granted to the Gentiles from legal observances, a broad and large concession was implicitly made, and the law could not but be judged to be essentially superfluous for all, since it

had been pronounced to be so for some. As we have already said, logic is an imperious and despotic power, and never pauses midway. It was therefore this very compromise made for the sake of peace, this formal attempt at conciliation, which opened the arena of theological debate; and if the discussion of principles did not assume at once a public, popular, and literary form, it very rapidly took important proportions in the thoughtful minds of both parties.

The fact in itself, so vaguely defined as yet, that there was in the religion of Christ something new and foreign to the law, something that must be added to the old forms, if these were still persistently retained, which might indeed ultimately supersede these altogether,—this fact, dimly discerned from the earliest days of the Church, began to take more definite shape in the minds of men, after the events narrated in the preceding chapters. The very conversion of the Gentiles was in itself a token of the presence of this new element; their admission into the community, if it did not prove that that element was already recognized as the principal thing, at least called to it the attention of those who had almost unwittingly obeyed in this instance the impulse of a truth which made its power felt before its claims were fully understood. Let us try, then, to determine precisely what was this new element, the growing recognition of which led to what we may call the rise of Christian theology.

We have seen on the very threshold of this history how John the Baptist promised that very shortly a baptism of the Spirit should take the place of the baptism administered by himself. We have seen Jesus subsequently appropriating this promise, and with a more definite meaning reiterating it solemnly in His last interview with His disciples.* We call to mind the Pentecostal scenes, in which this promise found for the first time a visible fulfilment upon the assembled multitude of disciples, who in the new power and ecstasy with which they were filled, recognized at once the descent of the Spirit of God, to inaugurate the new order of things predicted

* John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13; xx. 22; Acts i. 5, and foll.

by the prophets.* They were afterwards witnesses of the same facts in the case of the converts at Samaria and Cæsarea,† and the later reports brought from all parts by the mouth of the missionaries who had gone through distant provinces, gave increasing confirmation to their joyful assurance. The baptism of the Spirit was henceforward a fact, a reality. At first, doubtless, and often afterwards, the disciples looked for outward signs discernible by the bodily eye, to verify the presence of the inward grace. They gathered confidence from the extraordinary manifestations which sometimes accompanied conversions;‡ they watched with delight the prophetic ecstasy, and listened to the unknown tongues, the inspired utterances, such as had not been heard for centuries, which fell now from the lips of inspired speakers more numerous that had adorned all the past history of Israel.§ Even women|| shared in a privilege which became every day less rare. Soon, however, they learned to discern the action of the Spirit, not only in exceptional and extraordinary facts, but in all the efforts made for the advancement of the kingdom of God, as well as in all the impulses of the soul sanctified by faith in Christ and love to man.¶ The new life of which the true believers were conscious in themselves from that decisive moment which they called conversion,—the life of devotion in the soul, of holy joy and humble resignation, the life of brotherly love changing the whole face of human society by transforming it into one great family,—was not this the effect of the presence of that Divine Spirit? Now it is evident that in promising this gift of the Spirit as an assured privilege to all who should come to Christ,** the apostles, without being clearly conscious of it, laid down an entirely new principle as the very basis of the newly-

* Acts ii. 16, and foll.

† Acts viii. 15, and foll. ; x. 44, and foll. ; xi. 15, and foll. ; xv. 8.

‡ Acts x. 44 ; xix. 6.

§ Acts ii. 17, 33 ; iv. 8 ; vii. 55 ; xi. 27 ; xiii. 1 ; xv. 32, etc. ; comp. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28 ; Eph. iv. 11.

|| Acts ii. 17 ; xxi. 9.

¶ Acts iv. 31 ; vi. 3, and foll. ; ix. 17 ; xi. 24 ; xiii. 2, 52, etc.

** Acts ii. 38, etc.

formed Church; they fixed, so to speak, its centre of gravity at a point beyond the circle of traditional legality, and of the more or less fanatical and materialistic hopes of the synagogue. We do not say that all the members of the Church recognized this spiritualizing tendency; we would rather say that the greater part even of those who came under its influence, and who finally aided in establishing its supremacy, only awoke slowly and gradually to a perception of the essential difference between conceptions of Jewish origin, and these new ideas, or, as we may rather call them, these evangelical facts, which were not precepts to be learned or rites to be observed, but experiences only understood by the subjects of them. And it is just this discovery of the fact that Christianity introduced something new, this exercise of reflection upon the respective characters of the two religious spheres, which we venture to call the commencement of the apostolic theology.

From the very outset, men must have noted in this new element various phases and effects, standing in close connection with each other, and yet corresponding to different aspects of the religious nature of man and of the ancient constitution of Israel. We shall note first the fact, to which we have alluded above, of the new moral power acquired by the believers from the moment of their conversion. And by this new power we mean not simply greater aptitude for the performance of everyday duties, but a noble strength of will, a holy enthusiasm, a joyous zeal for that which is good such as they had never known while duty appeared to them only as a hard commandment, a burden heavy to bear, and while its accomplishment imprinted the stamp of bondage upon the faces even of the most earnest and scrupulous.* Many Christians may have rejoiced in the fulness of blessedness resulting from this metamorphosis, without thinking deeply about its origin; but doubtless many a one also would reflect upon the cause and principle of the change, and would perceive that his relations with God were placed on a new footing, and that he had derived from this new condition something which the popular Messianic hopes

* Matt. vi. 16; xxiii. 4.

had failed to impart,—a sense of present gladness as great as it was novel.

But they could not pause at this general reflection, which was itself rather an experience than a principle; out of it arose the conviction of a second fact, of more importance to our purpose, since it necessarily led to a direct step in advance in Christian theology. The new relation of which we have spoken was evidently an individual relation between the believing man and his God. Now we must remember that such a relation had no existence in the religious sphere of Judaism, which was a purely and essentially national institution, the members of which had rights and duties only as belonging to the great whole. To the Jew there was one worship, one morality, one faith, we might even say one God, only because there was one law alike for all, antecedent to all, and on the plan of which each life was fashioned before it had, so to speak, the power of choice. Here all was different. Here were individuals with their various dispositions, with their differing degrees of knowledge and intelligence, more or less in subjection to that stern and severe law, more or less instructed in the history of their people or in the promises of their God. At some moment, which was not necessarily the same for all, on a special and remarkable occasion, or after a long period of preparation which memory could scarcely retrace,—in short, in some way not fixed and uniform,—a word struck them, a voice appealed to them. A voice from within responded, a voice which they had not heard before, and soon they found themselves standing on new ground, with a horizon stretching far beyond the court of the temple, and with a new vital energy sustained and developed independently of the Jewish calendar, and without the intervention of the priest at the altar. The more conversion and faith were recognized as the essential elements of the Gospel, the more did mere hope become subsidiary; the more also grew the individual principle, the very sap and marrow of true evangelical theology; and as it increased in strength, it developed in the domain of thought, the new powers

of a life which had already begun almost unconsciously in the heart.*

Thus Christianity, circumscribed at first within the narrow limits of a people's hopes, fixed upon a contemporary historic fact and a person in whom Messianic expectations seemed to centre, began gradually and insensibly to attach itself mainly to the facts of individual religious experience. Its theology, which in its first stages had been but a borrowed science, a lingering tradition of Judaism, became its own from the moment that it transferred its chief attention to the domain of individual salvation. But what is still more essentially noteworthy is, that by this change of direction the person of Christ came to occupy a place of far higher importance than in the primitive conception of Christianity. In that, Christ appeared as the future Founder of a triumphant and glorious kingdom, as destined to accomplish a vast social and moral revolution in the world, by an irresistible but essentially material and palpable power. From the new point of view His influence was recognized as more immediate, though less observable; it was *seen* less, but *felt* more; and, better still, its beneficent, consoling, salutary effects were realized without the dread of tumults, which were to precede and accompany His second appearing. Now, at length, all that tradition had to tell of His touching and beautiful but too short life on earth, acquired a present and immediate importance, and formed, so to speak, a personal link between Him and each believer. His miracles were not only

* Those who had received the supernatural life were also conscious that a new community had been established of which all the regenerate, and only the regenerate, were members. The kingdom of Heaven—as actually realized in those who had “risen with Christ”—gradually took the place of the elect nation. The great transition of which Reuss speaks was effected, not so much by the creation of the consciousness of a new relation between the individual and God—though this, too, was of grave significance—but rather by the consciousness that the spiritual relations between the regenerate were more intimate, and rested on a deeper foundation, than the relations between the members of the Jewish commonwealth. The old *law* began to pass away because there was the consciousness of the coming of a new *kingdom* in which it had no place.—ED.

proofs of His exalted dignity, and pledges of a miracle in store greater than all the rest; they were symbols of that healing of suffering souls, of which day by day the need was more deeply felt and the progress more gladly watched. In earnest meditation and thoughtful study of this theme, Christian theology found its purest and fullest fountain. Happy those who rose to this high appreciation of the facts of the Gospel, without losing the warmth of feeling which had led them to the study, and who did not sacrifice the living glow to the cold spirit of abstract speculation and analysis. The systematic theology of the Church, alas! took only too soon this false and lamentable direction.

It is plain from what we have just said that Jesus lost nothing by this progressive change, in which the religion He had implanted in the hearts of His disciples assumed scientific form and expression as theology. There was indeed one special point in His history which had a tendency to call forth essays of this nature, more generally and more directly than anything we have mentioned hitherto. This was His death, His ignominious death upon the cross. Here it was not enough to deplore the fact, to vindicate a sacred memory, to immortalize the fate of a heroic martyr; it was needful to explain how Messiah had come to yield in such an unequal fight, to succumb to such ignoble adversaries, while by the word of His mouth, or the breath of His lips, He could have destroyed all the powers of the earth. On the answer to this hung the faith of those who had already, under whatever influence, embraced Christianity, as well as the possibility of converting those who as yet believed not. Every one knows how that unlooked-for death of Messiah, contradicting all the notions of the schools, all the hopes hitherto cherished by the Jews, overthrew the faith even of the disciples, and made them lose the fruit of their close intimacy with the Saviour. We know how they themselves needed the witness of His resurrection to raise their fallen faith and courage, and what stress they laid upon it in their attempts to overcome the aversion of the Jewish world for a crucified Christ. The

fact is, be it controverted as it may, that the theology of the synagogue had never comprehended the fact of the death of Him who was to restore Israel, as among the things predicted in the sacred text. But why then did He die? This question necessarily presented itself to every Christian who would reflect upon the relations of His faith to the facts of history. The unbelieving Jews might say: Since He died, this was not He for whom we looked. The disciples, convinced that no other Messiah was to come, found themselves constrained so to explain His death that it should not compromise His Messianic dignity. The reply to be given appears now perfectly simple and natural to us, who as evangelical Christians have had instilled into us from our childhood truths which this first generation of believers had to discover anew for themselves. They had failed to receive or comprehend these truths when first presented to them,* and they must have found much difficulty, after all, in giving them satisfactory expression; since they stopped short at attempts more or less happy, leaving to after-generations the task of enlarging and developing them.

But who cannot see that this question whether Messiah ought to have suffered, and why,† must issue in a separation of the Church from the Synagogue, and of the theology of the Gospel from that of the schools and of tradition? There was here a precious and fruitful germ, which once settled and vitalized in the mind, became powerful enough to sustain by itself a complete science of Christianity, not to lean for support on ancient forms, like the creeper clinging to the tree.‡ From this one great fact of a Saviour whom it behoved to suffer before entering into His glory, and before glorifying His people, the theologians of the primitive Church, that is, the Christians who joined reflection to faith, could derive all the principles which led to the salutary separation of the new Church from

* Matt. xvi. 21, and foll. ; xvii. 22, and foll. ; Mark viii. 32 ; Luke xviii. 34 ; xxiv. 19—26.

† *Εἰ παθὴρὸς ὁ χριστὸς* ; Acts xxvi. 23.

‡ Gal. iv. 1, and foll.

the old. That separation is not yet complete, far from it; nor will it be till the work happily begun by the apostles, negligently carried on by their successors, resumed for a moment by the leaders of the Reformation, and ever guided by that Divine Spirit promised to those whose hearts are opened to receive Him, shall at length produce all the fruits proper to its nature and promised to its efforts. This is equivalent to saying that the task of Christian theology is not yet accomplished, as those imagine who look upon the formulas of the sixteenth century, not as posts marking the road to be pursued, but as pillars standing at the end of the way.

• We add one more observation to those already made with reference to the rise of evangelical theology. It was not regarded as the peculiar study or special privilege of any one class of Christians. As soon as reflection aroused by personal experience or by the conflict of opinions had begun to grasp the meaning of religious facts, all the members of the community, without distinction of origin, might take part in this intellectual labour, the full bearing and consequences of which were not as yet apprehended. We shall show that even those who were least disposed to break with the traditions of the past, being led to consider carefully the questions which arose, found their views widened, and formed new theories. The power of the ideas contained in the Gospel was such, that from the moment circumstances had broken through the trammels that at first fettered their development, their intrinsic force produced its natural effect in the world of thought, just as every healthy and vigorous plant starts into new growth and beauty when the spring sunshine sets the sap in motion and bursts the blossom-sheath.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOSPEL OF LIBERTY.

THE growing tendency of Christian society to make the facts of the Gospel, and the feelings which had been their first fruit, the subject of mature reflection and theological study, was, as we have just seen, at once a necessity and an advance. But it was attended with some drawbacks and even dangers. All had not an equal aptitude for such studies; widening disparities became manifest among those who in the sphere of unquestioning faith, and the loving duty it inspired, had been of one heart and of one mind. In the new phase of the Christian life, the preponderance of the individual mind and the bias given by education or philosophy, asserted itself over that unconscious spontaneity of the heart, which the Gospel loves to compare to the state of childhood. This transition was inevitable. Man is not to remain for ever a child; he is destined to arrive at maturity—the maturity not only of the physical but of the moral and intellectual life. We are here only asserting a proved psychological fact, not laying down a theological theory. It would be possible that all, pursuing this path of progress, should follow the right direction without losing the guiding thread which Providence has been pleased to present to us; it would not be possible that all should walk abreast, and advance at equal speed to the goal. Nay, more. Out of reflection arises also diversity of ideas, opinions, theories. The centre of gravity of the spiritual life is easily displaced; opinion asserts its real or imaginary claims, and soon the bonds which subsisted between individuals are broken; prin-

ciples held in common, and once all-powerful, fade away or grow feeble as the attention becomes absorbed with differences less important, perhaps, but more striking. The higher the interests involved, the more certainly will this be the case, and with the more serious results.

We have just seen how Christian theology took its rise naturally and legitimately, and with every chance of success, in its search after truth. We shall not need to go beyond the age of the apostles, in order to show that the psychological observations just made apply to it as to every other phase of human thought. As we have not yet come to the explanation of theological systems, but only to the narration of the facts which form, so to speak, their historic framework, we must pause again for a moment, to point out the immediate effects produced by the rise of evangelical theology within the primitive Church. This will form the subject of the closing chapters of this volume.

The decision taken at Jerusalem with reference to the admissibility of the uncircumcised could not, as we have seen, stand as the ultimatum of Christian thought, the definitive law of the Church. On the contrary, it could but accelerate the movement, whether progressive or retrograde, which should free the Church from a compromise fraught with difficulties new and old. We find therefore, immediately after the conferences, the doctrine of the abrogation of the law or the gospel of emancipation preached by Paul, while the opposing Judaizing party uplifted once more the standard of that same law, and even went so far as to annul the concessions publicly made by the apostles.

It is perhaps rather too much to say that this result followed immediately; for it is quite evident Paul did not arrive at once at the point at which we find him, when we study the theology of his epistles. In devoting here a few preliminary pages to the development of Pauline thought, we do not propose to dwell on the facts of Paul's life, so familiar to all readers. We have already mentioned his name as one of the principal actors in the drama of the Church at the time when it awoke

to a consciousness of its mission in the world ; we shall soon recur to him again as the true creator of evangelical theology. Here we simply purpose to show the steps he had yet to take, from the point which he helped to carry at Jerusalem, to that which he occupied when he conceived the admirable system which is the basis and principal source of almost all the systems since received in the Church.

Popular opinion represents Paul at Jerusalem as in full possession of his great principle that the law was abrogated in Christ, a principle by virtue of which he is supposed to have victoriously resisted the Pharisees, and which through his influence was thenceforward adopted by the whole community of Christians at Jerusalem. Such an opinion appears to us quite unfounded. If it were correct, we should maintain that the writer of the book of Acts had singularly ill rendered the facts, since the part he assigns to Paul on this important occasion is certainly quite different from this. According to Luke's narrative, it would appear that Paul, instead of boldly defending the truth, accepted without remonstrance conditions contrary to his own convictions, and undertook to bear them to the distant Churches. Now such a course seems to us quite irreconcilable with the known character of Paul. We maintain then that Luke's version is the true one, and that what Paul said and did, according to the testimony of this author, as well as by his own testimony, is in perfect harmony with the convictions he held at the time of which we speak. This amounts to saying that Paul was then satisfied with having obtained the release of the Gentiles from the necessity of circumcision, while a few years later, as we well know from his epistles, he demanded it virtually for the Jews also. In other words, in the interval he had passed from the particular fact to the general theory, based upon broad and positive principles. He did not start from this point, but rose gradually to it, having first apprehended the truth in its concrete and practical form. We hope to prove that he did really traverse all the stages of this slow and gradual progress.

At Jerusalem, Paul steadfastly opposed the circumcision of

Titus, because he would not yield the principle that men born Gentiles were free from the obligation of this rite. But some months afterwards he himself circumcised Timothy, because, as the son of a Jewish mother, he belonged in a manner to the Israelitish nation, and had been at any rate brought up in the religion of monotheism.* This act of Paul has been regarded by some modern authors as quite incomprehensible; they have considered it to be in flagrant contradiction with the principles habitually taught by him,† and have even gone so far as to think there must be an error of fact. In that case, however, we must admit that both master and disciple imposed upon the Jews, for it would be impossible to suppose that Luke should have made such an assertion if his contemporaries had been able to disprove it from their own recollections. We ourselves accept the statement as true, and conclude from it that the principle subsequently taught by Paul, that the handwriting of ordinances was blotted out for all believers and nailed to the cross of Christ,‡ did not yet determine his own course under these circumstances; in other words, that his convictions with respect to it were not yet matured. When Paul wrote to the Galatians,§ “I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law,” he had certainly got far beyond the position he took up at the conference, or during his subsequent stay at Lystra,|| when the difference of nationality led him to draw a distinction between cases which afterwards appeared to him identical. The exegetes, who sacrifice anything to harmony and consistency, do not fail to tell us that Paul circumcised Timothy to please the Jews; but we may note that Paul acted in this spirit¶ only in reference to his own voluntary observances and privations,

* Acts xvi. 1, and foll.; 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15.

† Gal. v. 2, etc.

‡ Col. ii. 14.

§ Gal. v. 2, etc.; comp. 1 Cor. vii. 17, and foll.

|| Acts xvi. 3.

¶ 1 Cor. ix. 20.

never in acts imposed upon others, and diametrically contrary to his own theological principles.

We have also another fact to bring forward in support of our assertion. The Epistle to the Galatians contains a very significant phrase, which exegesis has hitherto passed by. "If I *yet* preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?"* This expression is found in a context in which Paul is endeavouring to make his readers comprehend that they are wrong to receive circumcision. We may infer then, that among the arguments used by the Judaizers was the assertion that Paul himself, had after all adopted, recommended, and preached circumcision. Now, as he cannot have preached it to the Gentiles, we must suppose that his adversaries, in seeking to influence men whose views were not clear and defined, made use of the fact that the apostle had at certain times and under certain circumstances spoken of circumcision according to the terms of the resolution passed at Jerusalem, or, what would amount to the same thing, that he had caused Timothy, or some other disciple similarly placed, to be circumcised. Why did not Paul, to neutralize these insinuations, reply simply: I never have preached circumcision to any one? Instead of this, he contents himself with saying: I preach it no longer, and in proof alleges the persecutions he unceasingly has to endure from the Jews generally and from all the zealous partisans of the law. The word *yet*, which slips into his reply, can only be understood by the almost involuntary recollection of a foregoing fact. It cannot be maintained that he is alluding to his life before his conversion; for while he was persecuting the Christians, he had no need to preach circumcision, for all Christians were then circumcised; and if he was persecuted for having preached against circumcision, it was certainly not at the time of the conference at Jerusalem.

But we do not need to establish by inference the fact to

* Gal. v. 11. [This passage is not decisive. In Gal. i. 10, Paul says, "If I *yet pleased men*, I should not be the servant of Christ." Does this imply that there was a time when he had endeavoured to please men? See Lightfoot on the force of *ἐτι* in Gal. i. 10.—ED.]

which the reader's attention is here directed. The Acts themselves bear distinct witness that, subsequently to that conference, Paul assumed a position different from that which he then sustained. In the discussions of which we have already spoken,* there is not a trace of an opposition personally hostile to Paul. Many were unwilling to recognize men not circumcised as brethren in Christ; this was all. No other difficulty had arisen. In silence they listened to the account Paul gave of his success, and discussion arose, not on the facts, but on the conclusions which he drew from them. But nine years after, at the time of another journey to Jerusalem, of which the Acts give no very circumstantial details, things are quite different.† The circumcision of the Gentiles is no more matter of question; that is henceforward a settled point. But since their last interview with Paul, they have learnt that he no longer contents himself with carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles, and absolving them from the burden of the law, but that he goes so far as to wish to lead the dispersed Jews to apostatize, teaching them not to have their children circumcised, nor to conform themselves any longer to the rites of the synagogue. The Jerusalem Christians are stirred by these reports. Things had not been thus determined at the conference, and the most zealous members of the conservative party recalled, no doubt, the sinister predictions which they had made when the first steps were taken in the path of concession. James and his colleagues, however, remain faithful to the plan agreed upon, and have no desire to draw back, but neither are they prepared to widen its application. They warn Paul of the irritation around, and while they are quite prepared to believe that the charge against him is ill-founded, they suggest that he would do well to prove that there is no foundation for it. He, however, offers no denial. He cannot, indeed, deny the fact, for it is patent; and had he wished to deny or cloak it, his epistles written shortly before this would have contradicted that denial; he does seek, however, to calm the storm and con-

* See Book III., chap. iv. and v.

† Acts xxi. 20, and foll.

ciliate the favour of the Church, by an act of devotion which may have been sincere on his part, but which strikes us here as a weak concession such as we should not have expected from him. Can we suppose that if there had been ground for this same accusation at the time of the first discussion, he would have been spared, or that the issue of the conference would have been the same? Clearly, Paul had made progress in the interval; he had found at length the true key by which to unlock the successive revelations of God; and if from the first he had been in advance of his colleagues at Jerusalem, but only so that they could rejoin him and stretch out the hand of fellowship to him over their common task, he had now so far outstripped them, that they called to him to come back, a demand to which he neither could nor would listen, but which he sought to evade rather than deny.

Thus we learn from history that, while the apostles at Jerusalem, and all those who were pre-eminently concerned for unity and peace in the Church, adhered to the essentially conciliating plan passed by the conference, Paul on the one hand, and the Pharisees on the other, finally abandoned it, to follow out their principles to their logical and legitimate consequences. If the Gentiles could obtain salvation without circumcision, which was the seal of the whole law, it follows that circumcision and consequently the whole law, was foreign to the Gospel, and that the latter introduced what the apostle so happily calls a new dispensation, a new economy, that which Jesus had called a new covenant, founded on another basis than that proclaimed from Sinai. We shall soon see how this pregnant idea, which a mind like Paul's could not fail to apprehend after having been led to it by the irresistible teaching of facts, became the parent of his whole system of Gospel theology. We shall understand why, in speaking of the Gospel, he so often dwelt upon it as the Gospel of liberty, in spite of the false interpretations to which this aspect of his teaching was exposed. It expressed his conviction that he had only adequately apprehended the religious truth revealed in Christ, from the time he had had the boldness to lay down a broad

principle from which the majority shrank in alarm, and to which he himself had only been led through prolonged and often painful experiences. But we understand also now, why in speaking to the Galatians of the conference at Jerusalem, he says nothing of the conditions to which he had then consented; why, in speaking to the Corinthians on the use of meats, he does not refer to the *decree*, or rather why he lays down for them principles widely different from those embodied in the apostolic resolution. We shall admit without hesitation that Paul, at the time when he wrote his epistles, was far above and beyond the point at which compromise was possible on a question touching the very essence of the Gospel, and that having once discovered by happy reasoning or intuition (might we not say inspiration?) the true ground of oneness for Jews and Gentiles, he could not but scorn to return to the timid, elementary conception which was based on no principle, and which proved itself, after all, absolutely powerless in its application. The primitive Church had not in its early stages even caught a glimpse of the great question which was to arise out of the expansive force of the Gospel; and when it *did* arise at Antioch, and had received what might be called an *instinctive* solution, the apostles at Jerusalem acted in a manner worthy of all respect in sanctioning that solution, and thus preventing the schism with which the Church was threatened, through the hitherto preponderating influence of the old views. Paul could join heartily in that act, since it gained for his work the sanction of a yet undecided majority, and much facilitated his task. But he could not fail also, whether from his more perfect understanding of principles, or from the teachings of experience, to arrive at the conclusion that this act had been but a halting-place on the highway of truth, and that he must have the boldness to pass beyond it.

That which, using Paul's own expression, we here call the Gospel of liberty, was, in his view, a body of facts and doctrines equally rich and precious, sufficing perfectly for all the needs of an enlightened conscience and a soul thirsting for God. But we are not surprised to find that this Gospel appeared

to many people as one of pure negation, at which they were the more alarmed because Paul, being soon compelled to defend it against unfriendly attacks, often cast the exposition of his views into the form of polemics more or less incisive and severe. It followed that his doctrine concerning the law, which was really only a secondary element of his system, became sometimes the main subject of his preaching or writings, and stirred the Christian world to its depths, long before any other theological controversies were started. But the historian who verifies this fact, must not allow himself to be deceived by appearances, or make a negative statement, the basis of the systematic exposition of the Pauline theology. When we come to analyze that theology, we shall find that its most important statements are very positive, and essentially new and creative, though all can be traced back to the ideas revealed by Christ on which they manifestly rest. Wherever the negation is positively stated, it is supported by the theological principles which form its premises, and of which the person of Christ and the mystical union of man with Him by faith form the centre. We shall allude again to this essential element of the evangelical teaching, which does not belong exclusively to Paul, though he has contributed most to give it a definite place among Christian ideas. We need not here do more than point out how, in Paul's view, true liberty was inseparable from submission to Christ, whom he did not regard as the mighty monarch of a kingdom to come, but as the very source of the new life to be at once realized, as the dispenser of influences the gentle constraint of which rendered needless any code of precepts. The end to be attained was no longer the triumph, near or distant, of one peculiar people, but the salvation of men without distinction of nationality.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JUDAIZING OPPOSITION.

It would be needless to multiply proofs of the growing opposition Paul had to encounter from his old co-religionists. He had himself been foremost in such hostility and fanatic hatred to the disciples of Christ, when he stirred up the first fierce persecutions against them, and aided and applauded at the stoning of his forerunner Stephen. He was now to be himself the sufferer, and the object of even deeper resentment on the part of the Jews, as a traitor to the cause he had once defended. His severe logic also, and the indisputable success of his ministry, made him a dreaded and dangerous adversary. Jewish hatred therefore dogged his steps wherever he went carrying the Gospel; it stirred up tumults at Lystra, at Ephesus, at Thessalonica; it broke out in all its fury in the porch of the temple at Jerusalem; it finally riveted the fetters of his life-long captivity, and would not loose its hold of a prey which a sure instinct urged it to destroy.

These facts do not belong properly to the domain of our subject, but there are others of only too much the same nature which come specially beneath our notice. Paul had to encounter the same opposition, if not the same hatred, from the Judæo-Christian party. We know how strong and sincere was the attachment professed by that party for the traditions and rites of the synagogue. Startled at first, then shocked, by the freer relations into which Paul and his friends entered with the uncircumcised, the Christians of this faction, more deeply imbued with the spirit of Pharisaism than of the Gospel, soon

saw that a more serious issue was here involved than a mere dissidence of form or conduct; they began to measure with a suspicious eye the distance which divided them from this man, whom they had but lately feared on quite different grounds. They discerned at length in his teachings a tendency essentially subversive of all which in their eyes formed the true basis of faith and hope.

In the book of the Acts it is still easy to discover, in spite of the reticences and conciliatory attempts of its author, the rapid growth of this antipathy to Paul. We have just seen how it must necessarily keep pace with the growing clearness and power of Paul's preaching. At the time when the epistles were written, which set before us all the dramatic crises of the story, it had already reached its height, and called into play severe, unsparing polemics on either side. So soon as it became clear to the Judæo-Christians of the strictest sect, that the question involved the abrogation of the ritual law—in their eyes a crime of deepest dye—their course was decided. They could not remain impassive spectators of such an attempt; they must, by every means in their power, impede its success; nor do we for a moment deny that, from the standpoint they occupied, the cause they defended must have appeared to them a righteous one.

In fact, when we consider that the perpetually obligatory character of the law was not in their view an open question, there was nothing in the person and position of their principal adversary to hinder their opposition. Who was Paul? had he sat at the feet of the Master? had he even seen Christ, or received his commission direct from Him? These questions were asked often and openly, as we gather from Paul's eagerness to reply to them, both directly and indirectly, in all his epistles. More than once he goes thoroughly into the matter,* and the superscriptions and subscription of his letters, in which he so prominently asserts his apostleship, show how much he felt the need of thus vindicating himself from false imputations.

* 1 Cor. ix. 1, and foll.; 2 Cor. xi.; Gal. i.; Eph. iii. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i.; Titus i. 3, etc.

How wide was the gulf between Paul and these Judaizing Christians, we may judge from the fact that they did not hesitate to speak of him as an apostate, and so openly, that James thinks it advisable to give him a word of warning, and to suggest to him a method of avoiding the serious consequences that might ensue.*

The adversaries of Paul were not content, therefore, with opposing him merely in the arena of word and doctrine. They soon reached more open hostilities, and laboured ardently to destroy a work which on conviction they detested. While Paul, with a prudent and honourable reserve, carefully avoided encroaching on what he considered to be the ground of his colleagues, and made it a matter of principle to break up entirely new fields for the Gospel,† the opposing party organized a regular counter-mission, with the avowed object of bringing back to the Gospel preached by them of Jerusalem, those who had received only the Gospel according to Paul. We find numerous traces of this attempt in the epistles. The Judaizers sowed discord at Corinth; they overturned the faith of the Galatian Churches; they sent forth everywhere on the track of the apostle, men who discredited his title and vocation among the Churches he had founded, and claimed for themselves alone apostolic honours and authority.‡ They produced letters of recommendation, possibly genuine, to introduce themselves to the Churches.§ Perhaps they may even have gone so far as to circulate others, in support of their own ideas, under the name of Paul himself.|| They ventured to claim in a general manner the patronage of the heads of the Jerusalem Church, whose names are unhappily mixed up (we would gladly suppose unjustly) in the whole of these lamentable controversies.¶ The Judaizing party asserted the exclusive

* Acts xxi. 21, and foll.

† Rom. xv. 20; 2 Cor. x. 16.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 13, and foll.; Gal. i. 7.

§ 2 Cor. iii. 1.

|| 2 Thess. ii. 2.

¶ 1 Cor. i. 12; Gal. ii. 12.

authority* of the apostles in Judæa—a pretension which these would themselves have wholly repudiated, and which Paul makes bold to deny to them.† These false teachers proclaimed themselves further to be the only true disciples of Christ;‡ and in His name they imposed upon the faithful, as a condition of salvation, circumcision, the observance of holy days, abstinence from certain meats,—in short, all the rites of the laws of tradition;§ and they abruptly broke off all intercourse with the uncircumcised Christians,|| whom Paul had welcomed as brothers into the great family, and whom the other apostles had recognized as such. Their hatred to Paul was not at all appeased even by his heroic sufferings and sublime self-devotion. When the populace of Jerusalem laid homicidal hands upon him, there were myriads of Christians in the city, and not one lifted a finger to defend him. Carried to Rome, a captive under threat of death, he found no friends among the Christians of that city to stand by him on his trial;¶ and after two years' sojourn there, during which, through all the alternations of hope and fear,** he had never ceased to work for God and His kingdom, he has still reason to complain of the unkindness of those who preach Christ only of contention, thinking to add affliction to his bonds.††

All these facts are established on evidence that cannot be questioned, namely, by the text of the epistles themselves, and we need not discuss them more fully. But scientific theology, whether of former times or of our own, has gone still further, and has pointed to a polemical purpose, a design directly anti-Pauline, in some of the books which form part of the New Testament canon. All are familiar with the question of the

* 2 Cor. xi. 5; Gal. ii. 6, and foll.

† Ibid.; comp. 1 Cor. ix. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 12; 2 Cor. x. 7.

§ Gal. ii. 3; iii. 2, and foll.; iv. 10, 21; v. 2, and foll.; Rom. xiv. 1, and foll.; Phil. iii. 2; Col. ii. 21, and foll.

|| Gal. ii. 12.

¶ 2 Tim. iv. 16.

** 2 Tim. iv. 6, 18; Phil. i. 20, and foll.

†† Phil. i. 16.

divergence between Paul and James, a question that has become almost matter of popular discussion, since the solution given of it by Luther, and constantly taken up by modern criticism. We shall advert to this subject more fully presently, but we do not think its decision is such as would assign to the epistle in question a place in the present chapter. We shall take this opportunity, however, of alluding to some other traces of this controversy, to which attention has been drawn of late, and shall try to set them at their true value. They have been discovered in the book of Revelation, which, of all the writings of the apostolic age, borrows most largely from the spirit and ideas of Judaism.

Thus it is there said * that the twelve stones on which the walls of the New Jerusalem are built, bear the names of the twelve apostles. Of course Paul cannot be included in this number. Now it must not be forgotten that the passage just quoted has a doctrinal significance, that it asserts a privilege for the twelve, not only within the Church and in the sphere of their earthly labours, but far beyond these, and that it implies also the idea of such an estimate of their merit as would exclude the possibility of competition or even comparison with them. In view of this fact, the claims of Paul, so often urged, appear an arrogant assumption. We can see no answer that can be given to this reasoning by those who, upholding the official theory of the Church, increase to thirteen the number of the disciples to whom they would accord the apostolic title and prerogatives. When a dogma is expressed in figures, it is easy to ascertain if there is identity of views between the persons who profess it; and when writers affirm that there are but twelve apostles, after another has called himself the thirteenth, we naturally conclude that the contradiction was not unintentional.†

* Rev. xxi. 14.

† In addition to the explanation given by Reuss in the next two paragraphs, the following extract from Hengstenberg, *in loc.*, seems worthy of consideration, although it is more than doubtful whether Rev. xxi. 14, was suggested by Eph. ii. 20: "It has been thought that, as only twelve apostles are here spoken of, Paul must have been left out, and efforts

But looking at the matter as we do from a historical and not from a theoretical point of view, the difficulty vanishes. We shall only observe that Paul nowhere says that he is the thirteenth apostle; that the idea could never have occurred to him of deciding dogmatically the number of the men who were to bear that name.* There will be apostles so long as there shall remain any in the world to be converted to Christ; and whosoever has really received from the Saviour the commission to carry His word to men who as yet have never heard it, has the right to call himself Christ's apostle. The proofs of his apostleship,† moral and tangible, will not be wanting, success in the spiritual field being always the chief.‡ In the case of Paul, his humility and the recollection of his previous career might prompt him to call himself the least of all the apostles,§ though the results of his ministry, for which in another passage he thanks God, gave him the foremost rank, both in his own consciousness and in the judgment of history. But if he claims as his simple right a place on a par with the earlier apostles,|| it is certainly not with a view to close the list, and to exclude those who should come after him.

have been made to account for this omission. But that the author of the Revelation reckoned Matthias, and not Paul, among the apostles, can be imagined by no one who has perceived the relation in which the Revelation stands to St. Paul. Comp. at ch. i. 4, i. 5, iii. 14, xvii. 14, and many other passages, and the remarks made in vol. i., p. 42. This passage, however, itself rests on a Pauline foundation. The appointment of Matthias was indeed made according to the will of God, but it was only a *provisional* one, as is clear alone from the way in which it took place, and likewise from the *external* qualifications which, according to Acts i. 21, 22, were alone taken into account, while the *internal* conditions were uniformly held to be indispensable toward an *ultimate* appointment. It is clear, too, from the object in view, as declared in ver. 22. The more John elevates the *prophetical* side of the apostolical calling, the farther must it have been from him to regard that appointment as a final one. It stood in force only till the Lord Himself should be pleased by His own immediate choice to fill up the vacant ground."—ED.

* Rom. xvi. 7; 1 Cor. iv. 9; ix. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 13; comp. Acts xvi, 4, 14.

† Τα σημεία τοῦ ἀποστόλου, 2 Cor. xii. 12.

‡ Ἀπόδειξι πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 1 Cor. ii. 4.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 9.

|| 2 Cor. xi. 5; Gal. ii. 6.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that the standpoint of the writer of the Revelation is altogether different. We know that the primitive Church, of which he is there the interpreter, regarded the twelve disciples chosen by Christ as a body apart, raised above all other believers by virtue of their mission received from the lips of the Saviour Himself. The name apostle therefore was in this sphere applied to them exclusively. This is evident from the Acts, where Paul appears on the scene beside them, but is never so denominated; and where the personages placed at the head of the Church of Jerusalem are uniformly styled the *apostles and elders*, showing that the former constituted a class by themselves. This was so invariable a custom, and so deep-rooted in the language of the Church, that Paul himself, through the force of habit, sometimes falls in with it,* boldly and uncompromisingly as at other times he vindicates his high calling. Clearly, then, the passage quoted from the Revelation must be explained by the influence exerted over men's minds by the priority of the ministry of the twelve, and their wholly exceptional historical position. It proclaims a fact rather than a doctrine. And if, as we are far from denying, the assertion bears the dogmatic impress of Judæo-Christianity, it does not at all follow that it was written with a polemical intention. Were this indeed the case, it would tell, not against Paul only, but against all the other contemporary missionaries, who unquestionably used and claimed the name of apostles. Nay, more; the same polemical purpose must be traced in the letter to the Christians of Syria, in which the apostles in the same way appropriate the title.†

There is another passage in the Revelation which has been supposed by various authors to contain a direct attack upon Paul. It occurs in the letter to the Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira,‡ in which the prophet reproaches them with suffering false teachers in their midst (for such is the significance of

* 1 Cor. xv. 7. This was so much matter of habit that he speaks of them as the twelve when they were but eleven (see verse 5).

† Acts xv. 23, and foll.

‡ Rev. ii. 14, 20.

the mystical names Jezebel and Balaam), who taught the people to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. It is known that on the first of these two points, Paul held wider views than the Judæo-Christians. The latter had a horror of even the most distant contact with idolatry, and sternly proscribed the use of meats that had formed part of an idol sacrifice, even though they had been bought in the market. Paul, on the contrary, in theory at least, held this to be a matter of indifference. Again, it is certain that a similar divergence of opinion had arisen in relation to various questions connected with marriage. Thus the Jews and many Christians held very rigid views as to the degrees of consanguinity within which marriage was lawful. A strong prejudice was also entertained from very early times in the Church against second marriages. From this point of view marriages were declared incestuous, which might appear perfectly legitimate to other Christians, and on which morality, as at present understood, would pronounce no condemnation. We have the sanctity of celibacy extolled in the Revelation; we shall therefore naturally expect to find it espousing the severe side of this question of marriage. Now Paul declares plainly that he sees no moral objection to the re-marriage of widows and widowers.* He lays down no rule as to the lawful degrees of relationship; but there is reason to believe that on this point also, he would have been prepared to mitigate the rigour of legal or traditional proscriptions, without lowering at all the moral safeguards for the purity of marriage.

We can admit all these facts, which are for the most part sufficiently attested, without drawing from them the conclusion that the writer of the Revelation, in addressing his reproofs to the Churches, has any design of raising objections to the teaching of Paul. Let us observe, first, that ten years had passed, at the time of the composition of this book, since Paul had been in those regions, if indeed he had ever visited the towns there specially named. The reproof then, if there be any, must have been conveyed, not to Paul himself, but to his disciples, and it

* 1 Cor. vii. 9, 39.

is possible to suppose that some of these, in their eagerness to disseminate liberal principles, may have proclaimed them in too absolute a manner, and without the counterpoise of other moral principles, by which Paul was always careful to guard them from abuse. The famous saying "*all things are lawful for me,*"* without being precisely interpreted in the sense of positive and criminal licence, † might be taken as a motto by people who would not impose upon themselves the same invaluable rules of consideration and respect for the conscience of others, which Paul preached and constantly practised. But is it indeed necessary to suppose that these tendencies were encouraged by the immediate disciples of Paul? Those who could forget that knowledge without charity, ‡ so far from edifying the Church, tends to destroy brethren for whom Christ died, did not deserve so honourable a name. A true disciple of Paul would feel abstinence from meats, the use of which would cause a brother to stumble, to be a thing natural and familiar. § And as to the question of marriage, Paul is certainly the last against whom the reproach of laxity of principle can be brought. Is he not indeed charged, on the contrary, with having given the first impulse to monastic asceticism, by basing on such broad principles the preference of celibacy over marriage? || Did he not plainly make a vast concession to extreme opinions, when he advised his disciples not to choose as heads and officers of the Church, men twice married? ¶

* Πάντα μοι ἔξεστι, 1 Cor. vi. 12; x. 23.

† Gal. v. 13.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 2; comp. v. 12.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 13; x. 24, and foll.

|| 1 Cor. vii. 1, 7, 8, 26, 38, 40.

¶ 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 6. [It is not clear that St. Paul required that a bishop should not marry a second time. There is a great weight of authority in favour of interpreting this passage as forbidding the appointment of any man as a bishop who had *at the same time* more than one wife. A man might be received into the Church who before his conversion was in this condition; he was not required at baptism to put away either of the women he had married, for to put a wife away might inflict on her great injustice; but such a man was not to be appointed bishop.—ED.]

It remains for us to see how Paul acted towards his opponents. Among those who differed from him, he could very clearly distinguish between the men of weak consciences, whom timidity prevented from rising to his own standpoint, and those who followed the impulse of a self-satisfied fanaticism, and did not scorn to attain by means which morality condemned, an end which the Gospel did not sanction. With the former, how forbearing he was ! how careful not to do violence to their sincere and innocent prejudices ! He would impose on himself many needless privations rather than by the use of what to him seemed lawful, lead them to act against their own weak and as yet unenlightened conscience.* He is never weary of instructing them with all gentleness, of reiterating again and again the arguments which victoriously demonstrated the truth of his doctrine. He devotes his whole life to spreading around him light and liberty ; he is ready by vigils, by fastings, by perils and labours, by the sacrifice of his life, if need be, to win the Church into the path of Gospel progress ; and the tender outflowings of his heart, the yearnings expressed with such intense earnestness, are the last weapons to which he resorts, when those of argument have failed to triumph over intellectual indolence or suspicious prejudice.†

But how different is his tone when confronted with the other class of antagonists ! For them he has no consideration, no shafts of gentle courtesies. All the resources of an ardent and impassioned rhetoric are used against them.‡ Satire, irony, invective, provocation, the magnifying of his office, the question which takes the form of a challenge, the reply which becomes an appeal to public justice—all is fair in such a warfare ; and the blows fall hard and ringing upon the men whom he would simply despise, if he did not deem them dangerous, or if the interests they compromised were less dear to him. The epithets

* Rom. xiv. 1, 4, 13, and foll. ; xv. 1, and foll. ; 1 Cor. viii. ; ix. ; x. 13, and foll., etc. (*σκανδαλιζέειν*).

† 1 Cor. vi. 11, and foll. ; vii. 3, and foll. ; Gal. iv. 12, and foll., etc.

‡ 2 Cor. x., xi ; Gal. i. 6, and foll. ; ii. 4, and foll. ; v. 7, and foll. ; Phil. iii. 2, and foll., etc.

he flings at them shock our conventional age. They are liars, dogs, messengers of Satan, who himself sometimes takes the form of an angel of light. Plays upon words as apt and witty as they are foreign to the language of our day,* call in raillery to the aid of the good cause, and even go the length sometimes of sallies of humour, the terrible vigour of which startles us more than it attracts.†

Paul would have been more lenient, more considerate towards the men on whom he discharged this torrent of burning eloquence, if their errors had been of the understanding only, and the tenacity of preconceived opinions had been their sole offence. But the narrow views of these representatives of tradition stifled charity, as well as faith, beneath the pressure of their dry formularies and their asceticism, so full of pride, so empty of humility. They looked upon the preaching of the Gospel only as a means of enrolling members in their little coterie, a way of feeding the Synagogue through the Church, a field to be worked by their greedy proselytism.‡ Orthodox, alike in the good and the bad acceptance of the word, they saw in Paul the neologist, the heretic; his lofty reasoning was proscribed because he would not lend it to the service of their scholasticism. Hating progress by instinct, and regarding the form of tradition received from their fathers as the final expression of truth, they joined to all the rigidity of the priestly spirit, all the vanity of a hard and barren scholarship, and all the venom of a wounded self-love.

If any should think that the apostle went too far in his declamations against such adversaries, that some of his pages, however fine oratorically, cast a shade upon his character as a man, especially when they are compared with the calm and gentle demeanour of Jesus under assaults no less hostile, we hasten to bring forward considerations which should temper such

* Phil. iii. 2, 3; *παριτομή* in the ideal and symbolical sense; *κατατομή* in the material and legal sense.

† Gal. v. 12; *ἀποκρίνονται* in the same sense, but with an exaggeration which translation cannot convey.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 20.

a judgment.* A parallel cannot fairly be instituted between a man and the Son of God, between Him before whose eyes all the future lay open, and who could discern the certain ultimate triumph of His Gospel, and the man who, absorbed in the struggles and duties of the moment, comes into rough collision with obstacles in his path. The Master might know and proclaim that faith shall overturn mountains; the disciple, full of faith, must employ all the force of his will, all the activity of his zeal, in breaking down or overleaping the barriers which obstructed his progress. Time with God has no limit; the time of man is short; earnest, devoted souls would fain finish themselves the task they have set before them, and the means they use tell of the eager passionate haste within.

* The *manner* of our Lord no doubt differs greatly from that of St. Paul, but it will be difficult to find in St. Paul's epistles denunciations as vehement as those which occur in our Lord's polemic against the Pharisees.—ED.

CHAPTER IX.

PAGANISM AND GNOSTICISM.

IDEAS are not formed and developed simply by virtue of their inherent power and the germs of life they contain naturally, but also under the influence of the obstacles they encounter, and by the very efforts they make to overcome them. The survey we have just taken of the struggle between the evangelical principle and traditional Judaism, and of the changes consequent on it, gives a direct illustration of this great principle governing the progress of the human mind. The history of Christian doctrine during eighteen centuries furnishes many more such illustrations,—the opinions dominant in each epoch, the various systems of philosophy, and political interests, all exerting in turn a more or less powerful influence over Christian ideas. These, however, while undergoing indefinite modifications from various individuals or schools, have always remained unchanged in their essence, by virtue of the vital principle within them, or, which is the same thing, by the divinity of their origin.

In order to complete what we have to say on the history of Christian theology in the first century, it is then necessary to inquire whether it was brought into contact with any other religious philosophy than that of the synagogue, and if that contact exerted any influence either upon the form of the apostolic teaching, or upon the direction which the first Christian theologians gave to their arguments.

It is needless to remark that the question here is not of the opposition between monotheism and polytheism, since this was

of much older date than the Gospel, and is dwelt upon far more largely by the prophets of the Old Testament, than by the apostles of the New. We need scarcely pause to notice the occasional passages in which the apostles combat the views and opinions of popular paganism.* That paganism was too poor, too worn-out already at that period, for its overthrow to require much effort from the preachers of the Gospel. If it resisted at first, it was rather by the power of habit than on theory or principle; it lingered on in the customs of society, after it had deserted the schools. But from the very condition of corruption and decay to which paganism was brought, arose two special tendencies,—we can scarcely call them two new forms of the religious movement,—which were strongly marked in pagan society, at the period when the Gospel emerged for the first time from its narrower circle, to try its power on the world. We soon find the apostles brought into collision with these influences; and subsequently, in the course of the second century, one of them became a source of real peril to the Church, by assimilating Christian ideas, and wearing the colours of the Gospel, and thus insinuating itself into the Church under cover of a syncretism which escaped unpractised eyes. Our readers will divine that we are alluding to gnosticism, which played so large a part in the theology of the first ages. It will be at once remembered also, that it has been a much-controverted question, whether gnosticism can trace back its origin to the period now before us, and consequently whether or not indications of it are to be found in the apostolic epistles. This point, like so many others, has been often obscured by the consideration of other critical questions connected with it. Of late days the presence of these indications has been strongly insisted on, and an argument derived from them against the authenticity of certain books of the New Testament. The opposite party have as strongly denied their presence at all, with a view to maintain the integrity of the Scripture canon.

Without staying to examine the views held by others, we

* Acts xiv. 15, and foll.; xvii. 24, and foll.; Rom. i. 19, and foll.; 1 Cor. x. 20; Rev., *passim*, etc.

will endeavour to state our own as clearly as possible, and to show that they have all the probability that can be attained with regard to a fact so far removed from our horizon, and a true knowledge of which is rendered still more difficult by the nature of the sources at our command. It will have been observed that we have spoken of two tendencies, born of ancient paganism, which we distinguish from each other, while we still suppose an affinity between them. The first and the most easy to characterize is the superstition which, from the very first century, had really with a large part of pagan society taken the place of the religious beliefs that once formed the spiritual food of the whole Greek and Latin races. These beliefs no longer existed in their concrete or mythological form, except in remote places which had not shared in the general march of mind, the progress of philosophy and intelligence. But absolute indifferentism, religious vacuity, is not a condition natural to man. The void left in the mind must be filled by something; pleasures, more or less gross and sensual, might divert the spirit for a time, but not for ever; and, failing nobler instincts, the imagination asserted its natural rights; doubt came to avenge departed faith, and the secret terror which it inspired in a sickened heart and an accusing conscience, stirred all the faculties to seek a way of escape, to grasp at any straw, to follow in blind haste the faintest ray of delusive light; and left that age, like every age which boasts of its philosophic wisdom, at the mercy of rogues and charlatans. Men mocked at the Olympic gods, but professed great respect for diviners, astrologists, jugglers, and magicians of every sort. The occult sciences were believed in; men sought initiation in the mysteries; the dead were invoked; men fed their hungry minds on every description of fable, miracle, and metamorphosis. A pardonable credulity had given way to a credulity that was shameless and boundless. This superstition came in great part from the East; at least those who turned it to account were chiefly orientals. The Jews especially understood how to use this disposition advantageously, and made it a source of large gains to themselves. We find them every-

where, with other adventurers, on the track of the apostles, as miracle-workers, enchanters, exorcists, fortune-tellers.* We see them supplied with books of magic,† assuming Arabic names,‡ sometimes opposing the preaching of the apostles, sometimes trying to turn it to account in their trade.§

No great hindrance or serious danger could arise, however, to the Gospel, in this direction, and we have only mentioned the facts in order to complete the picture of that world in the midst of which the Christian principle had first to assert itself. That superficial observers, or men blinded by sordid avarice, should confound the miracles of the apostles, or the psychological phenomena which accompanied their preaching, with the tricks of vulgar magic, could neither divert the progress of ideas into a false channel, nor stop them in their natural and beneficial course. We cannot, however, pass from this subject without saying that, in our opinion, a large proportion of those whom Paul speaks of in his epistles, and especially in his pastoral letters, and who have been supposed to be the false teachers from Colosse, or the gnostics of Ephesus or of Crete, were simply Jews, and generally adventurers of the commonest order, who would not have deserved to be noticed by the apostle, if there had not been in the ranks of the Church persons feeble enough in mind to be caught by their artifices.

Side by side with this low superstition and interested roguery, which aimed only to make dupes, we find in the sphere of paganism, and as far back as the age of the apostles, another tendency more serious, and connected in the closest manner with the history of Christian theology. We allude to that form of religious speculation known under the name of *gnosticism*, the first indications of which appear in history almost at the same time as the Gospel. It is true that at that remote period we find no traces of the existence of any system

* Acts viii. 9 ; xiii. 6 ; xvi. 16 ; xix. 13 ; 2 Tim. iii. 13.

† Acts xix. 19.

‡ Acts xiii. 8.

§ *Loc. cit.* ; Luke ix. 49 ; comp. Acts viii. 19.

of gnosticism defined and openly taught; but it is none the less certain that the apostles already saw the upspringing of ideas, which those who came after them would find much difficulty in checking, and that they would fain have nipped them in the bud, or guarded the Church vigilantly against them. Those who remember how the very next generation, before the middle of the second century, saw gnosticism the dominant philosophy of almost the entire East, though under various forms and widely modified according to its different schools, must be constrained to admit that its origin cannot be traced to one special spot, or to one single name, and may be prepared to grant us this further point,—that it was not the creation of any one individual, of any one province, or of any one year, but the natural outgrowth of the spirit of the age, silently advancing and developing itself according to the laws imposed by circumstance. The causes of this effect, which assumed in the end such grave proportions, are not difficult to trace, though like all other moral revolutions they began in obscurity. In addition to the negative cause—the overthrow of former faiths and the inability of the old systems to sustain or to replace them—there were very powerful positive causes. There was the ever-growing commixture of peoples, and of ideas of various origin; there was the contact of Jewish monotheism with oriental pantheism; there were the mystical and theosophic elements contained in the doctrines of Pythagoras and of Plato, fructified by the more ardent mysticism of Asia, and the purer mysticism of the Gospel; there was finally the growing conviction that the study of physical nature and cosmological theories, are not the most important themes of philosophy; that it may aspire to a more exalted end, by seeking to reunite man to God, the finite to the infinite being. The essential syncretism of this speculation—that is, its method of combining and amalgamating conceptions of very various origin—explain why it was so eager to assimilate Christian ideas, and to make them a constituent element of its sometimes singular, often spiritual, always daring conceptions.

The focus of all this intellectual movement was chiefly in

Asia Minor, a country which has never taken any important part in the history of humanity, but which was at this time the meeting-place and arena of all the philosophical schools of the age. Among the apostolic books, therefore, those which belong to this region bear the clearest traces of the necessity felt by the apostles to familiarize the Church with these much-debated questions, and to guard it against the invasion of new ideas, more attractive than those of ancient polytheism, but not less alien to the Gospel.

The fundamental idea of gnosticism was a sort of dualism ; its starting-point was the question of the origin of evil ; its goal the victory to be gained over the latter, and over the world which is of it, so that man may rise to God, or become identified with Deity. It is plain that in the abstract there must be many points of contact between gnosticism and the Gospel. The difference, in point of theory or method, could be only formal, the Gospel confining itself to the moral sphere, gnosticism aspiring to the metaphysical. But in their practical application there was the widest possible distance between the two. The Christian doctrines concerning Christ, the nature of His work, the means of salvation, must be strangely modified, if not subverted altogether, by a system which linked the world to God by a series of intermediary existences, lower evolutions of the Divine essence, and the design of which was to make man ascend this scale by means of an asceticism far surpassing that of the Pharisees. As, however, Christianity was, of all the religious theories of the age, the most suggestive and attractive for philosophy, it is not strange that gnosticism should have borrowed largely from it, in terms, formularies, and even in doctrines, so that it was able at last itself to pass for a simple modification of the Gospel teaching.

Leaving generalities, we may proceed to show by the evidence of apostolic texts, that gnostic philosophy—that is, theological theories originating outside the Synagogue and the Church—had crept into the Church before the close of the first century, and naturally called forth the opposition of

Christian teachers. We do not forget that the fact of such arguments being contained in the apostolic writings has been urged in disproof of their authenticity. But as, on the one hand, the chronological history of gnosticism is itself still a problem unsolved, and, on the other hand, the genuineness of the books in question can be sustained by a series of other arguments, we shall be justified in receiving their witness in this as in the preceding parts of our narrative.

Among the instances that here present themselves, the most interesting, and at the same time the most explicitly stated, is that of the doctrine of intermediary beings. All the ancient religions recognized such beings; we have already seen Jewish philosophy taking hold of this idea; the theory of emanation, so widely spread through the East at this period, raised it far above the sphere assigned to it by traditional Judaism. Gnosticism, in its turn, made large use of it, and set forth, perhaps more clearly than any other system, its eclectic origin. We do not assert that any one of the systems taught during the second century was professed at Ephesus or in Phrygia in the days of the apostle Paul; but we discover an allusion to something at least very analogous to them in his remarks to the Colossians upon the doctrines of angels,* which he calls philosophy vain deceit † and in contrast to which he sets the religion of Christ, ‡ the one Mediator between God and man.

The theory of Æons seems more directly indicated in what the same apostle calls "profane and old wives' fables," § if we may be allowed to combine those myths, or to identify them with the endless genealogies elsewhere spoken of. || Paul speaks of these fables as of Jewish origin; ¶ or at least traces in them a great affinity with certain tendencies of Judaism, a fact which is not incompatible with our idea of gnostic

* *Θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων*, Col. ii. 18.

† "Ἄ μὴ ἐώρακεν εὐβατεῶν.

‡ Coll. ii. 10; i. 16, and foll.

§ *Μῦθοι βέβηλοι καὶ γραῶδεις*, 1 Tim. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 4.

|| *Γαρεαλογίαι ἀπέραντοι*, 1 Tim. i. 4; Titus iii. 9.

¶ Titus i. 14.

syncretism, especially if we take into account the prodigious development at this period, among the Jews, of the doctrine and mythological history of angels.

The asceticism so deeply enrooted in the mind of the Jewish people before the age of the apostles, was not by any means peculiar to them, and if it manifested itself in schools which held as a fundamental principle that the seat of evil was in matter, it does not follow that they must have derived from the Pharisees, or the Essenes, their principles and practices on this point. In reading the passages in the epistles we have referred to, in which Paul remonstrates against an anti-evangelical, perhaps even hypocritical asceticism,* we need not suppose him to be referring necessarily to the same narrow circle of Pharisaism which he had elsewhere in view. Pharisaism and gnosticism may have been agreed in certain forms prescribed for the attainment of religious perfection; but the proscription of marriage,† pointed out as one of the doctrines opposed by the apostle, was certainly not derived from the Pharisaic code. The very vehemence of the arguments he uses against this proscription—he, Paul, the advocate of celibacy, who himself practised it, and who belonged to a Church which from the very commencement had favoured it—prove that there lay at the basis of the precept a theory hostile to a scriptural creed. This can be no other than dualism, the theory of the corruption of matter, or of its origin as alien from God. Herein is also a reason why we cannot think ancient Essenism is itself a sufficient explanation of the fact in question.

We note another phase of gnosticism in the doctrine so directly and warmly combated in the epistles of John; we refer to docetism—that is, the theory which refused to recognize the reality of the human body of Christ. That the Divine element in the person of Jesus, in the metaphysical sense of the word, should not have been acknowledged, was an error common in the apostolic times, and long after, in the sphere of Judæo-Christianity, although it was too vague as a

* Σωματικὴ γυμνασία, 1 Tim. iv. 8; comp. Col. ii. 23, etc.

† 1 Tim. iv. 3.

dogma to become a subject of direct argumentative attack from the apostles. It is not in this sphere, however, nor in that of the Pauline Churches, that the diametrically opposite error could have arisen—that, namely, which carried spiritualism so far as to deny the human element* in the person of the Saviour; but this view had also gained ground before the close of the first century.† The apostle would not have combated a chimera. It is evident that this repugnance to admit the fact of a true incarnation was a consequence of the gnostic theory concerning matter, between which and God there should be no affinity or bond whatever. On the other hand, docetism, or the doctrine according to which the Son of God had a seeming not a real body, is only indirectly the product of pagan philosophy. The essential part of this doctrine, the idea of the Son of God revealed to the world, belongs to Christianity alone, and only by the application of dualist principles to the substance of Christianity could the doctrine in question have been evolved.

Perhaps we may even be authorized in saying the same thing with reference to one other dogma combated in the epistles of Paul. From a passage in the second letter to Timothy,‡ we gather that some had taught at Ephesus that the resurrection had already taken place, which amounted to saying that there was no other resurrection to be hoped for in the future. Without this last addition, the first statement contains nothing anti-evangelical, since the apostles themselves speak of a death and resurrection in the spiritual sense. The denial of a future resurrection was the expression of an absolute spiritualism, which would deny to the flesh any right whatever. No shade of materialist incredulity prompted the negation; it had quite another source. But on the other hand, the very idea of a resurrection already consummated is a Christian idea; the philosophy of Hymenæus and Philetus could have been derived nowhere else; they only combined

* Σάρξ.

† 1 John iv. 2; comp. ch. i. 1; 2 John 7.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

with the Christian element, a theory introduced by them from without.

The apostles could have but an imperfect acquaintance with the whole of this school, so foreign to the sphere of their national and religious training. They noted its most striking developments as they appeared; but the full scope of the theory, and its germinal principle, may have escaped them, even supposing it to have been clearly expressed in their day. Perhaps it would be more exact to say they did not seek to discover it. Their work was to combat error wherever they met it, and in every form. The diversity of the origin of error does not influence the method of the arguments used against it, and opposite forms of heresy might be the subject of attack and refutation in one and the same letter. This may explain why we find so many statements apparently incongruous in one single epistle, and why there is so much hesitation on the part of the greatest modern critics, with reference to a historical problem so full of interest. It is from the persistent attempt to bring into one system all the scattered traits of anti-evangelical theories, (those found, for example, in the pastoral epistles,) that we get such fantastic conceptions of these false teachers, and have to seek in vain the true place in history to which to assign their hybrid systems.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN GNOSTICISM.

THE preaching of the apostles, carried on in the very sphere which was agitated by the conflicting tendencies to which we have just referred, could not by possibility pass them by or ignore their importance. If indeed the tumult in men's minds had been of a nature wholly hostile to the Gospel, they might perhaps have allowed it to exhaust itself by its own struggles; but that which rendered it peculiarly dangerous was the false appearance it assumed of relationship to the Christian movement. Christian truth was imperilled by the inability of many minds to distinguish the radical difference in the two currents of ideas, and by the sympathy with the new school, felt by so many of the Greeks, whom the desire for knowledge, the craving for philosophy, rather than any deeper motive, had brought into the Church, and who naturally turned to any quarter which promised fuller satisfaction of this intellectual hunger. There came a moment, as we see in the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, and even in the first epistle of John, when the old party of resistance, the Judaizing party, seemed less to be feared than the faction of the new philosophers. Paul, who had formerly been content to affirm that the doctrine of Christ crucified was worth more than all the wisdom of the world, and who had gloried in the charge of foolishness laid against him by the Greeks, as the grandest triumph of the Gospel,* even Paul was led by the new nature of the opposition to represent this

* 1 Cor. i. 21, and foll. ; ii. 2, and foll.

same Gospel rather as the most sublime philosophy.* Without changing one point, without leading the believer out of the sphere of the experimental life, or of the practice of social duties, he brought into relief and prominence that aspect of the Christian doctrine which offers the richest food and the fullest satisfaction to the reflective and speculative cravings of man's deeper nature. After having simply said to the Corinthians † that the Gospel may also be presented in the form of philosophy, but only to the more advanced intelligences, he, the most advanced of all, was led to use by preference this mode of teaching when he had to deal with a false philosophy, a system of bold and fantastic speculation. Having learned the pretensions advanced by it, he hastened to neutralize their influence by a more scientific exposition of the Christian doctrine. Using the parallels, antitheses, and formulas suggested to him by the false philosophy, he successfully commenced the construction of a system of Gospel metaphysics which he had not previously deemed necessary for the immediate purpose of the Church. We have already indicated that this change of method widened the distance between the various members of the community, all not being equally capable of following this flight of speculative thought, and too many persuading themselves that in this direction Christian perfection was to be sought.

Independently, however, of this external stimulus, the choice spirits within the young Church found in the essence of the Gospel itself many elements inviting the effort of reflection, and which, in addition to the simple and abundant food they offered to the masses, contained problems to be solved, and directed religious meditation to the highest themes. We have just spoken of Paul, but we do not mean to assert that he was the only one to follow this bent. His name naturally comes first, because his history is the more familiar to us, while we know the other authors of the New Testament only by their writings, and even the names of those who confined themselves to oral instruction have scarcely come down to us.

* Col. ii. 3 ; comp. v. 8 (*σοφία*) ; comp. 1 Cor. i. 30.

† 1 Cor. ii. 6.

All however, doubtless, with greater or less frequency and in a larger or smaller measure, rendered testimony to that hidden wealth of the Gospel which the Christian theology of every age has found to be inexhaustible.

The deeper apprehension of the religious truths revealed for the salvation of man, is called by the apostles themselves the "word of wisdom,"* a term equivalent to what we term in our day philosophy or speculation. It must be observed, however, that this wisdom is regarded by the apostle as the gift of God, no less than the simple faith which is its basis and premise; and is not placed in contrast with it to the derogation of faith. The Greek fathers perfectly understood this distinction, and continued to make it the starting-point of what in their day had become a real theology in the present sense of the word. The apostles themselves were conscious of the steps of their own progress, and of the path to be traversed by the faithful who would follow them. They distinguished the foundation,† which must be laid first and everywhere, from the edifice to be built upon it by after-effort, and more or less slowly according to the requirements and capacities of the converts. They knew that many men, without endangering their salvation, might be content simply to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Christ, and to follow His precepts; and that faith in one God, the doctrine of conversion and of baptism, of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment,—the fundamental element, that is, of Gospel teaching,‡—would be the sum of the knowledge to which many Christians would ever attain. But this did not prevent them from recognizing that for those who had their senses exercised,§ there was a far wider sphere of religious thought open, that they might add heavenly things to the earthly things with which they

* Γνωσις, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9; xiii. 2; xiv. 6; comp. 2 Cor. xi. 6; Col. ii. 3; comp. Eph. i. 17; iii. 10, 18; Rom. xi. 33; xv. 14.

† Θεμέλιος, 1 Cor. iii. 10, and foll.; Heb. vi. 1.

‡ Ἰστῆς ἀρχῆς Χριστοῦ λόγον, Heb. loc. cit.; στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων, Heb. v. 12.

§ Αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα, Heb. v. 14; ὀρθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας πεφατισμένοι, Eph. i. 18.

started,* and they were eager to lead on unto perfection † all who were able to follow them.

It is not our purpose to give here even a detailed exposition of that which we are entitled to comprise under the term Christian gnosticism, in so far as that belongs to the apostolic age, and therefore to the sphere of our history. The whole of the rest of this work will be devoted to an exposition of the teaching of the apostles from a theological point of view, and we shall confine ourselves for the present to indicating briefly the main points of doctrine of which they treat. For this purpose, it will suffice to compare the facts to which attention has been already directed, with the contents of the books we shall have to analyze.

We shall notice especially two points, in reference to which theologic thought should never be slow to leave behind mere elementary principles. We have already given prominence to them in speaking of the rise of evangelical theology; we revert to them now to show how they became the primary subjects of what the apostles themselves regarded as Christian gnosticism, or rather how that term came to be first applied to them. These two points are the relation of the two covenants, and the nature of the person of Christ. To the former, reflection was drawn as soon as it was found impossible to maintain the observance of the law in all its traditional precepts, though its Divine origin was still recognized. It was necessary to find some standpoint from which these two apparently contradictory principles might be harmonized. We know that Paul applied himself specially to this question, making it an essential part of his teaching. The solution which he gave, and which referred at once to the theory and the method, is more than once presented by him and his followers, as a discovery made by virtue of a deeper apprehension of that which remained hidden from the many. The theory was that of the transitory purpose of the law; the method was that of typology. These two ideas will occupy a large place in the

* Ἐπιγεια ἐπουράνια, John iii. 12.

† Heb. v. 13, and foll.; vi. 1; 1 Cor. ii. 6; iii. 1.

exposition we have to give, and in most of the special representations that will come before us.

With reference to the other point, it must not be forgotten that the disciples had acquired before the death of the Saviour a very positive conviction of His superhuman nature. The gospels mention various circumstances which prove to us that this conviction was founded on the impression naturally produced upon them by the discourses and miracles of their Master;* His resurrection revived their faith in new power, but they did not feel any immediate necessity of embodying their belief in a theological form. The tradition of the school suggested to them, at most, certain expressions by means of which they might attempt to convey their true sentiments. The simple, eloquent profession of faith made by Peter in the name of his colleagues, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," bears the impress of that direct assurance, of that unquestioning conviction, which is never the result of metaphysical speculation. Thus the religion of the disciples was essentially matter of personal experience, and we may conclude that the Christology of the Church also sprung originally from a heart vitalized by love, and was not built up exclusively on abstract theories. On the other hand, it was natural that the spirit of reflection should soon suggest the necessity of rendering some account of a fact which assumed paramount importance in the circle of the new religious ideas. Even before this, the theology of Judaism had risen to conceptions which promised, in their turn, to throw some light on that which had until now never been the subject of thoughtful investigation. The metaphysical notion of the Deity, as it had grown up in the schools of the time, on the basis of the Old Testament, appeared singularly to aid the researches of the new Christian theologians, and to shed the light of science upon beliefs already acquired, and thoroughly established. We shall find all the writers of the first century entering on this path, and differing among themselves only

* Matt. xvi. 16; xiv. 33; Mark viii. 29; Luke ix. 20; xxiv. 21; John vi. 69; comp. xx. 28, etc.

in the more or less scientific forms in which they clothed one and the same thought. Christology will form an essential and important chapter in apostolic theology, but we shall find whenever we revert to the teachings given by these writers, that the two elements of simple instinctive faith, and wisdom more or less transcendental, join hands and advance side by side—distinct always, but never hostile.

Beyond these two main points, there still remained a wide field to be cultivated, but one which was at first comparatively neglected, because it had scarcely attracted the notice of the wisdom of the fathers. We refer especially to matters connected with the moral nature of man. Jesus had awakened in a world stultified by Pharisaic legalism, the direct consciousness of sin; He had taught His disciples to sound men's hearts, to gauge the impulses of their moral and spiritual activity; He had shown them that the present and the future depend on the direction given by men to their powers and possibilities. This was the basis of what we may call the psychology of the Gospel, which will embrace all the facts relating to the inner life, considered from the ethical point of view, from the very first impulse to good to a complete salvation. The facts, which were known to all the members of the community by personal experience, became to some the subject of special meditation; these sought to arrive at a knowledge of the nature and scope of the facts, and by connecting them with the great principles of the new covenant and of salvation in Christ, they came to assimilate or identify, in a manner, doctrine and morality, and to give new life to both through this closer union. Thus their teaching remained popular in form, while in substance it yet rose to take in conceptions foreign to the thought of the age. Ethical precepts received a more powerful sanction; social duties were animated by religious feeling; the prospect of the future assumed less material colours. Thus theories were formed on the moral misery of man, on his natural weakness, his need of redemption, the help of grace, the end and the means of the Church, the hopes of the believer,—theories which not

every mind was capable of developing for itself, but which, once formed and stated, were found within the grasp of all, and marvellously responsive to their more or less articulate experience. In this sphere, however, some of those more arduous problems presented themselves, on which the human mind loves to ponder, though it can but very imperfectly solve them,—such problems as the origin of evil, the relation between the will of God and that of man, and all that belongs to the mysteries of the life to come. We shall see that more than one theologian of the apostolic age touched upon one or other of these questions, which became subsequently an inexhaustible subject of study and controversy; and that if in regard to these as to other points above enumerated, the Christian wisdom of the first age has not succeeded in satisfying by anticipation the speculative requirements of later generations, it at least kept always in view the immediate needs of the community.

Its attention was also often directed to another sphere of religious thought, into which the science of the Church, too exclusively desirous to broaden the horizon of speculative reason, has not followed it. The apostolic theology had, at least in its most illustrious representatives, an essentially mystical tendency. We have marked the presence of the mystical element in the teaching of Jesus,—that is to say, the idea ever present of a personal and direct union between the human soul and God. We shall not therefore be surprised to find the same idea reproduced by those of the disciples who had most truly apprehended the meaning of the Gospel. If they loved to dwell on the promise of their Master, that He would abide with them by giving them His Spirit, it was not that they claimed any peculiar privilege for themselves personally, but that they felt in the depths of their soul that this promise had not been an empty saying, that their whole nature had been transformed, ennobled by it, raised above its own weakness by a mysterious power which their reason could not control, and the operation of which they loved to recognize in all who believed. So truly was this the case, that they came at last to appropriate the very name of faith to that feeling of intimate union, of personal oneness

with Him who had redeemed them unto God, and who did not suffer them to wander and stumble along the sterile, delusive path of this world's wisdom. Upon this basis, laid without the aid of logic or rhetoric, they built up a theology of the Gospel, at once simple and sublime, one which offers still, as from the first it offered, peace and consolation to spirits wearied with the vain attempt to rise on reason's wing to God. Conversion, regarded as a new birth, the abolition of sin through the mystical death of the sinner, the hope of the life to come made sure by the resurrection of Christ,—all these phases of the life of the believer, considered as so many stages of his identification with the spiritual and representative life of Christ; the entire Church as the living body of the Redeemer; its rites regarded as symbols of the intimate union of the members with the Head; and all the traditions of Judaism spiritualized by the potent influence of a new principle,—this is the sphere in which we shall find apostolic theology rising to its highest perfection, the sphere in which alone the Christian wisdom of the primitive age has never been surpassed.

CHAPTER XI.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

BEFORE concluding this preliminary historical survey, and passing on to the exposition of theology in theory, we must meet one objection which has been urged against us in various quarters, and which, if it were well founded, would be of a nature to arrest our progress, or at least to constrain us to abandon the method we propose to follow in the other parts of our work. Is it possible, it is asked, to present the theology of the apostles under systematic forms? Did their teaching ever cease to be popular, by which we mean subordinate in its forms and methods, to the necessities of circumstance and the capacities of the masses? Did it ever attain such a scientific development, that our scholastic modes of treatment can be applied to it, without the risk of changing its whole character, of depriving it of just that which was most characteristic, and which guaranteed its enduring value as the basis of all theology? To this question the old orthodoxy unhesitatingly replied in the affirmative. It was itself, by its very nature, so confident in its logical accuracy, and so fully persuaded of its identity with the doctrine of the apostles, that it was startled when in the last century the question was mooted of the distinction to be made between the theology of the schools and that of the Scriptures. We can well understand, however, how those who approve of a separate and independent treatment of the latter should presage danger in any attempt to systematize it. It is very easy, we admit, to go too far in this direction; that is no reason, however, for condemning absolutely the legitimate use

of a method which has its great advantages. Doubtless, if by means of analysis we eliminate from the entire preaching of an apostle the theoretical elements only, and study them apart from the rest, we are in danger of taking a very imperfect view of their entire import. But is there really any necessity for separating these elements from that which connected them with the life of the faithful and of the Church, whether in their ideal expression or practical application? Does not the true exposition, as we have seen, bring into prominence this great fact, that the apostolic teaching everywhere united by an indissoluble bond that which science has unhappily been too persistent in disjoining—theory and practice, doctrine and morality? We shall certainly go astray if we attempt to derive an entire system from a few pages written for a special purpose, and which give perhaps the only key we have to their author's mind; but must we therefore cease to search in the same pages for the ideas by which they are linked to other systems more complete, broader, and better known? Again, it would be perfectly right to withhold the term *system* from the teaching of the apostles, if the word is supposed necessarily to signify a body of scholastic theses, such as those of which the seventeenth century supplies a category; and we imagine that those most keenly conscious of the difference between these two forms of Christian teaching, have insisted the most upon the necessity of distinguishing them even by separate names. But this difference having been once recognized, and, what is more, abundantly demonstrated wherever proof is needed, we hold that the name *system* may and ought to be maintained, if we can trace its constituent elements in the writings before us, those elements being a fundamental principle recognized and laid down, and a logical division of the consequences to be derived from it.

The same objection meets us again from another quarter. If it is true, as a conscientious study of the document has shown, that the most scientific form under which the teaching of the apostles has come down to us, was the result of a progressive development, directed by the Spirit of God, can the progres-

sive method of the narration, which we have hitherto adopted, be advantageously replaced by that which may be called a synoptical exposition, in which all is placed on the same level, and all traces of progressive development are obliterated? This objection, often advanced in our day, has some speciousness, and the historian should be the last to depreciate its importance. But if it rests, in theory, on a just appreciation of the facts, in practice it cannot influence to any extent the course to be taken. Indeed, in order to prove this progressive development of which we have spoken, we have had recourse to all our sources at once, so as to bring together the analogous facts supplied by them, and to elicit at the same time the ideas which give these facts their significance. As the facts were interlinked, the ideas also naturally assumed a position of mutual dependence. The task which remains before us is of a different order. We have now to pass in review these same sources taken separately, and to consider each singly as the expression of a particular phase of that series of facts or succession of ideas. Now with regard to almost all these documents, the preliminary question raised—that, namely, of a progressive development to be shown—does not come before us at all, either because we do not know the history of the writer whom we study, but know him only through his book, or simply because that book, at whatever stage of the author's life it was written, is the expression of his thought at the given moment.

There is only one writer among all of whom we have to speak, in regard to whom the objection we have mentioned could arrest us. That writer is Paul. The objection indeed is raised with special reference to him. Nor does it come solely from critics who dispute his claims to the authorship of some of the epistles which bear his name. Among those who accept with us the genuineness of all these epistles, there are many who regard them as different types of the teaching of the apostle, the expression of a thought which was still in process of formation, and of which we can very distinctly trace the progressive advance, but the various elements of which cannot be harmonized into a single and complete system.

In theory, such an assertion contains nothing startling. The narration we have already given shows plainly enough that we have no intention of ignoring the claims of psychology and of history, in the estimate of the facts to be discussed. We can even call in the testimony of Paul himself as our authority in speaking of progress and development in his apprehension of the Gospel. He certifies that the Gospel preached by him was not learned of man, that he was not taught it by any of his colleagues,* but by the revelation of Jesus Christ vouchsafed to him on repeated occasions.† He speaks of growth in knowledge, no less than in grace and charity, as the fundamental condition of the Christian life.‡ He declares that he himself has not yet attained to the goal set before him, and says: "I press toward the mark."§ He characterizes his knowledge and his teaching as yet fragmentary and incomplete, and says that they will remain so until the day of final revelation;|| and in every direction, not only in relation to spiritual enjoyments and moral perfection,¶ but also in relation to the comprehension of the eternal decrees and the wisdom of God, he sees before him the vista of illimitable progress, which sustains and stimulates his efforts, while at the same time it eludes and outlies them all.

A sound psychology will not then deem it impossible that Paul may have only gradually apprehended by a mental process, those convictions the germs of which were implanted in his soul by the Spirit of God, in the great crisis of his spiritual history. Methodical arrangement, the right disposition of materials, the support of argument, the exposition of evidence, the combination of various phases of truth, the resources of polemics—things indispensable not only in the solid construction of a great system, but in a life entirely devoted to controversy, preaching, and every form of instruction,—all these would be the result of prolonged and conscientious effort, of laborious and continued study. And since it is impossible to determine

* Gal. i. 11, and foll. ; 2 Cor. xi. 5.

† 2 Cor. xii. 1, etc.

‡ Eph. iv. 11—16, etc.

§ Phil. iii. 14.

|| 1 Cor. xiii. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 7.

¶ Rom. xi. 33, etc.

precisely at what point the labour expended on the form ceases, and that which deals with the substance begins, we must freely admit that the theological system in which Paul glories may offer as fair a field to the historian who seeks to trace the gradual evolution of thought as to the theologian in search of a definite and final result. The exposition we have already given shows that this aspect of the subject has not been disregarded by us.

We feel it no less incumbent upon us, however, to consider his system in the second aspect; for the course of preparation through which we think Paul must necessarily have passed before he arrived at his ultimate theological views, must have been almost completed at the time when that series of epistles commences from which we shall derive our information, so that we may safely use them without fear of blending together ideas belonging to different stages in the progressive development of their author. The literary career of the apostle, so far at least as we can trace it, embraces only the last ten or eleven years of his life,—a shorter period than elapsed between his conversion and the oldest epistle we possess. Thus we are led by the probabilities of the case to conclude that he must have had both time and occasion to complete his system during the former period. Before committing it to writing, he probably taught it orally, and tested it in the vicissitudes of a troubled life. The progress, which we readily recognize in the results of the labour devoted to it, is to be traced in a period preceding that in which the series of epistles commences. If beyond this point, as we note the chronological succession of the epistles, we can discover in them a growing clearness of view, exactness of statement, and expansion of the theological horizon, we must not exaggerate the significance of such indications; for we must bear in mind that the epistles are called forth by various exigencies, that they are independent of each other, but in very close dependence on the changing necessities of the various Churches to which they are addressed, and are greatly influenced also by the mode and measure of the oral teaching previously received, of which we know nothing. We

find no indication in this latter period of the apostle's labours that as a writer he had ever to change his standpoint, or modify his great principles.

We maintain, then, the possibility of deriving from these epistles, a system coherent and harmonious in all its parts. In opposition to this view, much stress has been laid upon the speculative Christology said to be taught only in the later epistles, and upon the Messianic hopes, still clothed in the garb of Jewish materialism, expressed only in those of earlier date. We shall show, however, as we proceed, that critics have misinterpreted, on both these points, the scope of the apostle's words. With reference to the first, we shall easily prove that the earliest epistles contain all the premises of the more extended teachings that follow, and that we may find in them more than one explicit statement bearing upon them, and more than one dogmatic term in which the same theory is plainly presupposed. As to the other point, it is true that we find in the writings of Paul, representations borrowed from the Messianic traditions of the Jews, side by side with the utterances of a more exalted spiritualism. But these two views do not appear in chronologic sequence. Paul was, like his colleagues, the man of his age and of his nation; the images impressed upon his mind by all the early influences of the schools, were never completely effaced; but the new, the Christian element, the life of love and duty blended with the old vivid imaginings, and added, rather than substituted, many new images, more in harmony with the mysticism of the Gospel. This combination, which in theory may not appear justifiable, should at least be regarded as the less strange, because it is found more or less in the minds of us all, and the spirituality of our Christian hopes has not even yet entirely cast off its material garb.

We claim then the right to speak of *systems* even in this first period of Christian theology. But, we repeat, we are far from using the term in the same sense as when it is applied to a modern conception, elaborated in the study and presented to the contemplation of the learned. Not such was

the theology of the apostles. Intimately connected with the religious life of the Church, having as its chief aim the spiritual education of the multitude of the faithful, it never ceased to be practical and edifying. Therefore it has been a well-spring for all subsequent ages; and all later theology, in whatever way it has sought to exert a salutary influence on the Christian world, has derived its principles and its power from the same source. The saying of the disciples, which we lately quoted, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," might be legitimately applied to the relation between the theologians who came after the apostles, and their illustrious patterns and exemplars; and if Protestantism took up the cry with renewed energy and emphasis, it does not follow that it had ever in that age, or in ages preceding, been formally denied.

But it may also be said with truth, that Christian theology, from the apostolic age down to our own day, has become more and more absorbed in dialectic discussion; that it has shown a tendency to become too rigidly an affair of systems, so that the practical interests, which at first formed part of its very essence, have been subordinated or even sacrificed to theoretical considerations. Definitions gradually assumed more importance than duties; metaphysics arrogated the dispensation of the graces of the Gospel; and the form of sound words, taking the place of regeneration of heart, the Church came to stand on a basis altogether different from that laid at the beginning. If the history of Christian theology in the apostolic age, is the living image of a regenerative movement of thought and of social relations, the history of dogmas in the following ages is nothing more than a chapter of speculative philosophy; and if it is still linked to the history of the Church, it is by the violent commotions, struggles, and schisms which the exercise of the reasoning faculties alone has never failed to produce, and which have rendered greatly more difficult the return of scientific theology to the salutary simplicity of its starting-point.*

* The vice of scientific theology consists in the extent to which it has relied upon the validity of the processes of a merely formal logic as applied to the contents of divine revelation and of the spiritual consciousness of

The most lamentable effect of this argumentative and speculative tendency was the rapid deterioration of the mystical element, which had been, so to speak, the vital sap of the theology of the great apostles. Mysticism, indeed, is in itself an element not easily apprehended by the masses, who require something more positive.* The intensity of feeling which finds its supreme satisfaction in the union of the soul with its God and Saviour, and which gives at the same time the key to all the mysteries of the invisible world, grows less with the lapse of time. The number of those among whom it is diffused makes it gradually lose its primal strength. In order to remain pure and powerful as at first, it must be confined within a narrow circle, and withdrawn from contact with the world. Like a delicate plant, which gives forth its full fragrance and beauty only under wise and careful culture, which degenerates or becomes wild again under unskilful hands, so mysticism is, of all the forms of the religious life, that the elements of which are most liable to change in their nature and true value; and the very length and breadth of the career open to it, present special facilities for this deterioration.

Thus we find that in the earliest theology of the second generation, this element disappears gradually, leaving behind it only abstract statements, fit food for the speculation of thinkers, but offering to those who possessed no such powers of inde-

man. It has failed to verify its deductious "step by step" by a fresh appeal to spiritual facts. Hence every fresh movement of scientific theology has originated in a revival of intense religious earnestness in the Church generally or in the profound spiritual experience of an individual theologian. A return to *facts* has given new life to theological thought. All that is true in the Augustinian theology came from the depth of Augustine's consciousness of sin. The noblest elements of the theology of the Reformation were the direct results of those severe conflicts which preceded Luther's sense of rest in God. Between the spiritual life of the Church and a true scientific theology there is an indissoluble connection.—ED.

* The truth of this may be contested. Mysticism as a philosophy cannot be "apprehended by the masses," but wherever there is deep religious life, whether among cultivated or illiterate, the great principles of mysticism will be apprehended by the heart.—ED.

pendent thought, only formulas to be learned by rote. The living image of the Saviour, dying and rising again in each believer, and testifying His presence by the direct and constant operation of His Spirit, became the possession of a few privileged ones only, and these not always to be found among the leaders of the Church. The foremost spirits, meanwhile absorbed in studying the nature of the Incarnate Word, made Christology a chapter of transcendental philosophy. The faith which had been with the apostles the very life of the regenerate man, and the strength of which, abundantly nourished by close and personal union with Jesus, rendered superfluous any law from without,—(so did it overflow the believing heart with gratitude towards Him who wrought all these good works in it, and gave to it the promise of eternal life,)—this faith, emptied of its essential element, became the seal or appendix of a cold system of scholastic jurisprudence, which lowered while it pretended to exalt the work of redemption, and ministered only to moral indolence.

Apart from this transformation effected by intellectual as dissevered from moral effort, apostolic teaching lost some of its native vigour also, by the prolonged friction of contending influences which agitated the first century, and which have principally occupied us in this volume. The contest between Judæo-Christianity in its more or less exclusive forms, and Helleno-Christianity, which was of the liberal and universalist school, between the principle of legality and the principle of grace, continued after the death of the apostles. The one represented the tendencies of conservatism, the old ideas; the other, the party of progress, and of new thought; and it is not to be wondered at that the disciples of Paul and those of the Pharisees, could not agree so long as they both remained consistent and firm in their convictions. This struggle continued even to be defined and individualized by proper names, according to the wont and tactics of parties in all spheres of human activity. Well or ill chosen, these names are a power; they do not serve to decide quarrels, but to simplify them in the eyes of the many; they envenom rather than

terminate disputes. The Judaizing opposition thus survived Paul and the first age. It occupies a considerable place in the second century. We have not to follow out here its ultimate chances of success or defeat. Suffice it to say, that after having maligned the memory of the great apostle, in books and even in legends which became popular, this party, yielding to the slow but sure ascendancy gained by evangelical ideas, finally became a dissenting sect, continually decreasing in numbers and importance, but having exercised in its day a pernicious and repressive influence on the development of the Church.

For it is a fact that the human mind is governed, like matter, by a law as natural as it is general, according to which opposing influences have a tendency to wear out and blunt each other, to rub off their asperities by the mere friction, and finally to find some middle way on which they may meet in peace. This phenomenon, as old as the world, yet always new, may be observed in all social relations, in politics and in the sciences no less than in the Church. This does not imply that truth is always to be found in the happy medium between two theories accidentally opposed; and nothing is further from our thought than to characterize as true progress the compromise attempted by the theology of the second century, between Paul and the synagogue. These remarks are not made to extol a method, but to verify a psychological fact, of which we have before us an example often overlooked.

We have now seen both theories confronted, the two parties in a state of declared war, and the unity of the Church seriously compromised from its first steps in the world. It might be divined that one of these two principles would undertake alone to lead the Church forward, after having gained a decisive triumph over the other, in which its integrity should have been vindicated and its privilege guaranteed. This was not, however, the case. It is true that the Church remained one, universal, *catholic*; or rather it became so by degrees, through the completion of its system and the opposition to gnosticism, but not through the absolute triumph of either of the

two principles of which we have just spoken. Pauline universalism was in the end victorious over Jewish exclusiveness; but if the latter abandoned circumcision and other forms of the traditional religion, it bequeathed to the Church in return, beside the tendency to a hierarchy, a series of popular beliefs, and yet more, an essentially legal morality—elements which only too soon began to fetter the free movement of the Spirit of God, for whose reign the apostles had so bravely contended.

BOOK FOURTH.

JUDÆO-CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

IN the preceding part of this work, we have been endeavouring to trace the rise of Christian theology in the apostolic age. We have noted first the gradual change passing upon Mosaic ideas through the medium of the synagogue, and the state of religious instruction among the Jews at the time of the coming of Christ. We have next dwelt on the teaching of Christ Himself, observing what new thoughts and principles He implanted in the hearts and consciences of His disciples. Lastly, we have traced the growing influence of these thoughts upon the minds that received them; how they led first to the formation of the Church, and then impressed upon it its special and peculiar character; how they piloted it through the perils and straits with which the rigidity of old forms impeded its course; how, after regenerating the moral nature of the whole body of believers, they went on to offer to those capable of more profound thought and speculative study, sound and wholesome nourishment, and to open to them a rich and inexhaustible mine. It yet remains for us to set forth in a more detailed and systematic manner, the progress and results of these studies and meditations on the truth of Christ.

We have already hinted that the effort of reflection on the precious heritage left by the Master (and this is the sum and substance of Christian theology,) would naturally produce dif-

ferent results according to the standpoint taken by the thinker, the measure of his independence of old beliefs, and the preponderance given to one or other of the fundamental ideas of the Gospel ; in short, it would take the impress of the aim he set before him, whether that aim was to uphold conscience and give a new sacredness to duty, or to satisfy the eager craving to understand the deep things of God, or to build up the inner life, and cherish the contemplative spirit. Hence arose the various forms and phases of Christian truth into which we shall now look more closely, as they come before us in the writings which set them forth. We shall there see, so to speak, divers rays of more or less power, all proceeding from the same centre of light, and all equally adapted, in their own order, to illuminate the path pursued by Christian theology on to our own day. We shall endeavour to apprehend each group of ideas in its characteristic expression, in its complete and exact form, so as to present it to our readers in a pictorial rather than a narrative mould. The number of such pictures may vary according to the method of exposition adopted. There have been authors who have blended all into one, bringing the analogies into such prominence as to throw the shades of difference completely into the background. Others have deemed it preferable to trace many separate outlines, hoping to present the truth more fully, the more distinctness they gave to the varieties of detail. We propose to adopt the latter method, guarding ourselves however against exaggeration.

In fact, the theology of the apostolic age, truly so called, offers to the study of the historian only two bodies of doctrine which demand or justify a systematic exposition ; that, namely, which is contained in the epistles of Paul, and that which is expressed in the gospel and epistles of John. To these therefore we shall devote two entire books, which will be the most extended portions of this work. The other writings which complete the New Testament collection, are much less adapted to become the subjects of a study of this kind ; they are too slightly developed, too dependent on the special or accidental circumstances which called them forth. It is true that the

scholiasts of the seventeenth century, and even of our own day, have repeatedly tried to derive a complete system of Christian theology from every separate small epistle of the Scripture canon. But we are persuaded that, with regard to most of the writings of this description, the task of the theological exegete ought to be simply to ascertain the relations of the teaching they contain, within the limits which their authors have imposed upon themselves, either to one or other of the two principal types of which we have just spoken, or to the religious elements previously possessed by those to whom the epistles were sent.

To these then we first address ourselves. We may have been convinced by what has been already said in the preceding part of this work, that in the primitive Church, especially in Palestine and wherever the Christian society was composed mainly of Jews, a certain alliance was formed or maintained between the new convictions, aroused by the person and teaching of Jesus Christ, and the hopes and religious traditions existing in the synagogue. In this alliance the old element sometimes predominated, if not in theory at least in practice and in application, through the force of habit or the feeble apprehension of the new and regenerative truths of the Gospel. The apostles themselves were the first to mark this fact, though it has received but little notice from their followers in the theological field. In our own day, attention has been drawn to it afresh, and it has even been marked by a new and special name,—*Judæo-Christianity*. As this term is now generally adopted, we have made use of it, though it scarcely commends itself to us as well chosen. For the second of its two terms signifies simply belief in a Christ, and as this belief was in no way foreign to Judaism, the combination of the two terms depends for any special meaning on a purely conventional interpretation. That interpretation gives to the term *Christianity* its present acceptation, and thus marks the union of two heterogeneous elements in one common formula.

It follows from what we have just said that in entering upon an exposition of Judæo-Christian theology, we do not intend to

promise or offer anything like a summary of a complete and fully developed system. We shall have rather to analyze the religious ideas which arose in the Churches of Jewish origin, from the unconscious and spontaneous action of the various influences brought into contact within them, and before the progress of events, or the ascendancy of the privileged organs of God's truth, had succeeded in freeing the Gospel element from its accidental envelope. We shall have then to speak, not so much of the doctrine of any particular apostolic personage, as of the beliefs generally diffused among the people. In reference to many points, masters and disciples, evangelists and catechumens, would start from the same ground and serve their apprenticeship together. We shall doubtless find some making quicker progress than others; we shall see before us some men deeply attentive to the instruction addressed to them unceasingly by the Spirit of God, others less ready to profit and always lagging behind. But at first the difference was not great, for we find the immediate disciples of the Saviour asking Him in all simplicity, on the very eve of His ascension, if He was about now to restore the kingdom to Israel, and thus to re-establish things on their old footing;* and we know that long years after, they could with difficulty comprehend that it was lawful for them to baptize Gentiles.

We observe yet further, that the religious notions with the analysis of which we shall be occupied in the present book, do not belong exclusively to any one class of Church members, that is, to an exceptionally dull and laggard party. We shall find that many of these notions were, and even still continue to be, common to the great majority of Christians. For this reason, and independently of all others which regulate the duty of the historian, it is not his province here or elsewhere to pronounce a critical judgment on the theories and beliefs which come before him. His one duty is to ascertain fully what those theories and beliefs are, and to leave it to others to estimate their significance and natural connection.

We may give in a word the substance of Judæo-Christian

* Ἀποκαθιστάνειν, Acts i. 6.

theology. In its primitive simplicity it is summed up as we have already said in the confession, *Jesus is the Christ*. This confession comprises three elements or applications.

The fact of the veritable appearance of the Christ in the person of Jesus, implies the immediate setting up of His kingdom.* Christian preaching will then deal primarily and before all else, with this prospective fact, which is so completely the dominant note of Judæo-Christianity, that any exposition of its teaching ought to commence with its eschatology or religious conceptions of the future. With this will be associated its Christology, or the doctrine of the person and nature of Messiah from a theological point of view. The condition of entrance into the kingdom, as well as the advantages to be thus obtained,—in other words, the doctrine of salvation,—will form the third and last part of our exposition. This last section may fairly take as its motto, words which occur frequently in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, as if epitomizing all their preaching: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.”†

* Acts i. 11; ii. 17; iii. 19, and foll.; comp. Matt. x. 7; Luke x. 9, etc.

† Μετανοήσατε καὶ βαπτίξεσθε ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰ. χρ. εἰς ἄρεσιν ἁφαρτιῶν, Acts ii. 38, iii. 19, v. 31, viii. 22, etc.

CHAPTER II.

EXEGETIS.

BEFORE passing on to the more detailed history of the apostolic theology itself, it will be needful to say a few words as to the methods by which its form was determined. We cannot too emphatically repeat that the teaching in the primitive Church was practical and popular, and never lost sight of the track pursued in this respect by Christ Himself. It was only on rare and exceptional occasions, and in presence of a select or special auditory, that theology endeavoured to rise to a height to which the masses could not follow it, a height which in later days it has only too exclusively sought. In all other circumstances, as our sacred books bear witness, the spiritual wants of the Church were amply satisfied by the simple narration of the history, by exhortation sustained by promise, in a word by that strong consolation in Christ, which drew all believers together in the bond of brotherhood. The ideas new and peculiar to the Gospel, even those which revealed mysteries or suggested speculative problems, were always closely associated with that which was more practical, and more immediately applicable in social and ecclesiastical life, so that the heart was as much interested as the reason. In a word, the theology of the apostles was not what that of their successors has too often been, a purely intellectual exercise, a more or less abstract scholastic study; it was an element entering into the daily life of the Church itself, and taking its form and direction from the exigencies of that life. The best proof of the justness of these observations is the fact that the writings of the

apostles, after so many ages, and under outward conditions so different from those of primitive days, still serve for the edification of the Christian community, and remain unchanged in form. This fact must not be attributed exclusively to the dogmatic authority which the Church attaches to these writings; they owe their indefeasible power to qualities not dependent on human opinion. Assuredly, considering the progress which the science of religion, guided by the Gospel, has made since those days, we should say that it ought to have left far behind these records of its early efforts; and in a philosophical point of view, the distance is indeed considerable. But the more philosophy has essayed its powers in the domain of theology, the more does the heart cling to those ancient models of a true Gospel teaching, which can never cease to be the wonder and joy of those who know how to apprehend for themselves the thoughts and principles they convey.

We shall often have occasion, as we proceed, to revert to these considerations; therefore we do not for the present dwell on them more fully. In this chapter we propose to bring before our readers another subject belonging altogether and exclusively to what may be termed scientific theology, one which touches at the same time very closely on the questions that most deeply occupied the thinkers of the age of which we are writing the history. This is the argumentative method based upon exegesis. In almost all the Christian writings of the first century, we find many quotations of passages from the sacred books of the Old Covenant,* and these quotations, for the greater part, are not used simply incidentally or by way of illustration, but as dogmatic evidence in support of positive teaching. They belong then to the special subject before us.

At the time when Christianity was born, the synagogue had formed the writings of the prophets and some other books, for

* The Epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to the Thessalonians, are the only ones which contain no such quotations; for the minor epistles addressed by Paul and John to special individuals must not here be taken into account.

the most part of more recent origin, into a collection which, added to the five volumes of the law, formed its canon, the sacred source of its doctrines and laws, of its civil and ecclesiastical code. The people were familiarized with its contents, less by means of private study, than by the public readings in the weekly assemblies of the community.* The apostles preserved this latter institution, not only from the force of habit and so long as they continued in union with the synagogue, but on principle, and because they had learned to find in those same books the authentic confirmation of the faith awakened and fostered by the teaching, the miracles, and the resurrection of their Master. It was thus that the knowledge and use of the Scriptures became common among the Christians of Greek origin, since the teaching of the apostles always took as its basis the predictions of the prophets, and the close and providential connection between the earlier revelations and the things which had come to pass in the latter days. It is true that direct testimony in evidence of this usage as existing in the primitive Church, is scarcely to be found,† but the numerous quotations in the apostolic writings justify us at least in assuming that the Christians possessed a measure of familiarity with the law and the prophets, which they could have acquired in no other way than through the public readings of the Scriptures.

The apostles adopted without alteration the dogmatic theories applied by the Jews to this canonical collection. The doctrine of the inspiration of the prophets, and of the sacred writers generally, had received in the schools the fullest development of which it was capable. That inspiration ‡ was regarded as something altogether exceptional, as the peculiar privilege of a small number of individuals chosen by Providence, or as bestowed only to meet special and solemn emergencies.§ The

* Luke iv. 16 ; Acts xiii. 15, 27 ; xv. 21 ; 2 Cor. iii. 15.

† 1 Tim. iv. 13.

‡ *Θεόπνευστος*, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

§ Acts i. 16 ; ii. 30 ; Heb. iii. 7 ; ix. 8 ; x. 15 ; 1 Peter i. 11 ; comp. 2 Peter i. 21, etc.

communications made to Israel by the prophets were so emphatically the word of the Lord and of His spirit, and not the counsel of the speakers' own wisdom, that the significance of what they said was often not perceived by themselves until the fulfilment of the prophecy made it plain. It was not needful, therefore, to cite the names of the various sacred writers in order to give weight to their testimony to religious or prophetic truth; though custom allowed this to be done. It was enough to appeal to Scripture in a general and abstract manner; or rather it was a natural consequence of the dogmatic principle laid down, to speak of Scripture as a single, continuous, organic, and personal authority, itself speaking, and which, having prevision of the future before uttering its prophecies, in a manner fulfilled its own predictions, since by the light of those predictions alone the fulfilment was recognized.* This character of absolute authority, moreover, belongs to it not only as a whole, but is possessed in the same degree by every subordinate part, so that all are spoken of as *the Scriptures* †—that is, special and indubitable manifestations of the will of God.

We have already seen how this point of view, which was that of the Jews before its adoption by the Christians, would naturally give rise to exegesis, or the art of interpreting Scripture. We can understand that the Christian community, as such, would not be equally interested in all the departments of exegetical labour carried on in the schools. The Messianic theology would naturally be to it the centre of interest, and this was cultivated in the Church with equal ardour and success. It is very important to note here that the Christians found themselves in relation to this matter in an altogether different position from those who had gone before them. The latter, whose pious and eager curiosity could not be satisfied with the clear and exact predictions contained in the books of the prophets, and who were anxious to know much more about the future of their nation and of the world, were driven to seek

* Gal. iii. 8, 22; Rom. ix. 17; John vii. 38, etc. (*ἡ γραφή*).

† *Γραφαί*, see Acts i. 16; viii. 35; James ii. 8, 23; John xix. 37; Luke xxiv. 27, etc.; comp. John x. 35.

laboriously for prophetic signs in texts which seemed to mock their inquiries. The apostles, on the contrary, and their disciples, held in their hands a new key with which to unlock the mysteries of the prophetic Scriptures. They had received more complete revelations of the kingdom of God, its destinies and laws, and with this aid they could easily decipher the meaning of writings which had been hitherto either passed by or imperfectly understood by the students of theology. The exegetes of the synagogue had been trying to calculate an unknown quantity; the exegetes of the Church started with this problem already solved, and had only to test and verify the solution. The former, with infinite and often thankless labour, had sought amidst the darkness of the past the light which was to shine upon their future; the latter beheld the old covenant in the glass of the new, and the dawn of reality dissipated the night of symbol.

The apostles were conscious of this change in their mode of viewing things. They tell us expressly that they only learned how to interpret Scripture after the consummation of all the facts which form the historic basis of the Gospel,* and one of them even goes so far as to raise this observation, so simple in itself, to the height of a theological principle.†

After all that has just been said, it can scarcely be needful to add that in quoting, in support of their teaching, passages from the holy books, the apostles and their disciples acted in the full conviction that these texts contained direct predictions relative to the facts and principles of the new covenant. Sometimes perhaps, but very rarely, they may have referred to these Old Testament passages merely by way of analogy or illustration, but such an explanation is not as a rule sufficient. The text quoted, especially if introduced with a theological formula, is regarded as having reference, in the mind of the Spirit by whom it was dictated, exclusively to the actual fact in support of which it is adduced. We know that the science of modern schools has fixed on one series of

* Luke xxiv. 6, and foll. ; John ii. 17, 22 ; xii. 16 ; xx. 9.

† 2 Cor. iii. 13, and foll.

passages, in relation to which a purely historical exegesis is found to conflict with the exegesis of the apostles; and theologians, especially in these latter days, have devised very various expedients by which to lessen the importance of this divergence, or to do away with it altogether. We are not called upon to go into their explanations; it is enough for us to verify by examples carefully chosen among the many which present themselves on every page of the New Testament, the plan and principle of the exegesis of our sacred writers.*

The first point upon which we lay stress here is that the principle of a twofold meaning is foreign to the exegetical science of the apostles.† We know that this principle, designed to satisfy at once the demands of a rational or historical exegesis, and of a theology interested in spiritualizing the contents of the Old Testament and in respecting the explanations given in the New, found acceptance with the Church from the time of Origen to the Reformation in the sixteenth century; that since then it has been advocated by Calvin and his school; and that, even in our own days, orthodox science is not prepared to dismiss it absolutely. We shall pronounce no judgment

* *Ὅπως πληρωθῆ*, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," etc.

† It is impossible to discuss within the brief limits of a note the large question of the quotations from the Old Testament and the New. These quotations appear, however, to fall into three principal divisions: (1) Passages which are alleged as directly prophetic of Christ and His kingdom, and which were recognized by Jews as well as Christians as referring immediately to the person and work of the Messiah. (2) Passages which had an immediate reference to persons in whom the Messianic ideal had been imperfectly fulfilled, and which are used by the writers of the New Testament as having their complete meaning fulfilled in Christ. (3) Passages which are quoted just as we are in the habit of quoting phrases and sentences from the great English classics, without any intention of suggesting that the events to which we apply them were present to the mind of the writers. To which of these three classes any particular quotation belongs must be determined by the ordinary principles of literary criticism. It is, for instance, perfectly preposterous to suppose that the evangelist Matthew really meant to affirm (Matt. ii. 15) that the words "out of Egypt have I called my son" had a prophetic reference to our Lord.—ED.

upon it in itself; we merely affirm most positively that it is directly contrary to our texts. In fact, as soon as it is adopted, the exegetical arguments of the apostles lose all logical value, and appear only as the result of the most inconceivable illusion or as gross sophisms. Look, for example, at the manner in which Peter and Paul prove the Messianic dignity of Jesus of Nazareth by a passage from the tenth Psalm.* They say plainly that this passage derives its evidential force from the fact that it could not in any sense refer to the person of the poet who wrote it. Now the exegesis which proceeds on the principle of the double meaning maintains that there is such a reference. In another passage,† referring to a text occurring under the very same conditions, the apostle expressly declares that a historical interpretation is inadmissible. Read, for example, the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with its long list of quotations, not one of which has escaped the criticism of later exegetes, as having another meaning in the original context. We repeat that if the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had accepted that other meaning, even as merely subordinate or accessory, after the manner of other advocates of the allegorical system, the whole of his demonstration would break down; the gist of his argument would be lost; the passage would be but a piece of rhetoric.‡ But

* Acts ii. 25, and foll. ; xiii. 36.

† Gal. iii. 16.

‡ “Concerning this series of quotations generally, I wish to say, before passing on, that we shall misapprehend the spirit and structure of the whole passage, if we suppose that these texts from the Old Testament were intended to form such a demonstration of the divinity of the Lord Jesus as should convince those who theoretically denied the doctrine. The writer of this epistle is not arguing with unbelievers, and therefore his argument is not shaped with any reference to their intellectual position. He is addressing those who acknowledged the Messiahship of Christ, who confessed that He was God manifest in the flesh, but in whom this faith was becoming practically ineffectual through the returning power of their old religious life. He therefore takes their ancient Scriptures, and points to passage after passage in which the Messiah’s glory is predicted, not to demonstrate that glory as an abstract truth—they believed the doctrine already—but to give depth and vividness to their conceptions of it, just as a Christian preacher addressing a Christian congregation, is constantly

why multiply examples? There is not a single quotation, designed to serve as evidence of a dogmatic assertion, in reference to which the same remarks would not apply. The assurance with which the sacred writers repeat that such an event must needs have taken place because it was foretold, is only justifiable if they held that the explanation they gave of the texts was the only explanation possible. For if there were sometimes a double meaning, the primary literal historical sense would alone be certain; the second—the allegorical, mystical interpretation—would be only optional, and, at the most, arbitrary.

The observations just made are further confirmed by other facts, which have been regarded by scholastic theology as so many additional reasons for attempting the various systems of interpretation of which we have already spoken. Modern exegesis especially has adhered closely to the historical point of view, according to which the Old Testament is primarily the faithful mirror of the men and times which gave it birth. Such a conception never entered the minds of the theologians of the apostolic age, whether Jews or Christians. The principle of the miraculous inspiration of the letter carried with it, as its natural corollary, that of the spiritual meaning of the letter. In fact, no such inspiration was needed if the prophets had only to speak to their contemporaries in the strain of moral exhortation, if the poets were to sing only the sentiments natural to their own circumstances, if all the Hebrew writers, in fine, were to express only ideas applicable to the conditions of the time, or called forth by them. Just as all

reviewing and reiterating the Scripture teaching on important Christian doctrines, not with the idea of convincing those who intellectually reject the doctrines, but to intensify the influence of a true Christian faith which he supposes his audience already possess. If he were reasoning with unbelievers, his argument would rest on other premises, or, at least, be conducted in another method. It is necessary of course that his reasoning should be sound in itself, but it is not necessary that it should be of the same kind that he would adopt if he were maintaining a controversy with men of another creed.”—*The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*. By R. W. Dale. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2nd edition, 1872.—ED.

theology had resolved itself into the sacred science of the future, so all literature was designed to serve as its source; it was one great collection of prophecies, not a collection of historical documents. In its interpretation, therefore, a rule was demanded or a right claimed, which the science of our own day (not merely rationalistic science) refuses to recognize, but which is perfectly legitimate if the premises are admitted. Prophecy, by which we mean that which formed the essence of the text, and the true intention of the Holy Spirit, was associated with the letter, or, if we will, was concealed in the letter. In order to disengage it, the ordinary resources of science, philology, history, logic, rhetoric, psychology, what we call the hermeneutic methods, were not sufficient; a new inspiration was needed, or, failing that, artificial means somewhat akin to the divinatory art. These we find employed by the rabbis. The apostles, and Christians in general, found in the new revelation which they had received, more effectual and abundant help in discovering the inner meaning of the texts they had to study. They read Messianic predictions not only in clear and direct, formal and extensive passages, but in isolated verses, which taken in their connection with the whole, might seem to convey quite another meaning.* Sometimes they found these predictions in fragments of sentences which, taken by themselves, present no complete sense, or one altogether different if replaced in their original connection.† We have no right to say that in such cases violence was done to the context; the interpreters had not to consider this, from the moment the dogmatic principle of their exegesis was granted; and this was assuredly no longer a doubtful point with them.

Let us observe, further, that this point of view, and the method resulting from it, remained the same, whether the expositors had to deal with the original text or with a translation officially received in the synagogue. That which the vulgate is to the Catholic theologian, that which the versions

* Matt. ii. 15, 18; iii. 3; iv. 15; Acts i. 20; John xix. 36, etc.

† Matt. ii. 23; 2 Cor. iv. 13; Heb. ii. 13, etc.

of the Reformation are to orthodox Protestants, the Septuagint translation was to the Jews and the Hellenist Christians. Our critical science may demand that the original be consulted before a Biblical text is used in demonstration of a doctrine; but no such necessity was felt by the theologians of whom we speak here. In their view, as in the view of the fathers of the Church, the Alexandrian translators were no less inspired than the prophets themselves, and the idea of verifying one text by another could not occur to them; they did not know what strange difficulties they were creating for their learned successors, by their artless confidence in a version which modern erudition has pronounced to be faulty and untrustworthy.*

We may say, generally, that in the estimate formed in our own day of the exegetical method of the apostles, the essential point is lost sight of. To them, Scripture was not the source whence their doctrine was derived, but the doctrine was the criterion of the exegesis. Conviction existed in their minds before the proof, as is generally the case with instinctive and direct beliefs, which are on that account only the stronger and more profound, and especially are the more capable of being transmitted and brought to bear upon the world. In our capacity as historians, we have not to criticise this method, but first of all to establish it, since it has been misconceived; next, to explain it, defining its origin and basis; and, lastly, to extol it as the only method which, under the circumstances, could usefully promote the subjective education of those who employed it, and the cause which they had to defend. It is true that, in more than one respect, this method was imperfect, and prepared difficulties for the future. The demonstrative force of the exegesis was not always guarded against what is called in logic a "petitio principii," and often depended on the previous favourable bias of those addressed. The same passage might be diversely explained by several interpreters,† or by the same writers on different occasions.‡ But all this

* Comp., for example, Heb. ii. 6; x. 5.

† Matt. viii. 17; 1 Peter ii. 24.

‡ Rom. iv. 13, 16, 18; Gal. iii. 16.

amounted to no more than a defect of form, and has only become matter of graver moment because theological routine has endeavoured to impose it upon a sounder and more exact science, as an integral part of revelation. Truth in itself is independent of the method which men employ to establish it; it often presses itself with irresistible force upon our reason, and the attempts which we make to confirm it by argument are weak and inadequate. How laboured and defective is Paul's exegetical argumentation in proof of the calling of the Gentiles!* Shall we therefore stand in doubt on that great point, as if there were no other evidence? or shall we suppose that Paul himself had but a doubtful assurance of it? How involved, obscure, ambiguous is the Scriptural demonstration of the Epistle to the Hebrews,† the design of which is to establish the certainty of the promises of God! But are the hopes which it so highly exalts the less powerful and precious to our souls? In relation to the most elementary truths, and the simplest facts, logic often stops short at very inconclusive arguments,‡ while the thing to be proved is itself high above the possibility of doubt.

The remarks we have just made with a view to place in its true light the exegetical method of the apostles, and to explain how modern science may adopt by preference another method, without sacrificing any part of the essential substance of the Gospel, apply indiscriminately to all the writers whose works form the basis for the study of the theology of the first century. But it still remains for us to examine one particular point on which the system of interpretation differed. We shall only allude to it here, as it will come before us again

* For example, Rom. iv. 10. [What ground is there for affirming that St. Paul's argument in this passage is "laboured and defective"? It was a Jewish dogma that circumcision was indispensable to righteousness; St. Paul reminds his Jewish readers that the Old Testament itself represented circumcision as "a seal of the righteousness" which God had recognized in Abraham while he was yet uncircumcised. The argument is perfectly legitimate and conclusive.—Ed.]

† Heb. iv. 3, and foll.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 12, and foll.

more fully in the regular course of our work. We refer to the use made by exegesis of the historical parts of the Old Testament. Under this designation we comprehend not only the record of the outward and material facts of the history of Israel, and primarily also the narratives of Genesis, but the legal and sacred institutions contained in the Mosaic code. In so far as these parts of Scripture were regarded by the Christians in their Biblical studies from the historical point of view, and accepted in their literal sense, except for the moral lessons, to be derived from them of examples to be followed or avoided, they have no claim to detain us now. But all did not stop at this first impression. The same theories of inspiration, of spiritual significance, of mystical interpretation* which we have noted elsewhere, were also applied to these portions of Scripture, not only as a voluntary exercise of pious meditation, but as a logical and doctrinal necessity. The principle having been accepted by them that revelation, and consequently also the Scripture which serves as the organ of revelation, could not have for its subject simple social and domestic relations, but must always have in view the great interests of humanity,—that is to say, its redemption and salvation,—it followed that history and the law also belonged to the sphere of evangelical teaching, much more directly than as the mere text-books of moral or catechetical teaching. These too were in their turn spiritualized by the exegetical method. But as this transformation was effected chiefly in the sphere of a theology reacting against traditional ideas, this is not the place for us to dwell upon it in detail.

* *Μυστήριον*, Eph. v. 32.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST TIMES.

AT the commencement, as we have already hinted, the hopes of the young Christian community were closely akin to those of the synagogue. The remarks we have made with reference to the Messianic beliefs among the Jews, may therefore help us to understand those of the apostles and their disciples, and all we have to do is to prove the fact of this identity.

We must bear in mind, however, that the preaching of the apostles, based as it was on experiences peculiar to the disciples, and on convictions derived directly from their individual relations with the Saviour, contained a germ of divergence and of progress, the importance of which was felt more and more, and which in the end broke the bond between the Church and the Synagogue. The disciples believed and knew that Messiah had already been personally revealed. His first manifestation was to them not only a new pledge of the certainty of their hopes, but at the same time a fact foreign to the traditional doctrine. It thus became at once an element of controversy and a subject of theological meditation, and powerfully contributed to open to their view a completely new horizon. For it must be remembered, the first manifestation of Messiah, the earthly life of Jesus, had not fulfilled all their expectation; the more deeply persuaded they were of His Messiahship and His dignity, the more they were perplexed by His death;* and His resurrection, while it raised their drooping courage, re-awakened in new force the hopes of the future, which they had previously fixed on His

* Luke xxiv. 21.

person. Now this fact of a twofold Messianic revelation, this idea of two appearances of the promised Christ,—the one in humiliation, the other in glory, the one past, the other future,—did not present itself as a mere chronological modification of the theory of the schools, but introduced a radical change into its constituent elements. In truth, it could not be a fortuitous and indifferent fact that Messiah had died upon the cross after a brief and lowly life ; that death, which shocked the Jews,* became to the disciples the germ of a theology which soon placed a deep gulf between them and the doctors of the law, and although this result was not at once apparent, the indications of it became daily more marked. Religious and moral influences gradually gained the ascendant over political pre-conceptions, and the doctrine by which the Church had at first seemed about to carry on the work of Pharisaism, became in truth the starting-point of its divergence from the past.

Although this reflection anticipates slightly the natural order of the facts, it seemed to us needful to place it at the head of this whole section of our historical study, because we were anxious to prove to our readers that the numerous points of resemblance between Judaism and the theological conceptions of the early Christians, to which we shall direct attention in the present book, do not mislead us as to the substantial difference, and that beneath all that appears on the surface we discern the deeper elements out of which future changes will be evolved.

We cannot wonder that the eyes of the first Christians were fixed with a gaze of such eager expectancy on the future, since the happy moment which was to realize all their hopes seemed to them close at hand. It is a fact sufficiently well known, that the power of their faith, and in part also the success of their preaching, rested upon this idea—an idea, we must remember, existing prior to Christianity. This could not but be fostered and strengthened by the evangelical convictions which the miracles and promises of Jesus caused to centre in Himself ; and the manner in which those promises especially were often

* 2 Cor. i. 23.

understood by His disciples would alone prove the previous bias of their minds. Long afterwards, however, when their ideas had become more or less spiritualized, and had risen altogether above the level of popular Jewish conceptions, the same impatience, going so far even as to express itself in figures, remained as a permanent indication of the source of their hopes and views of the future. The conviction that the days in which they lived were the last times* was general. We find it recorded not only in writings which belong more particularly to the Judæo-Christian school,† though that was the only party which had recourse to chronological tables to determine the time of the end;‡ but the Pauline theology also exhibits the same idea, which thus appears as an integral part of the primitive preaching of the apostles,§ and all down to the apostle John bear testimony to the same fact.||

This idea is naturally associated with another still more characteristic. If the great climax of the world's history was close at hand, it followed that it must be accomplished suddenly. It was not thought of as a gradual transformation of mankind, but as a sudden and terrible catastrophe, awful even to those whom it was to render blessed.¶ This is a very important feature to be taken into account, for it shows how great were the obstacles placed by the spirit of the age in the way of a true understanding of the teaching of Jesus, which was designed to spiritualize the current notions. We cannot therefore be surprised to find the political element of the ancient hopes of the Jewish people holding its ground for some time side by side with the moral and religious element,** and only slowly

* Ἐσχαται ἡμέραι, συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος, etc.

+ James v. 3, 8; Rev. i. 3; xii. 12; xxii. 10; Acts ii. 17; iii. 19, and foll.; Matt. x. 23; xvi. 28; xxiv. 29, 34; Luke xix. 11; Jude 18; comp. 2 Peter iii.

‡ Rev. xii. 14.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 15; Phil. iv. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 1; 1 Peter i. 5, 20; iv. 7; Heb. ix. 26; x. 25, 37.

|| 1 John ii. 18; comp. 2 John 7.

¶ Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15; comp. 2 Peter iii. 10.

** Acts i. 6; ii. 30; Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5; xix. 15.

yielding before the influence of time and the regenerative power of the Gospel teaching, which at first neutralized it, and finally absorbed that which was not homogeneous with itself.

Another more practical and more salutary consequence of this ideal conception of the kingdom of God, and of its relations with the existing order of things, was the courage and firmness with which it inspired Christians in all the trying circumstances of their life. The extraordinary conditions under which they lived, the ever-darkening horizon they saw around them, the trials and perils which threatened them on every side, all rendered necessary a peculiar power of resistance and of resignation, and assuredly nothing could so fortify their minds as the assurance that the day of recompense was at hand. The certainty that they would have to suffer from a hostile world was with this generation an article of faith;* patience was a virtue urgently impressed upon them;† and the word which expressed it became the synonym for the pious waiting for the coming of the Lord in His glory.‡

‡ There is nothing specially to remark on those aspects of the doctrine which, with the Jews, formed, so to speak, its dramatic side. All that for two centuries the imagination had pictured of scenes grand and awful, which were to close the present period of history (deemed by them also to be the last), all this repeated itself in the little circle of the disciples. The Gospel truths might insensibly change the notions entertained of the relations between God and men, or give a different colouring to the picture of future felicity; but the main fact, which was to bind together the two ages of the world, ever presented itself to their minds under the same aspect. It was still, as in the synagogue, the great day of the Lord, heralding in His second appearing, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment.§ These ideas, and the representations which ren-

* Acts xiv. 22.

† Rev. xiii. 10; xiv. 12, etc.

‡ Ἰσπομονή, Rev. i. 9; iii. 10.

§ Ἡμέρα παρουσία, κρίσις, etc. Matt. xxiv., xxv., and parall.; Acts ii. 20; James v. 7, 8; Jude 6; Rev. vi. 17; xx.; comp. 2 Peter i. 16; ii. 9; iii. 4, and foll.

dered them at once concrete and popular, lay for long at the very basis of the beliefs of the Church, so that apostolic theology found it needful to point to them as the first rudiments which must be left behind by men who would go on unto perfection in the Gospel of Christ.* The only remarkable innovation which deserves to be noted here is that the book of the Revelation speaks of a double resurrection, and a millennial era intervening between the two, so that a twofold reign of the glorified Christ is supposed, the one circumscribed within defined limits, the other eternal. This theory, which ingeniously combines the two conflicting systems taught by the Jewish doctors, was to assure to the martyrs privileges above all other mortals chosen by the grace of God. The idea that these should enjoy such a precedence became one of the favourite tenets of many Christians from the close of the first century; it was supported by very distinguished theologians of the second and third centuries, and the imagination of the people, ever ready to grasp at that which is palpable, delighted to represent the blessedness of the faithful in the most material imagery. These views embodied the strongest and most characteristic tendencies of Judæo-Christianity, and did more than anything else to perpetuate them in the Church; and they needed to be counteracted by all the force of the spiritualistic reaction which had its root in the Pauline Gospel, and its scientific basis in the Alexandrine school.

The sensuous and materialistic representations to which we have just alluded were, we repeat, the natural consequences of the Judæo-Christian point of view. We hasten to add, however, that they form no part of apostolic literature, which is distinguished by great sobriety on this matter. It has been always observed that the revelation, which pictures in so much detail the antecedents of the final catastrophe, passes with a rapidity so much the more noticeable over the scenes of the resurrection and the judgment, and dwells even more slightly on the description of the joys of heaven or the pains of hell, those inexhaustible themes of ordinary chiliasts. The

* Heb. vi. 2.

books which we are now analyzing content themselves generally with speaking of the eternity of suffering, and repeat, according to the belief of contemporary Judaism, that fire will be the instrument of punishment to the condemned.* Still more frequently, they pause at the abstract idea of the wrath of God,†—that is, of His inexorable justice towards the enemies of the truth and of the Church; or they use, to describe its effects, the rabbinical formulary of the second death,‡ which presents a strong analogy with the Christian idea that there is no true life, consequently no happiness, apart from communion with God. Thus happiness is itself spoken of simply as life;§ but even when it is embodied for the sake of the popular comprehension in the most concrete representations, it is still easy to distinguish the idea from the figure. The most famous of these representations, and that which has most often misled the mind of undisciplined chiliasts, is that which sets forth the heavenly felicity under the image of a feast;|| but other images, which are at once spiritual and beautiful, such as a fountain of water and a fruit-bearing tree,—the former used by Jesus, the latter occurring in the very opening history of the Bible, and both symbolizing eternal life,¶—show us that the apostles, while adopting in their teaching the familiar forms of religious thought, never forgot that the severe but figurative. The same remark must apply to the other synonymous expressions we meet with, the origin of which may be traced to less ideal conceptions. Thus the Messianic royalty,** which there can be no hesitation in taking

* Πῦρ αἰώνιον, λυγνὴ πυρός, γέννα, etc., James iii. 6; Jude 7; Rev. xiv. 11; xix. 3, 20; xx. 10, etc.

† Ὁργή, Rev. vi. 16, and foll.; xi. 18; xiv. 10, etc.; comp. 2 Peter ii. 2, and foll.; iii. 7.

‡ Θάνατος δεύτερος, Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6, 14, etc.

§ Ζωή, James i. 12; Jude 21; Rev. ii. 10, etc.

|| Δείπνον, γάμος, Rev. iii. 20; xix. 7, 9; comp. Matt. xxii. 1, and foll.; xxvi. 29, and parall.

¶ Ὑδωρ, ξύλον ζωῆς, Rev. ii. 7; vii. 17; xxi. 6; xxii. 1, and foll., 14, and foll.

** Matt. xxv. 34, 40; Rev. i. 9; xi. 15.

in its proper sense, appears as a dignity granted to the elect;* by its etymology it points no doubt to the ambitious hopes of the Jews, and the sentiments of aversion and vengeance so marked in the apocalyptic pictures are of a nature to suggest to us a more literal interpretation of that term;† but the analogy of the foregoing examples, and especially the circumstance that by the final death of the unbelieving, and the complete transformation of heaven and earth,‡ the very ground for a material reign is taken away, makes it clear that here also it is both possible and necessary that we should hold to the spirit rather than to the letter. It is needless to say that the frequent use of all these images and figures in teaching addressed to men full of prejudices, and scarcely comprehending the new truth revealed by the Gospel, was attended with large possibilities of mistake, a fact which the history fully proves. But the fault in this respect attaches rather to the method than to the theory itself.

* Βασιλεῖς, in the plural, Rev. i. 6 ; v. 10.

† Comp. Matt. xx. 21.

‡ Rev. xx. 9 ; xxi. ; comp. 2 Peter iii. 13.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVELATION.

THE sketch we have just given of the views of the future entertained in the early Churches of Palestine might suffice, if necessary, for the explanation of this subject, which presents little difficulty, and is by far the most popular part of primitive theology. We ask permission, however, to dwell on it yet a little longer. These same ideas received separate and systematic development in one particular book, one of the oldest belonging to Christian literature, and at the same time one of the most famous from its singular history. Our readers will understand that we refer to the book of Revelation. That book, it will be allowed, calls for special study, and it may fairly be expected that we should give here an outline of its tendency, its aim, and its contents. This we shall attempt to do, with a desire at the same time to do justice to all the extravagant opinions and singular interpretations which have been based upon it. To these we have already alluded in the preceding chapter; we shall refer again presently to other parts of its dogmatic teaching.*

For the present our aim will be to familiarize the reader with the form and character of the book as a whole; for it is a fact that the exegetes, in the wild pursuit of the mirage of their

* Instead of controverting point by point the exegetical theory maintained in this chapter—with some of the fundamental principles of which, however, I heartily agree—I refer the reader to the very valuable articles on the Apocalypse attributed to Professor Godwin, in vols. i., ii., and iii. of the *Biblical Review*: London, Jackson and Walford, 1845—1847.—ED.

own creation, have led the world to believe that the prophet of Patmos has jested with his readers by proposing to them an enigma, the key to which seems for ever lost. From Origen to Bossuet, from Luther to Bengel, from Newton to our own contemporaries, there has been one eager pursuit of an imaginary end, one blind search for the discovery of a treasure hidden by the magic of illusions. We boldly affirm that the study of this book would present absolutely no possibility of error if the inconceivable, often ridiculous, prejudices of theologians in all ages, had not so trammelled it, and made it bristle with difficulties, that most readers shrink from it in alarm. Apart from these preconceptions, the Revelation would be the most simple, most transparent book that prophet ever penned.

We shall not further discuss the question of its authenticity, as we make no such attempt here in reference to any of the New Testament writings. Our design is not to write a literary history, but a history of doctrine and of religious thought. The chronological date of the composition of the book of Revelation is, however, of some importance towards a right estimate and understanding of its purport. On this, therefore, we shall say a word in passing, and we shall at the same time draw the attention of our readers to a fact which, more than any other, proves that in the opinion of the primitive Church, the Revelation was not only what we should call in our day a canonical book, but was the only one of this description used by that Church. As to the date, there is no other apostolical writing the chronology of which can be more exactly fixed. There are very clear statements in reference to it, as we shall soon see, and nothing has done more to mislead exegetical science than the credit obtained by the inadmissible hypothesis of Irenæus, which places the composition of this book in one of the last years of the century. It was written before the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, under the Emperor Galba—that is to say, in the second half of the year 68 of our era. We shall discuss elsewhere the irrefutable proofs of our assertion. This high antiquity, joined to the nature of

the book itself, which sums up in a manner at once so complete and so ardent the thoughts and hopes of the early generations of Christians, explains also why the Revelation should have been the first book beyond the Old Testament to the testimony and authority of which ecclesiastical theology appealed, while it still observed unbroken silence as to the writings of the other apostles, who had nevertheless also composed books and edified the Church.* The antipathy which the Greek fathers and some writers of the Church itself, from the time of the third century, showed to the Revelation, only proves that the current of ideas had changed, and that the old Messianic hopes of Judæo-Christianity no longer coincided with the faith of the Church.

The name itself of the book, of which we are about specially to treat, carries us to the heart of these beliefs. It was the technical term to designate the victorious appearing of Messiah at the end of time; and by a very natural metonymy, of which we find many other examples in sacred literature,† it was applied subsequently to those books which spoke of that appearing. The Revelation of John was neither the first nor the last; on the contrary, the number of writings of this description both among the Jews and Christians is very considerable; but this is the only one which belongs to the apostolic sphere, and in which consequently the Church, as such, has taken a special interest.

Before analyzing the book itself, let us bring to mind, in a few words, the circumstances under which it was written. It is a fact to which psychology and history alike bear witness, especially the history of Christianity, that nothing is more sure to intensify religious convictions and to sustain the courage of

* It is a well-known fact that Justin Martyr mentions no other apostolic writer but John, the author of the Revelation; even earlier than this, Melito of Sardis, whose canon, preserved by the Church, comprehends only the Old Testament, had written a commentary on the Revelation.

† The law, and the Gospel, stood at first, the one for a collection of legal precepts, the other for a message relating to the coming of the Saviour; they came in the end to designate the books which contained these things.

those who profess them, than the oppression and persecution which are employed to uproot the one and to abate the other. The effect produced by these means, so falsely chosen, is always in inverse ratio to the end proposed, and assuredly nothing has so much increased the strength of the Church and brightened its hopes, as the baptism of blood which it received again and again from its blind and bitter enemies. The history related in the Acts of the Apostles shows all this on a smaller scale and in humbler proportions; but the face of things changed after the persecution under Nero, which burst forth first in the capital and soon spread through the provinces, rather by the contagion of popular fury than by a higher authority. It was chiefly in Asia Minor, where the pagan superstitions were most deeply rooted, that the storm raged in all its violence. Thousands of Christians there and elsewhere sealed with their blood the faith they had embraced;* but the desperate condition of the young Churches in that province, so far from bringing darkness and doubt upon the minds of their members, raised their courage, and filled their leaders with a prophetic enthusiasm which was of itself an earnest of victory. No new promise was held forth, nothing calling for demonstration. It was a prospect which had long been open to all eyes; it was the concrete and living picture of the final destinies of humanity. They had no abstract things to reveal, no mysteries hitherto unknown; that which they said was already in all hearts, on all lips; it was a treasure transmitted through ten generations, and amply guaranteed by the Gospel revelations; and the prediction, clear and complete in all its relations, presented but one point of obscurity, namely, the precise moment of its ultimate realization. This moment could not be very distant; the anguish of the world, the crimes of the enemies of God, the desolation of the righteous,—all was at its height; the Lord could no longer tarry; all the signs prelude of the first catastrophe pointed to the horizon; the generation to which Jesus had promised that it should see His kingdom come in its glory was fast numbering its days. No; there could be no possibility

* Rev. vi. 9, and foll. ; vii.

of longer doubt; the awful moment was at hand;* all that was promised, all that was to bring in the new revelation of the Lord, was to be accomplished in the briefest possible space.† Twenty times this nearness of the end is affirmed in the most positive manner.‡ The prophecy even ventures to limit the delay by figures borrowed from the Revelation of Daniel, which was thus at last to find its true solution, and which need no more be reproduced and explained. In three years and a half from the moment at which the author wrote, all would be accomplished. During yet three years and a half the enemy of the Church would be master of the field; during three years and a half the prophets of God would fight against the powers of darkness, without being able to prevail; during three years and a half, finally, the Church, withdrawn into the desert and miraculously protected, would await the defeat of its eternal adversary; but after that the grand scenes of the end would one after another come to pass, to the astonishment of the world and the joy of the faithful.§ Assuredly, it was this belief in the nearness of the end, common in that day to the whole Church, which enabled prophecy to fulfil its purpose, comforting the sufferers, confirming the wavering, exalting the courage of all, and causing a fresh hero to start from every drop of blood shed by the flagging hand of the executioner.

All truthfulness to life, all connection with the actual circumstances, all natural and transparent meaning is lost, if we attempt to uproot the Revelation from the soil from which it sprang, to suspend it in the air, so to speak, and accommodate it to the demands of the capricious exegesis of another age. The most arbitrary expedients, the most absurd combinations, the most recondite calculations are resorted to, in order to derive from this book the history of the middle ages or of our own time; it is made the tool of all sick brains, excited imaginations, evil passions, till reasonable people are often ready, by a natural

* Ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς, Rev. i. 3; xxii. 10.

† Δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, Rev. i. 1; xxii. 6.

‡ See also Rev. ii. 5, 16; iii. 11; xi. 14; xxii. 7, 12, 20, etc.

§ Rev. xi. 2, 3; xii. 14.

reaction, almost to shrink from it, and thus it is itself made the scapegoat for the extravagances of its ill-advised interpreters, and comes forth from the hands of its expositors only more obscure, more incoherent, more dangerous to dizzy imaginations. Lastly, the brilliant colours of its eastern poetry lose their glow under the touch of modern commentators, as the graceful pencillings feathering the fair wing of the insect, are brushed away by the rough finger of the child who admires them by instinct while in ignorance it destroys.

Let us first show what is the subject-matter of this revelation, and then say a word as to its form. As the prologue and epilogue belong to the latter, we shall pass them by for the moment, to speak of the body of the book, of its prophetic or dogmatic portions. (Chap. iv.—xxii. 5.)

The series of visions opens with the description of the throne of the Divine Majesty, a description principally caught from Ezekiel.* Here, as in the writings of that prophet, the most essential attributes of Deity—wisdom, power, omniscience, and creative might—are personified in the four figures of the man, the lion, the eagle, and the bull, upholding the throne. The same necessity of bringing the abstract idea of God within reach of the imagination, by means of symbol, suggests to the author the image of the seven lamps before the throne, representing the sevenfold manifestation of the Divine Spirit, which Jewish theology had discovered in Isaiah.† A choir of angels of the highest rank surround the throne; their number represents that of the twenty-four classes of priests who served in the earthly sanctuary. (Chap. iv.)

Before God is seen a book lying, sealed with seven seals; this is the book of the future. No creature is able to open it; one only is found worthy; this is Christ, who is at once the firstborn of every creature and the Branch of David, and who appears here under the figure of a Lamb, bearing, on the one hand, the marks of His sacrifice, on the other (in the symbol of the seven horns and seven eyes), the seal of the fulness of

* Ezekiel i. and x.

† Isaiah xi. 2.

the Spirit of God dwelling in Him. Christ, then, is to be the revealer of the future ; and the prophet is permitted to behold the spectacle of these revelations. The Lamb takes the book, and immediately, the cherubim, the archangels, and innumerable choirs of creatures of all ranks and from every quarter, join in songs of sounding praise. (Chap. v.)

The first four seals are opened in succession, and the first signs of the Lord's appearing are seen in the calamities which were to afflict humanity in the last days. These come as four figures mounted upon four horses, and representing conquest, war, famine, and pestilence, all distinguished by symbolic attributes very easy to understand. These four figures are followed by another, which serves, so to speak, to bring to a focus the various elements of this picture, the *scheol* or abode of the dead personified, and preparing to swallow up the victims of these four plagues. (Chap. vi. 1—8.)

On the opening of the fifth seal the martyrs appear, demanding that their blood shall be avenged. The answer is that they must have patience till their brethren, to whom the same fate is reserved, shall have also suffered. The tribulations of the faithful are then not yet fulfilled. (Chap. vii. 9—11.)

The opening of the sixth seal is accompanied with terrible signs in the heaven, eclipses, and the fall of stars.† The great of this world begin to tremble, and to dread the effects of the coming wrath of God. § (Chap. vii. 12—17.)

The spectator thus awaits with anxiety the opening of the last seal, which is to bring in the fulfilment of all things ; but his expectation is not at once satisfied. An intermediate scene, an interlude, still postpones the final crisis. A solemn silence reigns through the whole universe ; an angel proceeds to set the seal of God on the faithful, so that they may be exempted from the calamities which the wrath of the Supreme Judge is about to pour upon the world. These faithful, whose mark, not dis-

* See Zech. i. and vi.

† According to Jerem. xxi. 7 ; xxxii. 36.

‡ Joel ii. 10 ; iii. 4 ; Isaiah xxxiv. 4, etc.

§ Isaiah ii. 10 ; Hosea x. 8 ; Mal. iii. 2, etc.

cernible with the human eye, is revealed to the prophet by the angel, are the true people of God, the spiritual Israel, the twelve tribes of which represent in an ideal manner the totality of the nations among all of whom Christ has disciples. These are henceforth exempt from the tribulations which come upon the world. (Chap. vii.)

At length the seventh seal is opened, but instead of bringing the end directly, it presents to us a new series of scenes, introduced by seven angels, furnished with trumpets, whose revelations altogether will form the contents of this seventh seal. The prayers of the saints ascending before the throne of God come up before Him as incense; they are at once heard, and the angel casts the burning censer upon the earth, as a symbol of the punishments in reserve for the persecutors. (Chap. viii. 1—5.)

The first four angels sound their trumpets. They form with their prophecies a parallel picture with that of the first four seals. Plagues, like those of Egypt, smite the universe, earth, sea, rivers, sky, and cause a third of the creatures therein to perish. These four trumpets are separated from those that follow, and thus bound more closely together (like the first four seals) by another figure, that of an angel crossing the heaven and heralding the last three trumpets. (Chap. viii. 6—13.)

The fifth and sixth trumpets proclaim visitations yet more awful. The two plagues, peculiar to the East, locusts and the simoon, are introduced in descriptions which for strangeness far surpass anything which the imagination of the old prophets had suggested. Thousands of men perish by these plagues; the rest are the victims of unmentioned torments, but they are not converted. (Chap. ix.)

The world is then ripe for the judgment of the seventh trumpet. But this does not immediately sound. According to the symmetrical arrangement of the whole drama, there follows, as after the opening of the sixth seal, an interval between the acts. This interlude has a double purpose. First, in view of the grandeur of the things yet to be revealed,

* Exodus vii. 20; ix. 23; x. 21; Jer. li. 25.

the prophet passes through a sort of special initiation or preparation to receive them. The reader shares the impression that this imposing solemnity is designed to produce,* and his eager expectancy grows as the great crisis is still deferred. (Chap. x.)

In the next place, this interval is employed to provide a place of safety for the elect, who in the first interlude had received the seal of God. This safe retreat is within the sacred precincts of the temple at Jerusalem, which will alone be preserved from the conquest and profanation to which all the rest of the city will be subjected by the pagans. These will remain masters of the city for three years and a half.† During this time Moses and Elias, the precursors of Messiah, will preach to the people, but Antichrist will slay them. Their resurrection will be the signal for the beginning of the end. The city will be partially destroyed by an earthquake, seven thousand men will perish, but the great body of the Jews will be converted in this final hour. (Chap. xi. 1—14.)

At length the seventh angel blows his trumpet, and songs celestial celebrate the sure victory of God and of Christ in the great final conflict about to commence. Heaven opens, and the ark of the covenant appears once more, that symbol of reconciliation anciently lost in the burning of Solomon's temple. (Chap. xi. 15—19.)

All that follows is now the message of the seventh trumpet. We know beforehand that it proclaims the conflict of Christ with all hostile powers, and the victorious establishment of His kingdom. But we are not at once called to witness this unparalleled combat. Before the final issue is declared, we have an introductory description of the enemies, and a prophetic prelude. This description interrupts for a moment the progressive evolution of events, and must be regarded as parallel with the scenes previously described.

The enemies are three in number. The first and chief is the devil; he appears under the form of a serpent ready to devour a new-born child. This is the symbolical representation of the

* Comp. Ezek. iii. ; Ps. xxix.

† Dan. vii. 25 ; xii. 7.

idea that the devil is the born enemy of Christ and of His Church. But the child is placed in safety with God, and its mother, the Church of the true Israel, the Church of the believers, is carried away into the desert, there to be sheltered from the persecutions of the devil for the three years and a half during which the power of the latter shall last. The Church itself is out of danger, but its children are still exposed to the attacks of the evil one during this time. (Chap. xii. 1—17.)

The second enemy appears out of the sea under the form of a monster with seven heads, one of which has been mortally wounded, but is for the present healed. The devil gives him his power for another three years and a half, and the monster is worshipped by men, and is furious against the faithful. This is the Roman empire with its first seven emperors, one of whom has been killed, but is to live again as Antichrist. (See ch. xvii.) The substance of these images is derived from Daniel. (Chap. xii. 18, xiii. 10.)

The third enemy, also represented as a monster, is false prophecy, by which men are seduced and led to worship the first beast. (Chap. xiii. 11—17.)

In the last verse of chap. xiii. the writer gives in an enigmatic form the historical name of Antichrist. This verse is then, so to speak, the key of the whole book, and the explanation given of it will always be the touchstone of every system of apocalyptic interpretation. This point is so important and so little understood, that we must advert particularly to it, but in order not to interrupt our running exposition we refer our readers to a note on the subject.*

* It would form a very singular history were we to recount all that has been said by theologians with reference to this number 666 in the Revelation. This is not, however, the place to do so, and it is generally mere waste of time to refute palpable errors and absurd hallucinations. Our texts are so clear to those who have eyes to see and comprehend, that the simple statement of their true meaning ought at once to dissipate the clouds gathered round them by dogmatic prejudices, interested imaginations, and political pre-constructions.

The number of the beast, 666, is the number of a man, ἀριθμὸς ἀνθρώπου,

The description of the three adversaries is followed by what we have called the prophetic prelude to the conflict. First, the reader is reassured as to the fate of the elect during these

says the prophet. It is the number of a name, he says again; and that name is written on the forehead of those who are the loyal subjects and worshippers of the beast. But the beast itself is a personal being, Antichrist, and does not stand for some abstract idea. From this it follows that the number 666 does not represent a period of ecclesiastical history, as is maintained in the interpretation of orthodox Protestant theologians, and of pietistic chiliasts of the school of Bengel. Nor does it stand for a common name and to characterize a power, an empire, as, for example, Roman paganism, as Irenæus sought to show with his *Δαρείος*, which has been adopted by all subsequent interpreters who have failed to invent anything more inadmissible still, and which Protestants have eagerly made use of in the interest of their anti-papal polemics. The terms *Latium*, *Latini* had no existence in the first century, but in the poetry and local geography of the campagna of Rome, and as the name of a language, were utterly unknown in any form within the apostolic sphere. (Luke xxiii. 38; John xix. 20.)

The number 666 must then contain a proper name, the name of the political and historical personage who was to play the part of Antichrist in all the great revolutions awaiting the Judæo-Christian world. After reading Daniel and the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, we know *what* is the subject. Our author finally proceeds to tell us of *whom* he speaks.

Here then is the difficulty (if difficulty it be) which has most often misled even those who have approached the problem with a spirit free from prejudice and illusion. The beast of the thirteenth chapter is not an individual, but the Roman empire, regarded as a power. The writer himself tells us (chap. xvii.) that the seven heads of this beast represent the seven hills on which his capital is built, and again seven kings who have reigned or still reign there. This is quite true, but he tells us quite as plainly that this beast is at the same time one of the seven heads, a combination apparently inconceivable and more than paradoxical, but at the same time very natural and even necessary. The idea of a power, especially of a hostile influence, always tends to assume a concrete form, to personify itself in the popular mind. The ideal monster becomes an individual, the principle assumes a distinct human shape, and under this personal form ideas become popularized, till individuals come in their turn to be the permanent representatives of ideas and influences which outlive themselves. To most men, a proper name conveys more than a definition, and is more apt to excite warm and living feeling. The pagan power, idolatry, blasphemy, persecution,—all that stirs the lawful antipathies of the Church, all that inspires it with horror, and wrings from it the cry of woe,—would naturally be individualized and concentrated in the person of him who, a

stupendous conflicts. They are safe sheltered in Zion, in company with the saints and the celestial choirs. (Ch. xiv. 1—5.)

The prelude itself consists of three scenes. First, three angels

few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, had filled up the measure of his crimes. The beast is then at once the empire and the emperor, and the name of the latter is on the lips of the thoughtful reader before we utter it. Let us however cast upon it all the light of historic science.

An attentive reading of chap. xi. will have already brought us to the conviction that this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. The temple and its inner court with the great altar are there measured, destined, that is to say, to be preserved (Zach. ii.), while the rest of the city is given up to the pagans and devoted to sacrilege. These passages could not have been penned in view of the state of things which existed after the year 70. But the indications given in chap. xvii. are still more decisive. We shall maintain that Rome is here spoken of, till it can be shown that in the age of the apostles there existed another city built upon seven hills, *urbem septicollem*, in which the blood of the witnesses of Christ had been shed in torrents (v. 6, 9). This city, or this empire, has seven kings. The revelations of Daniel, of Enoch, and of Esdras, follow the same chronological plan, all counting successions of kings to put the reader upon the track of the dates. Of these seven kings, five are already dead (v. 10), the sixth is reigning at this very time. The sixth emperor of Rome was Galba, an old man, seventy-three years of age at his accession. The final catastrophe, which was to destroy the city and the empire, was to take place in three years and a half, as has been already noted. For this one simple reason, the series of emperors will include only one after the then reigning monarch, and he will reign but a little while. The writer does not know him, but he knows the relative duration of his reign, because he knows that Rome will in three years and a half perish finally, never to rise again.

Then shall come an eighth emperor ; he is one of the seven, and is at the same time the beast that *was*, but at the moment is not. This must refer then to one of the previous emperors who is to come again a second time, but as Antichrist,—that is, invested with all the power of the devil, and for the special end of fighting against the Lord. As it is said that at the time the vision is written he is not, but has already been, he must be one of the first five emperors. He has been already wounded to death (ch. xiii. 3), so that there is something miraculous in his reappearance. It cannot then be Augustus, Tiberius, or Claudius, who none of them came to a violent end, and who are farther placed out of the question by the fact that none of these stood in hostile relations to the Church. This reason will also exclude Caligula. There remains only Nero ; but everything concurs to point him out as the personage thus mysteriously designated. So long as Galba reigned, and even long after that, the

appear to make prophetic proclamations. The first declares the eternal judgment, and his message comes like a final word of warning to the world. The second foretells the fall of Rome.

people did not believe Nero to be dead; they supposed him hidden somewhere, and ready to return and avenge himself on his enemies. The Messianic ideas of the Jews, which had become vaguely diffused throughout the West (as we learn from Tacitus and Suetonius), blending with these popular notions, suggested to the credulous the idea that Nero would come again from the East, to regain his throne by the aid of the Parthians. Many false Neros appeared, (Suetonius, "Ner.," 40, 57; Tacitus, "Hist.," 1, 2; ii. 8, 9; Dio. Cass., lxiv. 9; Zonaras, "Vita Tit.," p. 578; Dio. Chrys., "Or.," 20, p. 371, D.) These popular fancies spread also among the Christians. Visions were of common occurrence ("Visis Iesaj. Æthiopia; Libri Sibyll., iv. 116, and foll., v. 33; viii. 1—216), and the Fathers of the Church perpetuate the same tradition through several centuries later (Sulpic Sever., ii. 367; August., "Civ. Dei," xx. 19; Lactant., "Mort., persec., c. 2, p. 2; Hieron., Ad Dan.," xi. 28; "Ad Esaj.," xvii. 13; Chrysost., "Ad 2 Thess.," ii. 7.)

Lastly, that nothing may be wanting to the full evidence, our book names Nero, so to speak, in every character. The name of Nero is contained in the number 666. The mechanism of the problem is based upon one of the cabalistic artifices in use in Jewish hermeneutics, which consisted in calculating the numerical value of the letters composing a word. This method, called *Ghematria*, or geometrical—that is, mathematical, and used by the Jews in the exegesis of the Old Testament, has given much trouble to our learned men, and has led them into a maze of errors. All ancient and modern alphabets have been placed under contribution, and all imaginable combinations of figures and letters have been tried in turn. It has been made to yield almost all the historical names of the past eighteen centuries,—Titus Vespasian and Simon Gioras, Julin the Apostate and Genseric, Mahomet and Luther, Benedict IX. and Louis XV., Napoleon I. and the Duke of Reichstadt, and it would not be difficult for any of us on the same principles to read in it one another's names. In truth, the enigma was not so hard, though it has only been solved by exegesis in our own days. It was so little insoluble that several contemporary scholars found the clue simultaneously, and without knowing anything of one another's labours. The *Ghematria* is a Hebrew art. The number has to be deciphered by the Hebrew alphabet. גרון קטר reads Nero Caesar; נ 50 + ר 200 + ו 6 + נ 50 + ק 100 + ס 60 + ר 200 = 666. The most curious point is that there exists a very ancient reading which gives 616. This might be the work of a Latin reader of the Revelation, who had found the solution, but who pronounced Nero like the Romans, while the writer of the Revelation pronounced it like the Greeks and Orientals. The removal of the final noun gives fifty less.

The third finally threatens the rebellious with the wrath of God, and comforts the faithful with the prospect of rest after all their tribulations.* (Ch. xiv. 6—13.)

This direct proclamation is followed by a threefold prophetic symbol of the judgment. The figures of the pruning-knife, of the sickle, and of the winepress,† represent the divine judgments, and more particularly the carnage of a great battle of extermination (chap. xiv. 14—20). Lastly, the third scene of the prelude shows seven angels bearing seven vials full of the the plagues of the wrath of God, and ready to pour them out upon the world. The solemnity of this scene is further enhanced by a prelude of sacred song (chap. xv.)

The first four angels pour out their vials upon the four parts of the apocalyptic universe, earth and sea, rivers and sky.‡ This whole scene is closed and summed up, like that of the first four seals and of the first four trumpets, by the description of the effect produced upon men by these plagues. They still persist in their unbelief and blasphemies (chap. xvi. 1—9).

The fifth angel pours out his vial upon Rome, the anguish of which commences at the same moment. The sixth angel empties his vial upon the Euphrates, and dries the river up to make a way for the armies of the East, led by the Emperor Antichrist against Rome, which has rejected him. The uniform symmetry of the poem here again introduces an interlude in which unclean spirits, symbolized by the figure of three frogs, go forth under the orders of the devil, of Antichrist, and of false prophecy, to gather together the kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The meeting-place is Mount Tabor, which commands the plain of Megiddo, the ancient battle-field of Israel.§ After this, the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, and a voice from heaven pro-

* For the figures see Isaiah xxi. 9 ; Jeremiah xxv. 15, and foll. ; li. 7, etc.

† Joel iv. 13 ; Isaiah xvii. 5 ; lxiii. 3.

‡ Comp. Rev. viii. 6, and foll.

§ Zech. xii. 11 ; comp. Judges iv., v. ; 2 Kings xxiii. 29.

claims to the world that the time of waiting is passed; the prelude is ended; the action begins (chap. xvi. 10—18).

This action is again threefold; the conflict between the two powers engaged, heaven and hell, contending together for the empire of the world, is subdivided into three combats or partial encounters, each followed by a victory of the good cause. The first conflict will take place at Rome, but heaven will not defile itself by direct contact with the "mother of harlots," the modern Babylon. This shall be chastised by the king it has rejected, by Nero, the Antichrist. He, returning at the head of the armies of the East, will slay the dwellers in his capital, and burn it to ashes (chap. xvii.)

The fall of Rome is the subject of various manifestoes. On the one hand, three angels solemnly proclaim it, one declaring that she shall be left desolate,* another warning the faithful to come out from her, that they be not partakers of her plagues,† the third showing symbolically the eternity of her doom.‡ On the other hand, the men who had been the friends of Rome lament over her fate. Of these three classes are distinguished: the vassal kings, who held their power from the empire; the merchants, who had enriched themselves by the luxury of the capital; lastly, the sailors and shipmasters who had traded with her,§ (chap. xviii.)

In contrast to these lamentations, heaven and the elect magnify the righteousness of God, and rejoice that at length He has been pleased to strike the great blow, thus giving the first pledge of the speedy setting up of His kingdom (chap. xix. 1—10).

The second conflict is waged between the Lord and Antichrist. The Lord appears in triumph, riding upon a white horse, surrounded by the armies of heaven. His sword is His irresistible and victorious word. An angel summons the birds

* Rev. xviii. 2; comp. Isaiah xiii. 21; xxxiv. 11, and foll.; Jer. l. 39.

† Rev. xviii. 4; comp. Jer. l. 15: li. 9; Isaiah xlvi. 8.

‡ Rev. xviii. 21; comp. Jer. li. 63.

§ Rev. xviii. 9, 11, 17; comp. Isaiah xxiii. ; Ezek. xxvii.

of prey, which are to devour the adversaries.* Victory is so sure and so easy that the prophet does not even describe it. The monster and his colleague, the false prophet, are cast into the lake of fire, and their followers are slain with the sword of the conqueror (chap. xix. 11—21).

At the close of this second conflict, Satan is bound for a thousand years in the pit (chap. xx. 1—13).

The happy issues of this encounter are the first resurrection, that of the martyrs, who shall reign a thousand years with the Son of God, and will thus enjoy a privilege not accorded to any other dead (chap. xx. 4—6).

At length comes the third and last combat. After the thousand years, Satan, loosed from his bonds, again stirs up the nations against the city of the elect. He gathers his followers from the very ends of the earth, but fire from heaven consumes his army, and he is finally cast into hell (chap. xx. 7—10).

Victory then at once gives place to judgment. The last judgment is set, preceded by the resurrection of all those who had not shared in the reign of the thousand years. Their destiny is decided according to their actions, which are all written in the Book of God, and according to the book of life. Those whose names are in this book enter upon eternal joy, the rest are cast into eternal fire (chap. xx. 11—15).

For the former there now begins the new era of the world, that of the kingdom of everlasting blessedness. A new heaven, a new earth, and upon that earth a new Jerusalem, are prepared for them, and imagination exhausts itself in the description of the glories of the new Jerusalem, though the details are taken in part from the old prophets (chap. xxi., xxii. 5).

A comparison of this analysis of the Revelation with what has been said in the preceding chapter on Judæo-Christian eschatology, will lead at once to the conviction that the two representations, the two series of dogmas, prophecies, hopes, exactly correspond, and that it has been an erroneous impression which has in all ages led men to seek in this book for

* Ezek. xxxix. 17.

† Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.

new and special revelations not given elsewhere. If it were indeed necessary to explain the Apocalypse by the light of modern history, as is done by most interpreters, then the same system should be applied to various other parts of the New Testament. We have indeed in the Revelation richer painting, more minute descriptions, a more systematic arrangement of the ideas, but all this relates to the form, not to the substance, and we have no ground for believing that other Christians of that age, other apostles who give us substantially the same ideas, might not, had occasion led, have clothed them in the same forms. There are, even in the Apocalypse, some scenes very slightly sketched, which might well have exercised from the beginning the pencil of the prophet; the scene of the resurrection, for example, for which Ezekiel has already supplied all the materials necessary.*

These last remarks lead us directly to say something about the form of the book. The preceding analysis has shown how ingenious and artistic this is. The nature of the subject demanded a series of successive pictures, a continuous narration of future events, may we say an apocalyptic epopee. The writer was not satisfied with so simple a form. He has found means, without changing the simplicity of the substance, to vary the scenes, to sustain and stimulate the eager attention of the reader by apparent delays, and by combinations as interesting from their novelty as attractive by their symmetry. The future is enclosed in a book with seven seals; the last seal comprehends the seven trumpets; the last trumpet calls forth the seven vials of the wrath of God; the last vial alone ushers in the end. In each of these sevenfold evolutions the first four scenes are closely connected together by the natural relations of their contents, and separated from the rest by a figurative conclusion, common to all. The fifth and sixth follow separately, and are uniformly divided from the seventh and last by an interlude. Wherever the length of the scenes allowed of subdivisions, these were threefold. Thus, the

* Ezek. xxxvii.

seventh trumpet introduces successively the description of the enemies, the prophetic prelude, and the conflict. The enemies are three in number; the prelude is triple, the conflict is divided into three encounters or attacks. Each attack has three component parts,—the struggle, the victory, the result.

This series of prophetic pictures is set between a prologue and epilogue, which form not the least important parts of the book. They stand in the closest connection, both as to their form and their images. The prologue, however, is the most extended and the most interesting. It consists of an inscription, accompanied by a sentence in the form of a symbol or epigraph (ch. i. 1—3), of a dedication (ver. 4—8), and of a preparatory vision, in which the author declares his special mission (ver. 9—20). This mission is essentially pastoral and apostolic. The revelations are given not so much for their own sake as for the confirmation and strengthening of the Christians of Asia Minor. The teaching of the prophet is not intended to ignore the necessities of the time in which he wrote, in order to feed the idle curiosity of future generations; it is applicable to that which was most urgent in the then existing circumstances. The writer casts his exhortations, which clearly refer to actual conditions with which he is perfectly acquainted, into the form of seven epistles addressed to the seven principal Churches of pro-consular Asia. Each of these epistles is commenced with a superscription and concluded with a promise, varying only in form; the substance of these epistles consists of admonitions describing the state of each individual Church. The introductory words used in all refer to the various attributes of the Saviour, as described in the first chapter; the promises anticipate the description of the new Jerusalem. In placing these epistles at the commencement of the book the writer shows a fine poetic taste. In ordinary preaching the moral and practical application comes after the theoretical exposition. Throughout the whole of this book we trace, so to speak, a golden chain of sentences of the same kind, carrying back the attention of the reader to the needs of the moment,

and not allowing him to become absorbed in the brilliant images of the future.*

With regard to the peculiar colouring of all these pictures, and the kind of representation we have before us, we must bear in mind that nothing could be more unreasonable than to apply to it as a standard the æsthetic principles of western literature. It is needless to say that we shall not find here the severe beauty and plastic forms of classic poetry, still less the picturesque grace of modern romanticism. It is the fervent life of the East which breathes in these images; they are the creation of an unbridled imagination which is ever ready to sacrifice beauty to boldness, which defies all the ordinary rules of proportion to set before the astonished gaze the imposing and the awful, even at the risk of wounding good taste. We find a profusion of metaphors, a long gallery of daring impersonations, an incessant incarnation of ideas and abstractions. A field of the dead it might seem, where phantoms belonging to another world start up and thrill the viewer at once with a wild curiosity and an indescribable terror. Yet for all this the descriptions are not clear and defined; there is not one which the pencil of the artist can seize and reproduce; the outlines of the figures are vague and fluctuating; the vesture that clothes them is cloudy even in its materiality, and all the attempts that have been made to draw or paint the scenes in the Revelation have ended in caricature, only the more surely the more faithfully they have adhered to the original. As we read the book of the Revelation we must never forget that we are dealing with symbols of thought, not with daguerreotypes of nature. Let us add also that almost the whole of these images, symbols, illustrations, are copied from the old prophets, and that the exceptions are not among the happiest. The latter the writer is careful to explain after the manner of Jeremiah and Amos, while the rest, borrowed most often from Ezekiel or Daniel, rarely need any commentary.

From the foregoing remarks on the form of the Revelation,

* Rev. vi. 9, and foll. ; xiii. 9, 10 ; xiv. 4, and foll., 12, 13 ; xvi. 15 ; xix. 9 ; xx. 6, etc.

the literary studies which supplied its elements, the symmetrical combination and successive evolution of its scenes, and the connection of the different parts of the book, which was always present to the mind of the writer, we find ourselves constrained to regard the visions themselves as a form adopted by choice, and not to seek in them any historical objectivity. We might indeed speak of visions passing before the prophetic eye, inasmuch as hopes long and warmly cherished, and thus coming to form the very marrow of our spiritual life, easily assume to the eye of the imagination an outward form of reality, sometimes very strongly marked. In this sense visions are neither rare nor extraordinary. But this is not the sense in which traditional theology speaks of the apocalyptic visions. It holds that the apostle was entirely passive, in a state of ecstasy, in which he could see that which was invisible to the bodily eye in its normal condition. He is supposed to be simply the narrator of scenes which passed before him, and in the composition of which his own intellectual faculties took no part. We cannot acquiesce in this view. The real and objective visions, for instance, of which we read in the history of Paul, are psychological phenomena altogether different, whether we regard the shortness of their duration, the simplicity of their object, or the nature of the impression they leave behind. Here, on the contrary, art—that is the subjective freedom of the mind—is the prevailing characteristic in a long series of representations, all linked together in a manner equally remarkable and admirable. The more we study this book, the more are we constrained to admire the skill and care with which the whole is constructed, the well-studied arrangement of the larger and lesser lights all disclosing to the discerning eye perfect order, even where there might seem at first to be only a chaos of grotesque forms succeeding each other by chance, or chosen fortuitously among a number of others which are set aside. The poetic and artistic design is no less manifest than the identity of the prophecy in substance with the popular beliefs of the age; and as there was evidently no new revelation to be given to the prophet of anything which the other apostles had

not also known and described, visions in the theological sense would have been here as superfluous as psychologically incomprehensible.

The history of Hebrew poesy teaches us, further, that the vision had long been its accepted form. The old prophets were popular speakers, and for ages this mode of communication had appeared to them sufficient. It was only in later times, and very gradually, that they became writers. As authors they preserved the peculiar forms of their oral teaching. Just as they had been accustomed to illustrate their discourses by symbolic actions, in order to awaken the attention of their hearers, and to impress more deeply upon their minds the explanations which they gave,* so they connected their written teachings with symbolic images, which formed as it were, their text. These images were originally of the simplest,† and of such a nature that we perceive at once they are to be explained by oriental rhetoric, not by psychology or theology. In course of time this special form of thought predominated over every other; Ezekiel and Zechariah made use of this exclusively; it was especially applied to apocalyptic prophecies; and thus we recognize it here, not as an innovation, still less as a privilege peculiar to the writer of the Revelation, but as a national heritage, as a familiar literary form.

* 1 Kings xi. 29, and foll. ; xxii. 11; Isaiah xx. ; Jer. xxvii., etc.

† Jer. i. 11, 13 ; xxiv. 1 ; Amos vii. 1 ; viii. 1, etc.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRIST.

FROM the picture we have drawn of the Messianic hopes of the early Christians, it may be gathered that these had lost none of their strength or brilliancy in passing from the Synagogue to the Church. But it will be observed, at the same time, that the ideal of Messiah, around which all these hopes centre, so far from being compromised by its contact with the historical facts of the passion of Jesus, shines out here, if possible, still more gloriously, and encircled with greater honour and majesty. This leads us to seek more particularly in the history, for the first traces of positive Christian teaching as to the nature of the person of Christ.

We here find ourselves confronted with two contradictory assertions of modern science, neither of which appears to us in harmony with the truth. Many of those who have preceded us have thought that the belief subsequently known as Ebionitism, in which Jesus was regarded as a mere mortal raised to a higher rank by an extraordinary dispensation of God, was at first a heresy in the eyes of the Church. In controversion of this opinion, many of our contemporaries have insinuated that this Ebionitism may well have been the general belief of the primitive community, out of which other views more approaching the now received tenet as orthodox, may have been gradually developed. Both these assertions appear to us far too sweeping. With reference to the former, we may say, that heresy was impossible when there was as yet no fixed standard of belief; in reply to the latter, we may point to the fact, that

the elements of the orthodox dogma existed anterior to Christianity itself, and that there are indubitable traces of them in the oldest Christian literature of every shade of thought. We maintain then that the ideas on this subject were at this period in a formative state, and we shall endeavour here to trace their progressive development, with entire impartiality, commencing with those which bear the least decided impress of speculative or theological study.

Now ideas of this description are to be found first, and in the simplest form, in a book which does not stand among the monuments of Judæo-Christianity, but the author of which has made use of the most ancient narratives, whether written or traditional, without changing in any way their primitive character. We refer to the book of the Acts of the Apostles. It is notable that the text of this book often alludes to the Saviour in terms which would not suggest the ecclesiastical dogma concerning His nature. Thus, in the first sermon by Peter, Jesus is presented to the Israelites as a *man* of the seed of David,* approved of God among them by miracles, raised up after the pains of death, and exalted by the right hand of God, *receiving* then from the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost to be poured forth upon His people, and thus *made* both Lord and Christ. In another discourse Jesus is represented as a prophet *like unto* Moses;† as such He is spoken of as God's holy and righteous *servant*,‡ the Just One, a name which does not necessarily lift Him above the sphere of humanity. Again, it is said that Jesus of Nazareth was "*anointed* of God with the Holy Ghost and with power," and that He "healed all that were oppressed of the devil," for that God was with Him.§ Uniformly, here and elsewhere, the *man*,|| the Root of David, is declared to be Messiah and Saviour by the fact of the resurrection, and we may hence

* Acts ii. 22, and foll. (*ἄνθρωπος*); *κατὰ σάρκα*, v. 30; *λαβὼν*, v. 33; *ἀποίησε*, v. 36.

† Acts iii. 22; comp. vii. 37.

‡ *Παῖς*, chap. iii. 13, 14, 26; iv. 27, 30; comp. vii. 52; xxii. 14.

§ Acts x. 38.

|| Acts xiii. 23, and foll.; xvii. 31.

conclude that that fact was the basis and starting-point of the final convictions and fuller teachings of theology.*

But these are not the only indications that many Christians in the early days were satisfied with a simply popular conception on this point, not binding their brethren in hard doctrinal fetters, or being thus bound themselves. The testimony of history to the fervent and practical piety, the devoted charity and enthusiastic courage of the young Church, explains to us how it was that the perplexing problems of a high theology so little affected it, seem indeed scarcely to have been perceived by it. Thus the preservation of the genealogy of Joseph, to prove the right of Christ to the title of Messiah,† alone shows the existence, we will not say of a party, but of a point of view, to which that genealogy could be of interest. For those who assigned to Jesus an origin above the sphere of humanity, it could have no value whatever. This the writer of the third gospel explicitly declares.‡ The fact that there are even two different genealogies§ is sufficient evidence that the circle within which such researches were carried on was not a very limited one. Assuredly neither of the two evangelists was acquainted with the text of the other, and they must have derived their date from sources sufficiently distinct.||

* That the "orthodox dogma" was not articulately developed in the apostolic Church is incontestable; but if the passages above quoted are intended to suggest that the fact of Christ's divinity was not distinctly apprehended by the apostolic Church, they are inconclusive. These passages are precisely parallel to the words of St. Paul (Rom. i. 3, 4): "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." Nor is it just to say that the resurrection of our Lord was the "basis and starting-point of the final convictions and fuller teachings of theology;" it is clear from the gospels that the disciples caught glimpses of the higher nature of Christ even before His crucifixion.—Ed.

† Τὸς Δαβὶδ.

‡ Luke iii. 23, ἐνομιζέτο.

§ Matt. i. 1—16; Luke 23—38.

|| There is no trace, either in the Acts of the Apostles or in the gospels, of the opinion which Reuss supposes to have led to the preservation of the genealogy of Joseph. Our Lord's *formal* relationship to the Jewish

The tradition handed down by Luke, which carries the history back, as we know, to a more remote point, also casts a ray of light upon the childhood of Jesus, elsewhere wrapt in profound obscurity. Our readers will at once call to mind the touching story which shows us the son of Mary, at twelve years of age, remaining behind in the temple to hear and question the doctors.* This narrative, in itself sufficiently significant, is preceded and followed by expressions speaking of the child as growing, waxing strong in spirit, increasing in knowledge, and in favour with God and man. The Church in all ages has delighted in this simple story, and yet from the theological point of view it contains an enigma for the orthodox system, which science must strive in vain to solve.† Taken literally, and just as we have it, it belongs to that popular conception of which we were speaking above, which was not fettered by any logical or theological considerations. Theology, taking its stand on the Trinitarian point of view, and adhering to the logical consequences of that doctrine, would not speak of the Incarnate Word, as growing in wisdom and knowledge.‡

A precisely similar difficulty presents itself in the baptism of Jesus. The evangelist Matthew§ himself calls our attention

nation was through his reputed father, and this no doubt was the reason why the genealogy of Joseph was preserved.—ED.

* Luke ii. 41, and foll.

† On the contrary, a strictly scientific theory of the Incarnation requires that our Lord should be represented as growing in wisdom and knowledge. For a perfect Incarnation includes the assumption of a human soul subject to all the common laws and conditions of intellectual and moral development, as well as of a human body. The theory which is inconsistent with the growth of our Lord in wisdom and knowledge is the theory which represents the Incarnate Word as taking the place and fulfilling the functions of a truly human soul in the person of our Lord Jesus. This theory orthodox Trinitarianism condemns.—ED.

‡ It may be observed that the same progress is spoken of in the case of John the forerunner, Luke i. 80. The more spiritual theology of succeeding ages has not failed to feel this difficulty; so the narrative has been altered, and another substituted (apocryphal doubtless, and sufficiently absurd, but strictly logical as a theoretical result), according to which the child Jesus was from His birth in full possession of His Divine consciousness and of all the attributes of Deity.

§ Matt. iii. 14.

to the strangeness of the fact that the Son of God should seek the baptism of repentance, and the explanation which his narrative offers of the reason for this demand is a problem almost insoluble for a true and unshrinking exegesis. But there is more than this. All the four evangelists* relate, though in three different ways, that on this occasion the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus.† We ask, again, Had the Incarnate God need to receive the Holy Spirit at thirty years of age? We do not here discuss the fact, because we are writing history, not theory. We merely call attention to it in proof that at the time when the Church set its seal to this form of the accounts of the baptism, it had not yet addressed itself to those questions which the theologians of the fourth century did not fail to raise; which amounts to saying that it had not yet expressed in the form of creeds, its convictions as to the person of its Lord and Saviour. It was satisfied with knowing simply that He was in all things directed by the Holy Spirit; it did not stay to question whether such and such a particular form of expression would most fitly describe His actions, in an age when a history, designed in the first instance to edify the soul and nourish religious feeling, should be made to accommodate itself to speculative requirements.‡

* Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10; Luke iii. 22; John i. 32.

† We must not fail to note here that the fourth gospel avoids or lessens the difficulty, while the third seems almost to increase it; comp. Luke iv. 1.

‡ There is confessedly considerable difficulty in answering the question why our Lord submitted to John's baptism. The explanation is perhaps to be found in the fact that baptism is not—and from its very form cannot be—a profession of any faith or feeling on the part of the baptized person; if it were, he would baptize himself instead of being baptized by another. It is something to which a man submits; and in which he is not active, but passive. What then did John's baptism mean? I think it meant this: the people who came to it had already been separated from the rest of mankind by the ceremony of circumcision, which was the external sign of their belonging to an elect race. But it was not enough for them to be descendants of Abraham, and therefore the heirs by natural birth of all the privileges, memories, and hopes of the Jewish nation. As those Gentiles who became Jews were separated from their old life by the Jewish rite of baptism, so those Jews who wished to enter the kingdom of heaven were separated from their old life by the rite which John admi-

A similar remark is called forth and supported by the account of the Temptation.* After having spoken already of its inner meaning, we revert to it here in order to look at it from a doctrinal point of view. We assume at the outset that the evangelists state a real and objective fact, that they speak of a visible and personal tempter, in short, of the devil. If this is so, we must admit that the Christological idea, which lies at the basis of the narrative, is very far removed from an ideal conception, and farthest of all from the orthodox conception of to-day. In truth, it is exceedingly difficult to harmonize that conception with the idea of a temptation at all, since God cannot be tempted. Then the temptation is prolonged during forty days; there is again the remarkable fact that the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted. Nor must it be unnoted that the tempter, the principle of evil, exerts a material power over the Son of God, since he carries Him from the desert up to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem again to the top of a high mountain; Jesus, according to the text, yielded to this influence for some reason not explained by any theological statement, or because He did not actually recognize the tempter till the last extremity. But the conclusive proof that the orthodox theory does not

nistered. It was the sign of a second election within the elect race itself—an election participation in which depended in the case of all who came to be baptized, *with one great exception*, upon a preliminary confession of sin. The confession came first, and then the ceremony which marked its subjects as those who were not Jews alone, but Jews who were ready and prepared for the manifestation of the kingdom of heaven. The ceremony was a Divine institution, and therefore our Lord submitted to it that He too might be set apart from the rest of the nation as one who believed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The descent of the Spirit of God upon our Lord at His Baptism is by no means inconsistent with the orthodox theory of His Divinity. The supernatural powers by which He was to fulfil His ministry could not become His, on the theory of the Incarnation, until His human nature was sufficiently developed to receive them.

The difficulty suggested in the following paragraph in reference to the temptation of our Lord rests upon the same misconception of what is involved in the orthodox theory of the Incarnation.—ED.

* Matt. iv. 1, and foll. ; Luke iv. 1, and foll.

underlie this narrative, is that the Tempter proposes to Jesus to worship him, the devil. Such a suggestion on his part, *addressed to God*, his Creator, would be not merely blasphemy, but simply an inconceivable folly. Now the Gospels would not relate an absurdity, and the reply of the Lord shows plainly the conception they entertained of the fact.

It follows then clearly from all that has been said, that the religious feeling could be fully satisfied with convictions, narratives, and statements in which speculative theology found no place. The popular form of Christology, as set forth in the facts we have just passed in review, must have been at first very widely diffused, since we see it maintained side by side with a more scientific form soon suggested by the teaching of the apostles, and sustained by its close relation to all the other essential parts of evangelical doctrine. If it had not from the first cast its roots deeply into men's minds, it would not have come down to us as an integral part of a history which was not written till the more scientific form had obtained almost undivided supremacy in the preaching of Christianity. The majority of men have little aptitude or inclination for the higher departments of science, and even to-day, in presence of theories distinctly and formally stated, how many are satisfied with and cherish ideas barely compatible with the logic of those theories, though they have the best intentions of being orthodox, and would be greatly astonished to have it proved that they are not! We make one further observation on this point. The very name of *Christ*, so universally accepted in the Church, recalls by its etymology the popular conception of the dogma. It signifies the *Anointed One*—that is, He who has received from God a special mission to man, and the *means* for its accomplishment. Such expressions as the Anointed of God, the Anointed of the Lord,* prove that this etymology was present to the minds of men, and harmonized with the general tone of their religious views.

But it is no less certain also that in the sphere of Judæo-Christianity, theology had overpassed the limits of this popular

* Luke ii. 16 ; ix. 20 ; comp. Rev. xi. 15 ; xii. 10.

conception, to rise to a point of view which might seem more in accordance with the deepest nature or essence of the Gospel. As the Christian community rose to grander and wider views of the work of redemption, as it came to comprehend that Messiah was not simply One who was to come in the future to close the world's history, but One who was already come to establish it upon a new foundation by regenerating humanity, the more august and majestic did His person grow in its eyes. It became at length convinced that the former revelations could not give the measure of the new; that the Head of the Church was not simply the successor of the prophets, that the name *Son of God* belonged to Him in a sense in which it had belonged to none before. In order to prove this progress by quotations, we are under no necessity to invert the order adopted in this work, and to appeal to the apostles whose writings have more particularly served as the basis of ecclesiastical theology,—Paul, John, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Their teaching will be the subject of special examination in the books which are to follow. We may only observe here that the writings of Paul, which carry us back, so to speak, into the very cradle of the Church, contain nothing to indicate that their Christological doctrine, so different from that of common Ebionitism, was regarded as an innovation, or gave rise to any disputations at the time of its first appearance. But we have in our hand another book, essentially Judæo-Christian, which gives emphatic support to our assertion. This is that very book of the Revelation, the teaching of which in relation to the close of the present order of things we have examined in the preceding chapter. We shall complete our observations on that book with a few words about its Christology.

It is true that we find in it certain expressions used as descriptive of Christ which seem to keep us within the circle of Old Testament ideas. Thus the names of “the Root of David,”* and “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,”† and all con-

* Rev. v. 5; xxii. 16; comp. Isaiah xi. 1, etc.

† Rev. v. 5; comp. Gen. xlix. 9.

nected with them, point only to a dignity received by inheritance, and contain no element of Christian thought. The honourable epithets given to Him, "the faithful and true witness,"* "He that is holy, and He that is true," may be assigned to the same sphere, though it must not be forgotten that in the language of the prophets, as also in this book,† these are applied to Jehovah alone. We need not allude further to the passage‡ in which the Lamb appears as destined to receive in some time yet to come, the seven attributes of beatific perfection; nor dwell, lastly, upon the fact that the descriptions of Messiah§ are borrowed from an idealized human original. It may be freely admitted that the poetical form of the prophet's thought shows the influence of these models, without prejudice to the substance of the thought itself. With reference to the latter, it ought to be unhesitatingly acknowledged that Christ is placed in the Revelation on a par with God. He is called the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End,|| and those same expressions are used to designate the Most High.¶ Speculative theology distinguished by analysis, seven attributes or perfections** in the essence of God, and it is expressly said these same attributes also belong to Christ.†† He alone can call God His Father,‡‡ for in this book God is never called *our* Father; thus there is marked at once the distance which divides Him from us, and His affinity with the Father. He bears a new name, which is to be written also on the forehead of the faithful,§§ but this name is at the same time the name of the Father,||| Jehovah, a name myste-

* Rev. i. 5; iii. 7, 14; xix. 11, etc.

† Rev. iv. 8; vi. 10.

‡ Rev. v. 12.

§ Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14.

|| *A καὶ ὁ*, Rev. i. 11, 17; ii. 8; xxii. 13.

¶ Rev. i. 8; xxi. 6.

** Rev. i. 5; iv. 5; comp. Isaiah xi. 2.

†† Rev. iii. 1; v. 6.

‡‡ Rev. i. 6; ii. 27; iii. 5, 21; xiv. 1.

§§ Rev. ii. 17, etc.

||| Rev. iii. 12; xiv. i.

rious as yet, but which those who bear it shall be taught to pronounce by Him who keeps the secret.* Lastly, He is called "the Word of God,"† He is therefore that original hypostasis, Word, Spirit, or Wisdom, which, as philosophy had already acknowledged, had been created before the world, that in its turn it might call the world into existence, and enrich it with all the treasures of its own perfection. This is the meaning conveyed when Christ is spoken of as "the beginning of the creation of God."‡

All these formulas show us how Christology had risen to the height of a transcendental doctrine, or, as we are accustomed to say, of a mystery. If the writer of the Apocalypse had spoken of the earthly life of Christ, the influence of His doctrine would doubtless have made itself felt also in this sphere, hitherto reserved for purely practical and instructive contemplation. But that which we do not find in his writing, two other apostles agree in expressly stating. These are the evangelists Matthew and Luke, who both place at the head of their narrative § the fact of the miraculous conception of the Son of God in the womb of a virgin, and this record alone has sufficed for the Church as the adequate expression of its faith on this special question. These two books were not placed in circulation in the very earliest times, and Luke, in particular, did not write till towards the close of the century, but his narration appears to rest upon previous writings, so that the theological idea it presents may be regarded as of very early date. It is true that the prologue of Mark, which is one of the latest-penned pages of the New Testament, since it gives only an abridgment of the text of the two other synoptics, declares || that the Gospel began with the preaching of John the Baptist, and passes over in silence the history of the birth of Jesus. At one time there was no attempt to establish that the

* Rev. ii. 17 ; xix. 12.

† Ο λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, מִיְמַדְאֵלֵהָ, Rev. xix. 13.

‡ Ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, Rev. iii. 14.

§ Matt. i. 18, and foll. ; Luke i. 35, and foll.

[|| Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, Mark i. 1.

passages recording that fact were not genuine, but such an opinion has long been abandoned as untenable. It is only needful to say that the public teaching of the apostles, their evangelistic work, inasmuch as it was founded upon history and upon their personal testimony, did not go back beyond the period indicated by Mark.* The apostles in their relations with the people confined themselves to things necessary for the edification of the Church; they preached a crucified and risen Christ, reserving for the theological studies of the few, matters outlying the common and actual wants of the many.

* Acts i. 22 ; x. 37 ; xiii. 24 ; John i. 6.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ANGELS.

WE here interpolate a few remarks on the beliefs entertained by the early Christians with reference to the angels, simply because the book of Revelation, which has on many grounds claimed our special attention, speaks more than any other scripture of celestial and infernal beings, and of their influence on the world. But for this, we should not have felt it needful to take up this subject separately, since apostolic theology introduced absolutely no change in the ideas currently entertained with reference to it in Jewish society, and propagated by the teaching of the Pharisaic doctors. They indeed attempted nothing like the construction of a scientific doctrine on this point. In the exposition we shall presently give of the doctrinal systems of Paul and of John, we shall, following the indications given in the texts, assign to these ideas the place most convenient for connecting them with the whole Gospel theory. Here, on the contrary, we should be at a loss to say in what order this special subject ought to be treated in Judæo-Christian theology, and we may confine ourselves to a succinct statement of the principal points relating to it, that we may not seem to pass it by altogether.

We shall not repeat what we have already had occasion to say in the history of Judaism, on the origin of demonology. Those who are desirous of fuller information on that subject may consult the apocalypses of Daniel and of Esdras and their commentators. They will there find, if not a body of doctrine, at least a collection of narratives and of creeds more or less

philosophical in substance, more or less poetical in form, and occupying a large place in the religion of the people. A few lines will suffice to prove that Judæo-Christianity has not in this respect repudiated its parentage.

The sources to which we shall particularly refer here teach us very little about the nature of the angels. It has been inferred from one passage * that they were represented as being without sex, but the parallel passage,† and still more a legend generally received,‡ shows that this is an error, and that the reference is to their immortality. The points most frequently noted are their greatness, glory, and strength; their wings are the symbol of the rapidity with which they fulfil their functions.§ They form a hierarchy among themselves;|| they are around the throne of the Most High,¶ and their ministry consists generally in carrying out the will of God in nature, but more particularly in being His messengers to man. Thus there are the angels of the four winds,** of the simoon,†† an angel of the waters,‡‡ an angel of the bottomless pit.§§ They come on special occasions as the bearers of remarkable messages to mortals. In the old time they were used as instruments in the calling of Moses, and in the giving of the law from Sinai.|||| But they are especially the ministers of the new covenant service;¶¶ they were at the behest of Christ during His life,*** and will form part of His glorious train on His triumphal second

* Matt. xxii. 30.

† Luke xx. 36.

‡ Jude 6.

§ Rev. v. 2; viii. 13; x. 1; xviii. 1, 21, etc.; Acts vi. 15.

|| Jude 9.

¶ Luke xii. 8; Rev. *passim*.

** Rev. vii. 1.

†† Rev. ix. 14.

‡‡ Rev. xvi. 5; comp. John v. 4.

§§ Rev. ix. 11.

|||| Acts vii. 30, 53.

¶¶ Matt. i. 20; ii. 13, 19; Luke i. 11, and foll.; 26, and foll.; ii. 9.

*** Matt. iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43; Matt. xxvi. 53, etc.

††† Matt. xiii. 39, and foll. xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31, and parall.; Rev. *passim*.

coming.* Till then they watch over the progress of the kingdom of God,† and the spiritual concerns of men,‡ are the special guardians of the ministers of the Gospel, and guide them on their way;§ they are entrusted with the calling of the elect,|| and with the punishment of the reprobate.¶ Each section of the Church militant is governed by an angel responsible to God for the success of His ministry,** and the Church triumphant, the new Jerusalem, will no less have them for its guardians.†† Theology is even acquainted with the proper names of some of them.‡‡

The spirits of evil§§ likewise form among themselves an empire governed by a head, and offering opposition to the kingdom of God. This head is distinguished by different names.|||| He is first called Satan, which must not be taken for a proper name; it is the term by which the ancient Israelites were wont to designate the *accusing* angel of men with God.¶¶ The Hellenists translated this term by different Greek words having the same meaning,*** and one of which (the devil) has come into common use among Christians. He is subsequently called the serpent,††† from the time theology‡‡‡ began to take

* Luke xv. 10; 1 Peter i. 12.

† Matt. xviii. 10.

‡ Acts v. 19; viii. 26; xii. 7.

§ Acts x. 3.

¶ Acts xii. 23.

** Rev. i. 20; ii. ; iii.

†† Rev. xxi. 12.

‡‡ Luke i. 19; Jude 9; Rev. ix. 11; xii. 17.

§§ Πνευματα ἀκαθάρτα, Synoptical Gospels *passim*, especially Mark and Luke; Acts v. 16; viii. 7; Rev. xvi. 13; xx. 2; more often δαιμόνια, Matt., Mark, Luke, James ii. 19.

|||| Ἄρχων, Matt. ix. 34, etc.

¶¶ Matt. iv. 1, and foll., and parall.; Luke viii. 12; Mark iv. 15; Rev. *passim*.

*** Κατήγορος, Rev. xii. 10; διάβολος, *passim*, with the rabbis קטיוגר.

The name of Beelzebub (for that is the true pronunciation, and not Beelzebul, Matt. xii. 24, and parall.) has nothing in common with the Canaanitish god spoken of in 2 Kings i. 2, but is a Syro-Chaldaic word equivalent to ἐχθρός, the enemy, Matt. xiii. 39.

††† Ὄφεις, δράκων, Rev. xii. ; xiii. ; xx. 2.

‡‡‡ Book of Wisdom ii. 24.

up the narrative in Genesis. Lastly, he bears the name of Beliar, which is a misspelling or mispronunciation of Belial,*—annihilation, death, hell. The abode of devils is placed sometimes in the desert, sometimes in the air, sometimes in the bowels of the earth.† They are the authors of evil in the world; they torment men with all sorts of sicknesses;‡ but they seek most of all to lead them to the commission of sin;§ nevertheless their power shall not prevail against that of God and of His Christ, and when Christ's kingdom shall be established gloriously, they shall be judged and cast into eternal fire.||

* Βελιάρ, 2 Cor. vi. 15. [The change of λ for ρ is a common dialectical change.—ED.] Comp. Αβαδδών, Rev. ix. 11.

† Matt. xii. 43; Rev. xviii. 2; Jude 6; comp. 2 Peter ii. 4.

‡ Synoptics *passim*, δαμονιζεσθαι.

§ Luke xxii. 3, 31; Acts v. 3; James iv. 7.

|| Jude 6; Rev. xx. 10.

CHAPTER VII.

SALVATION.

JUST as eschatological ideas predominated in Judæo-Christian theology, and became the first subjects of intellectual effort, so soteriological ideas, those which relate to the basis and conditions of salvation, and which were soon to take the first place in Christian thought, appear at first to have been in abeyance. Theology—and we beg our readers to bear in mind continually that it is of theology, not of religion, we are speaking—was as yet more Judaistic than evangelical, and the school which was to raise it to a higher region of religious thought was still characterized by a simplicity approaching to poverty. The memory of the disciples had retained the teaching of Jesus, and we recognize readily the marked influence of those lessons upon their conscience and life; but they were not at once conscious of any necessity for testing those teachings theoretically, and developing by analysis the principles involved in them.

The question which Christian theology proposes to itself, after having acknowledged and proclaimed Christ as the author of salvation and the founder and king of the kingdom of the *saved*, is by what means and in what manner the individual may come to share in the enjoyment of these benefits. Assuredly this is the point of paramount importance, and we shall soon see that apostolic teaching gave a large place to the study of this question. But in the beginning the reply was still confined to a few facts and general terms, which we must first examine.

In reading attentively the records of the preaching of the first disciples, whose discourses, or epitomes of them, form an integral part of apostolic tradition, we arrive at the conclusion that with them too conversion and faith are the fundamental ideas of Gospel teaching, as we have already seen in the discourses of the Lord Himself. What we want to ascertain is whether the resemblance goes beyond mere expressions; in other words, whether the ideas represented by the same words have lost any of their original fullness of meaning.

With regard to conversion, the negative side of the idea seems to predominate in the homiletic use made of the term. When it is urged upon the pagans, it necessarily refers to their idolatry and the vices inseparable from it.* When required of the Jews, or of Christians already baptized, it implies a deviation from the positive commands of God, and is equivalent simply to what we call repentance.† In both cases it brings man back to God,‡ from whom sin had separated him. The Christian has only too vivid a remembrance of this state preceding his conversion,§ in which earthly and carnal passions ruled over him,|| and he obeyed the impulse of his grosser instincts.¶ In all this, however, the preaching does not rise above the level of the Old Testament, and no idea peculiar to the Gospel comes in as yet to add to its weight or spiritualize its influence. On the contrary, we might be led to imagine sometimes that conversion is the sum and substance of Christianity, at least in its practical aspect, nothing else being mentioned as the condition of salvation and life.** This presumption seems confirmed when we find elsewhere works—that is, good actions—spoken of as determining the judgment of God and the fate of individuals;†† for it is needless to say repentance is to be

* Rev. ix. 20, and foll. ; comp. xvi. 9, 11 ; Acts xi. 18.

† Rev. ii. 5, 16, 21 ; iii. 3, 19 ; Acts ii. 38 ; iii. 19 ; v. 31.

‡ Acts xx. 21 ; xxvi. 20.

§ Rev. i. 5.

|| *Ἐπιθυμῆσαι*, Jude 16, 18 ; comp. 2 Peter i. 4.

¶ *Ψυχικός*, Jude 19.

** Acts iii. 19 ; xi. 18 ; xvii. 30 ; comp. 2 Peter iii. 9.

†† Rev. ii. 23 ; xx. 12, 13 ; xxii. 12 ; James ii. 14, and foll.

followed by conduct which proves its sincerity.* Such conduct is called righteousness,† that is to say, a state conformed to the will of God; to practise righteousness is, then, to observe all His commandments.‡ “Blessed are they that do His commandments!” their works shall follow them,§ to witness in their favour before the great tribunal. The judgment which the Spirit of God pronounces upon the Churches is invariably regulated by their works,|| which are recorded in a book which the Judge will one day open.¶ Christianity, in this view of it, may be called the path of righteousness, the holy commandment,** and that same righteousness will be the character of the ideal world to come.†† Future blessedness, life eternal, is called the crown,‡‡ which contains by implication the idea of a purely subjective effort, of a conflict sustained with honour, and deserving an august recompense.

Nevertheless, in addition to this first essential element of the preaching of salvation, the apostolic documents before us contain also the second element, namely faith. Its importance may be gathered from the frequent use of the term *the faithful*, those that believe, to designate the members of the Church.§§ The word *believe* is uniformly employed in recording the salutary effect of the apostolic preaching.||| Sometimes the object of the faith is not clearly defined, but it is natural to suppose that the thing believed was the substance of the preaching accepted as the expression of the truth.¶¶ Thus it is said that the Samaritans believed Philip when he preached to them the

* Ἔργα ἀξία τῆς μεταβολῆς, Acts xxvi. 20.

† Δικαιοσύνη.

‡ Rev. xii. 17; xiv. 12; xxii. 11.

§ Rev. xiv. 13, 14.

|| Rev. ii. 2, 5, 9, 13, 19, 26; iii. 1, 2, 8, 15.

¶ Rev. xx. 12.

** Ὁδὸς δικαιοσύνης, etc., 2 Peter ii. 21.

†† 2 Peter iii. 13.

‡‡ Στέφανος, James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10; iii. 11.

§§ Πιστοὶ, πιστεύοντες, Acts ii. 44; x. 45; xv. 5; Rev. xvii. 14, etc.

||| Acts xi. 21; xiii. 12; xiv. 1, etc.

¶¶ Acts xv. 7.

kingdom of God and the name of Jesus.* Faith, then, is adhesion given to the declaration of another, especially when the latter is supposed to speak as the oracle of God; † it is an act of the mind which accepts a fact as true. Faith is therefore formed, ‡ fostered, or weakened § by the strength of the arguments employed. It is something which is handed down by tradition from man to man. || We have already spoken of its object,—the Lord Jesus Christ and His Messianic dignity, ¶ which necessarily includes the assured realization of the promises touching His kingdom. This is the meaning, then, which we may attach to the brief familiar formula “*believing in the Lord.*”** We have found no indication that it as yet meant more than this from the Judæo-Christian point of view. On the contrary, there is abundant evidence in support of this limited definition. We will not go for proofs to the Epistle of James, lest we be thought to be treading on debatable ground, but the book of Revelation supplies all we seek. In that book faith is, so to speak, defined by these words, “*holding fast the name of Jesus,*” †† keeping His word, not denying it in the face of persecution. It is, then, that which we call fidelity, perseverance in the Christian profession, adherence to a conviction once adopted. ‡‡ “*To die in the Lord*” means, then, to remain faithful unto the end, and not to be moved by the menaces or allurements of the world. Thus faith is easily blended by the writer with persistency, patience, faithfulness, a term used almost synonymously with it, and of yet broader import, §§ since it embraces at once obedience to the commands of God, which is to give

* Acts viii. 12.

† Acts xvi. 34.

‡ Acts xvii. 31 ; hence ὑπακούειν τῇ πίστει, chap. vi. 7, to be persuaded.

§ Acts xiii. 8 ; xiv. 22.

|| Jude 3.

¶ Acts viii. 37.

** τῷ κυρίῳ, εἰς, ἐπὶ τὸν κ. Acts v. 14 ; ix. 42 ; xiv. 23, etc.

†† Κρατεῖν τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ, Rev. ii. 13 ; iii. 8.

‡‡ Rev. ii. 10.

§§ Rev. xiv. 13 ; xiii. 10 ; xiv. 12.

us a title to the kingdom, and faith in Jesus, who will soon come to establish it. The moral teaching of the Revelation is therefore systematized, as it were, in the enumeration of the characteristics of the true Christian—works, love, faith, service, patience.* Works are named here in the first place as comprehending all that is essential; the term stands not merely for what we should call acts of duty, but for all the manifestations of the moral principle. The other four terms form two parallel members, in which *love* and *service* relate to social duties, to Christian work; and only after these come *faith* and *patience*, dispositions to be exercised in relation to the future revelation of Christ. It is at least evident that the writer who used such a form of expression, cannot have apprehended the idea of faith in the deep sense which we have already noted in a previous book, which we shall trace everywhere in the writings of Paul and in the fourth gospel, and which ultimately became its accepted meaning in the theology of the Church.

Conversion and faith, then, thus defined, are the conditions upon which man obtains pardon of his sins,† and the prospect of a part in the kingdom of God. But we must inquire if Christian theology, in this first phase of its development, already took account of the connection between cause and effect, if it defined with any precision the share of man and the share of God in the work of salvation, still more if it assigned to Christ Himself a sphere of action at once distinct and important, setting Him forth in His capacity as Saviour. We are able to reply to these questions, which lie at the very foundation of Gospel science.

If our tests so far have, so to speak, inclined the balance in favour of man's own exertions, representing salvation as obtained by his personal efforts and the steadfastness of his own determination, we can now point to others which render homage to God not only for the result, but for the first impulse to this happy resolution. It is the grace of God‡ which opens

* Rev. ii. 19, *ἔργα, ἀγάπη, πίστις, διακονία, ὑπομονή.*

† Acts ii. 38; v. 31; x. 43, etc.

‡ *Χάρις*, Jude 4.

the way of salvation; the gift from heaven is freely offered.* It is easy to harmonize this positive declaration with the no less explicit assertions we have before noted. We have only to bear in mind what has been said on the subject of sin. Christian feeling, might well rejoice from the moment of conversion, in a moral force sufficient to attain the end, to reach the crown, without always pausing to examine how far this power was inherent, or a direct gift from God. But the Christian soul could never forget its state before conversion; it must ever be convinced that the faults and sins then committed constitute a debt which no after-effort could discharge or cancel. That debt remained, it weighed upon the conscience, it paralyzed hope, and nothing but the Divine mercy, the free pardon of the Father, could restore calm to the troubled heart of the sinner, who saw his past life in its true light. This point of view, however imperfectly apprehended, had its basis in the teaching of Jesus. It was to become increasingly the theme of theological reflection. Thus we trace the rise in this same sphere of Judæo-Christian thought, of the ideas of election or calling,† the theological analysis of which we shall find elsewhere. For the present we have to compare them with the Old Testament ideas, from which these terms were derived. *Calling* is the invitation addressed to the individual as a free agent, with the view of leading him to repentance and faith, an invitation which is not always and necessarily followed by the desired result. *Election*, on the contrary, is an act of the predisposing grace of God, and enters into the more general notion of predestination. The latter is clearly brought out by the figure of the book of life,‡ according to which the fate of each is preordained from the creation of the world.§ Evidently these two ideas, thus defined, are

* Δωρεάν, Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17; comp. 2 Peter i. 3, 4.

† Ἐκλεκτοὶ, κλητοὶ, Rev. xvii. 14; Jude 1; comp. 2 Peter i. 3, 10.

‡ Βιβλος τῆς ζωῆς, Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8.

§ Reuss carries into these passages from the Apocalypse the theory of election developed by the later theological thought of the Church. In the former of them (Apoc. xiii. 8) the true translation is that given in our

mutually contradictory and incompatible, and we shall soon see apostolical theology endeavouring to harmonize them. We shall not anticipate this process; on the contrary, we shall show that Judæo-Christianity, so far from attempting it as yet, was not even startled by the contradiction, for we find combined in one single verse of the Revelation* the two images of the book of life, and of the books containing the actions of man, and both alike serving to set forth the idea of judgment, though the former rests upon Divine prescience and predestination, the latter upon human liberty and spontaneity.

Be this as it may, the Christian faith from this time comprehends that the relation of man is one of indebtedness to God, who in pardoning and blotting out the sin of the past preserves the sinner from the death he has deserved. God is thus a Saviour,† the dispensation brought in by the Gospel is one of salvation‡ by pardon,§ or simply of salvation|| assured to the repentant and believing sinner, and soon to be realized in the consummation of all things.

But it is said also that God is the Saviour by Jesus Christ,¶ and this brings us at length to consider what share in the work of salvation belongs peculiarly to Jesus Christ. That share has been recognized by theology as so incomparably great, that the name Saviour has come in the end to be regarded as His essential and peculiar name.**

We have seen that the moral and prophetic teaching of the Lord was naturally accepted by His disciples as an invaluable and absolute guide. They could not but be convinced, also, that the more closely they conformed to it in practical life, the more would they please God. But they soon learned that this

own version: "the Lamb" is "slain"—not the "names . . . written in the book of life"—"from the foundation of the world."—ED.

* Rev. xx. 12; comp. iii. 5.

† *Σωτήρ*, Luke i. 47.

‡ *Σωτηρία ἐν ἀρέσει ἀμαρτιῶν*, Luke i. 77.

! § Jude 3. In the Revelation, *σωτηρία* has only the special sense of the Hebrew *ישועה*, victory: chap. vii. 10; xii. 10; xix. 1.

|| Jude 25.

¶ 2 Peter i. 1, 11; ii. 20, etc.

teaching was not the only benefit they derived from Jesus. Contrary to their expectation, instead of at once establishing His kingdom, He had died upon the cross, and His resurrection alone could assure them of the authority of His words and the lawfulness of their hopes. But, then, why had He died? They called to mind that He had foretold that death as necessary, and this prediction, with the explanations attending it, became the basis of an entirely new phase of their Messianic faith; it served to broaden the circle of Jewish ideas, and they came insensibly to place the Christian doctrine upon a foundation other than that which had at first satisfied the great body of believers. They were led to acknowledge a *passible* Messiah,* and this was an important point of difference with the Jews, † to whom this idea was utterly strange. ‡ Exegesis might furnish arguments in proof of the act, but theology must explain it. It acquitted itself of the task, first, by putting forth two doctrinal theses closely connected, and which under various developments have been accepted as axioms by the science of the Church. The death of Christ has benefited mankind in two different ways: His blood has first washed away sin and purified the believing sinner; by this very act it has cemented a new covenant between God and man, destined to replace the old, which sin had already broken. Here we trace the germ of expiation and reconciliation, though the formulas or technicalities of later date are not yet adopted. For the most part, Judæo-Christian documents do not dwell much upon these ideas, but we can show that they were not ignored.

The book of Revelation will supply proof of our assertion. It presents in this respect many very striking analogies with the Epistles of Paul, even in its expressions, and thus shows how erroneous is the common opinion, already controverted by us, according to which Judæo-Christianity is nothing else than Judaism based upon surer hopes. The Revelation declares very plainly, and as a fundamental principle of its theology, that

* Παθητός, Acts xxvi. 23.

† Acts xvii. 3.

‡ John xii. 34, etc.

Christ has washed us from our sins in His own blood,* and the same idea is reproduced again in a figure, the paradoxical form of which only gives more emphasis to its meaning. For, in spite of the physical incongruity of the two ideas, the prophet delights to represent the elect as clothed in robes washed white in the blood of Christ.† In addition to this first figure, there is another, doubtless conveying the same meaning; this is that of a ransom effected by the blood of Christ.‡ Now a ransom supposes a state of bondage, from which there can be deliverance only through the intervention of a third person. It is natural to think here of the power of sin, which enslaves man, and exposes him to the righteous indignation of God; the purification, of which we have spoken, by taking away the guilt, disarms also the anger of the Judge, and gives us back at the same time our liberty. This inestimable benefit Christ procures for us by the love He has borne us.§ Thus the symbolism of the same book presents the Saviour under an image designed to set forth this part of His work. While applying to Him the magnificent descriptions of Daniel,|| it prefers the figure of “the lamb slain,”¶ for the sole reason that this belongs to the Christian point of view, and appeals to the conscience at the same time that it strikes the imagination. But the prophet did not invent this figure, it is one of the theological ideas that found earliest expression in the Church; it arose doubtless out of the circumstance that Jesus, being crucified at Easter, after telling His disciples that His blood was to inaugurate the new covenant, appeared to the eye of their mind as the Paschal Lamb of that covenant—that is to say, as the victim whose death was to seal the covenant of a

* Rev. i. 5.

† Rev. vii. 14; comp. iii. 4, and foll.; vi. 11, etc.

‡ Ἀγοραζειν, Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3, 4; comp. 2 Peter ii. 1.

§ Rev. i. 5; iii. 9.

|| The blood in which the vesture of Christ is dipped (Rev. xix. 13) might be the symbol of the bloody victory He was about to gain (Isaiah lxiii.)

¶ Ἀρνιον εσφαγμενον, Rev. v. 6, and foll.; vii. 9, and foll.; xiv. 1, and foll., etc.

sanctified Israel with a reconciled God. For the believers thus washed from their sins are devoted to God,* a holy people,† a peculiar priesthood,‡ gaining the victory over the world§ through the blood of Christ and their own faithfulness to Him. They are marked with the seal of God|| to show that they belong to Him as the first-fruits of the great harvest of the world;¶ and at the same time to guarantee to them His special protection amid the tribulations of this life.

Such are the teachings we gather from writings which, on account of the slight development of their doctrinal theory, and their attachment to traditional ideas, are commonly regarded as the documents of Judæo-Christianity. Many questions yet remain unanswered, or are not yet raised; and among the replies given to others, many which fully meet all the needs of the religious heart are not of a nature to satisfy the intellect. The former may triumph in the persuasion that the blood of Christ has taken away sin; but the latter wants to know how this can be, and how the justice of God is thus satisfied. Theology hastened to take up the problem, and we shall soon see that it was not slow in finding a solution.

* Ἁγιασμένοι, Jude 1.

† Ἅγιοι, Rev. v. 8; xiii. 7, 10; xiv. 12, etc.

‡ Ἱερεῖς, Rev. i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6.

§ Rev. xii. 11.

|| Σφραγίς, Rev. vii. 2, and foll.

¶ Rev. xiv. 4.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.*

WE have been obliged to adopt for this portion of our work a different plan from that which we shall pursue in the two following books. As the documents before us offered no complete system of theology, we have been compelled to make the principal elements of doctrine, not the writings themselves, the headings of our chapters. Many of these documents, however, have sufficient speciality of character to deserve to be studied separately and as a whole, or they will fail to produce upon us their full impression. On this principle we have analyzed the book of Revelation. We now propose to devote this closing chapter of our first volume to the Epistle of James, which is in a certain sense at once the simplest and the highest expression of Judæo-Christianity.

We know that various estimates have been formed of this epistle. Men of very high standing among the theologians of the Church have spoken depreciatingly of it, and from very remote times it has received scant welcome as a part of the sacred canon. It is all the more important that we should endeavour to form a true idea of its tendency and value; and this will not be a very difficult task, if we come to the examination of the question unshackled by doctrinal prejudices, against which the historian should always be peculiarly on his guard.

As purely literary criticism does not belong to the scope of

* See some admirable observations on the Epistle of James in Dörner's "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," Div. I., vol. i., pp. 62—66.—ED.

our present work, we shall not dwell upon the authorship of this epistle, or on the time of its appearance. Suffice it to say, we have met with no argument decisive, in our opinion, against either its authenticity or antiquity. It is true that the affirmative proofs are not more positive; the most probable solution, however, appears to us that which is now adopted by the majority of learned men; it was James the brother of the Lord who addressed this encyclical to the Christians of the circumcision, a few years before the destruction of the temple. Passing by the erudite portion of the discussion, we are about to see how far an examination of the epistle itself and of its theology harmonizes with this supposition.

On the first reading we trace little order or sequence in the ideas of the writer. He has therefore often been reproached with the absence of any plan in the composition of his book, with having allowed himself to be carried along by an almost fortuitous association of ideas. The only dominant thought which has been commonly recognized as underlying all the various exhortations in these pages, is the antithesis between practical Christianity and a purely theoretic and oral profession of faith. We do not share this opinion. Not only do we trace more coherence and unity in this little book, but its physiognomy presents far more characteristic features than the commonplaces thus indicated.

The fundamental thesis of the Epistle of James, that which forms its essence and imparts what may be called its individual colouring, is a principle with which the Jewish mind was already familiar before the Gospel era. It is, in one word, the antagonism between the friendship or love of the world and the friendship of God; the one procuring an illusive and momentary good, but pre-doomed and certainly fatal to those who seek it; the other inseparable from suffering and tribulation in the time present, but happy in hope and secure of reward. With this antithesis the writer commences, and after recurring to it repeatedly in the first two chapters, he lays it down as a principle in the fourth,* and goes on drawing from it

* Φίλια τοῦ κόσμου, James iv. 4.

practical consequences, and showing its application in detail, till the middle of the fifth chapter. It will be remembered that we have shown this antithesis to be the parent idea of ancient and pure Ebionitism. We have the less hesitation in drawing this analogy, because we have not here found the Ebionite principle anywhere removed from its original sphere, or raised to that of the Gospel, either by a fresh analysis of its motives or a new demonstration of its sanctions. In the parts of the epistle connected with this fundamental idea, there is not a word which rises above the level of the Old Testament.* So true is this, that many writers have gone so far as to say that the Epistle of James must have been written at a time when the separation of the Church from the Synagogue had not yet commenced.

According to the practical character of the book, this fundamental idea is presented, on the one hand, as a consolation, an encouragement to those who have chosen the good part, and whose perseverance may need to be sustained under the trial of suffering and poverty: on the other hand, it appears as a stern and threatening warning to those who are enjoying the world regardless of the future. This warning is expressed in terms so sweeping that one might be almost led to imagine wealth was regarded as in itself a sign of sin, or, at least, as its one source,† while poverty appears as a title to the favour of God, and as synonymous with Christianity and righteousness.‡

We need not enter into fuller details in order to bring out more clearly the moral character of this epistle. The remarks we have previously made on the severity of the ethical principles professed in the early Church, here find their complete justification; and, in truth, those principles, under the special sanction of the teaching of Jesus, were preserved intact in all the apostolic schools, in spite of the diversity of the methods adopted for their enforcement. We desire, however, to call

* "The end of the Lord," chap. v. 11, is not the death of Christ, but the final compensation given by God to Job.

† James ii. 1, and foll.; iv. 13, and foll.; v. 1, and foll.

‡ James ii. 5, 7; v. 6.

special attention to some points more striking than the rest, because of the very brevity of the epistle, and which will guide us in our judgment, or raise objections to the traditional exegesis.

Tribulations* are to be rejoiced in by those whose confidence is in God,† because they serve to strengthen their trust and to make them patient until the coming of the Judge, who will surely come and not tarry, and whose hand will hold out to those who love Him better than the world§ the promised crown. But there is all the more reason to congratulate the man who *endures* this trial, inflicted by a hostile world, because it is only too often the occasion of a fall.|| A secret tendency¶ leads man to covet the good things of this world; this tendency, to which the devil appeals in order to lead us astray,** is so powerful by the illusions it presents, that it gives rise to vice and crime, jealousy, envy, covetousness, even murder; and man is only delivered from it on condition that he renounces the world for the friendship of God, who alone can give him truly good and perfect gifts.†† This friendship with God is manifested, on the one hand, by the careful avoidance of contact with the pollution that is in the world;‡‡ and on the other hand, by the earnest endeavour to diffuse all around the blessings of true charity, succouring the needy and distressed.§§ Let it not be thought that the performance of these duties is set forth by the apostle as a very easy thing, because he speaks of his brethren

* The common exegesis insists that James speaks of two kinds of *πειρασμοί*, those which come from God, "trials," chap. i. 2, 12, and those which are of the devil, "temptations," chap. i. 13; iv. 7. The transition from v. 12 to v. 13 would then be most abrupt, and approaching a play on words.

† Πίστις, chap. i. 3.

‡ James v. 8.

§ James i. 12; ii. 5.

|| James i. 13.

¶ Ἐπιθυμία, James i. 14; iv. 2.

** James iv. 7.

†† James i. 17.

‡‡ James i. 20, 27; iv. 8.

§§ James i. 27; ii. 15, and foll.

as righteous men;* he knows only too well that we are all sinners;† he attaches no merit to any observance of the commandments of God that comes short of absolute perfection,‡ and he points out that it is specially important to avoid what are called little sins,§ because true righteousness, such as God seeks,|| is incompatible with them.

Here, then, we have in few words the substance of the morality preached by James. Assuredly he is not open to the reproach of having lowered the standard of duty or made any compromise from a practical point of view. But it will be also admitted, after what we have said, that there is as yet no distinct indication of a spirit which, in accounting to itself and to others for the place assigned to the world by the Gospel, should have sought to discern in the Gospel some great fact, some new idea, to form the basis of its teaching. The motives by which the precepts and exhortations are sustained, are uniformly the near appearing of the Judge, and the certainty of speedy judgment—a judgment resting upon the principle of compensation, we might say of retaliation.¶ We here recognize, using the word without intending to convey any reproach, the character of Judæo-Christian morality.

If we pass on to ideas belonging more specially to the sphere of theology, we trace the same characteristics. We may note, first, that the writer's mind, being preoccupied by the popular and practical purpose of his teaching, might easily pass by matters pertaining to another sphere; we believe, however, that even had he been addressing another class of minds, he would not have entered on the speculative questions of religious metaphysics. But there is another element, the absence of which is remarkable as a fact which fully confirms the opinion, so widely diffused in our own time, as in the time of Luther, of the theological tone of the Epistle of James. We refer to the

* James v. 16.

† James iii. 2.

‡ James ii. 10.

§ James iii. 2.

|| James i. 20.

¶ James v. 7, and foll. ; i. 9, and foll. ; ii. 13.

mystical element. There is in the whole course of the book only one single expression which could by possibility be construed as representing it; this occurs in chap. i. 18, where, speaking of regeneration, it ascribes its origin to the operation of God. This idea, which we shall find filling a large and important place in Pauline theology, here stands, so to speak, absolutely alone; but as the epistle before us does not contain a systematic exposition of doctrine, it would not be just to deny on that account the nature and significance of these words. Nor must it be forgotten that the generation by which we are said to become a kind of first-fruits of His creatures* is effected by the word of truth, that is by the preaching of the word of God, first listened to and then practised. When it is said that His word is engrafted or implanted in us,† it is only a figure borrowed from husbandry, and does not represent a transformation of our nature; for the writer adds that the word *is able* to save us provided we act according to it. This application giving definiteness to the thought of the apostle, transfers it at the same time almost completely from the sphere of mysticism to that of legal morality.

Neither does the repeated mention of faith raise us again into the more transcendental sphere. This faith is simply trust in God, as opposed to doubt and irresolution;‡ it rests upon the consideration of the divine power and mercy;§ it refers essentially to things to come, to the inheritance of the kingdom,|| and to the glorious manifestation of Christ that will usher it in; it is then, in truth, a synonym for hope. We shall speak more at large of the antithesis between faith and works, on which James insists so strongly, when we have analyzed Paul's teaching on this subject. The ideas conveyed in this

* Ἀπαρχή may be understood as indicating either dignity or priority in time. If the former, it represents generally the superiority of the Christian over the other creatures of God; if the latter, the phrase refers to the contemporaries of James, and the logical accent falls upon ἡμᾶς.

† Ἐμφύτος, James i. 21.

‡ Πίστις, James i. 6.

§ James v. 15.

|| James ii. 1, 5.

epistle of death and of the salvation of souls,*—which are correlatives, inasmuch as salvation here signifies simply preservation from death,—do not go beyond the scope of a teaching which acknowledges and establishes an intimate relation between the deeds of the present life and the fate of the future.

Finally, it is important for us to observe that the person of Christ is not the object of the teaching. We have no intention of following certain illustrious theologians, who because the name of the Lord † only occurs twice in the course of the epistle, are disposed to place it among apocryphal books. Would God that wherever that name is acknowledged in our own day with high-sounding words, there were a zeal for His commandments equal to that we find in these pages.‡ Nevertheless, this very silence indicates the particular shade of theology with which we have to deal here; Christology, as we judge, is still confounded with eschatology. The work of Christ during His earthly sojourn was to preach the word of truth according to the will of God; happy they who hear and do; for them He will come again, to receive them into His kingdom and glory.§ This is the substance of this part of the teaching of our epistle. We have no need to remind our readers, that we have already discovered far more than this in the very heart of Judæo-Christianity. But let us note another fact which may tend to reassure us as to the significance of the former, and which deserves to be made prominent. This short Epistle of James alone contains more reminiscences of the discourses of Jesus than all the other writings of the New Testament put together. If this is not always immediately apparent to a superficial reader, we must remember two things: first, that we read the thoughts of the Saviour to-day, not in the idiom in which they were originally uttered; and second, that it was assuredly not from our written gospels that the author of the epistle drew

* James i. 15, 21; v. 20.

† James i. 1; ii. 1.

‡ Matt. vii. 21.

§ James ii. 1; v. 7, 8.

his allusions and citations.* In the words of a modern theologian, those quotations would not necessarily prove that which is known in our day as orthodoxy; but we hold that, coming as they do from a writer who, in all probability, gathered them in close intimacy with Jesus and His first disciples, they are sufficient guarantee of the truthfulness of his religious teaching.

It is of some interest to mark how this epistle expresses itself in relation to the law. The name and the authority of the law are appealed to in several instances, but the purely ritual portion of it is passed over in silence, and we have no authority for determining the precise value attached to it by the apostle. Prayer is the only ascetic exercise of which he makes any express mention,† and this does not belong to what may be called the Mosaic ritual, in the strict meaning of the term. The writer only appeals to the law in confirmation of the ethical principles clearly enjoined by the Gospel,—the love of one's neighbour, for example, and the great precepts of the Decalogue;‡ and it is in view of such axioms, which rise far above the sphere of party disputation, that the absolute authority of the law is maintained.§ When we see, then, that the apostle calls the law a law of liberty,|| the description can refer only to the deliverance from the thralldom of sin, a characteristic belonging to the Christian alone, in view of the judgment which awaits him. This is said in express terms in the passage last quoted; in the other we are led no less surely to the same result, if we take into account the preceding

* See James v. 12, and Matt. v. 34; James ii. 8, and Matt. xii. 31, etc.; James iv. 12, and Matt. x. 28, etc.; James ii. 13, and Matt. v. 7, etc.; James v. 15, and Matt. ix. 1, and foll. and *passim*. The *δίψυχος*, James i. 8, iv. 8, is the *ὀλιγόπιστος* so frequently blamed in the Gospel. With reference to riches, the parallels are readily found; for example, Matt. xix. 23; Luke vi. 24; comp. James v. 2, with Matt. vi. 19; James i. 17, with Matt. vii. 11; James i. 20, with Matt. v. 22; James i. 22, and foll., with Matt. vii. 21, foll., etc.; James i. 25, with John xiii. 17, etc.

† James v. 13, and foll.

‡ James ii. 8, 10.

§ James iv. 11.

|| James i. 25; ii. 12; νόμος ἐλευθερίας.

allegory.* The man who beholds himself in the mirror (of the law), there perceives first of all his own blemishes. Then there remains one of two things, either he may go away and straightway forget them, or he may remain before the mirror till the stains are removed from his face, and the glass reflects a purified image of himself. Thus the law remains the code of the Christian; it may and can lead him to correct his faults, and it is by it he will be judged. All this belongs to the sphere of Judæo-Christianity, and we repeat it once again, this term conveys no reproach, but simply defines a particular shade of Christian theology.

We have reserved to the last one special point which does not come within the scope of the theoretic teaching of this epistle, but which is none the less characteristic of its tendency. As we read it straight through, we cannot but be struck with the warmth with which the author denounces the impatience men show to speak, to preach, to become the instructors of others; and it is impossible not to perceive that this propensity is, in his view, the source of much idle talk † and quarrelling, and consequently is highly injurious to the Church. True wisdom and knowledge, that which comes from God, the one Lawgiver, the one Fountain of Truth, is distinguished by the spirit of peace and concord which accompanies it.‡ If men claim to possess this knowledge, they must prove it by their blameless conduct and brotherly love,§ not by making the tongue the principal instrument of their activity. It is perfectly obvious that there is an association of ideas between these remonstrances in the third chapter and the famous discussion going before, to which we shall advert again. If we have apprehended rightly the thought of the apostle, he designs to mark with disapproval the growing influence of theological disputation upon the development of the life of the Church. The taste for arguing, for polemics, for scholastic discussions, seems to him likely

* James i. 23, 24.

† James i. 19; iii. 1, 6, 14, and foll.

‡ James iii. 17, and foll.; comp. i. 5; iv. 12.

§ James iii. 13.

to mislead the Church as to its true end, to trouble its peace and humble joy, and to change the character of its unpretending faith and simple virtues. His warnings read like the first startled shrinking of piety from the flights of science. Can we wonder at the manifestation of such a feeling on the part of a writer who is as remarkable for the sententious, often practical, truly oriental cast of his style, as for the austerity of his principles, and the lucid precision of his precepts? Little accustomed himself to the dialectic art, and esteeming action more highly than speech, was it not natural that controversy should appear to him as the first step beyond the safe and sacred enclosure? He does not set one theory against another; he is not even mainly occupied with the great theme of which the others speak; he fears the noise of tongues—a barren, fruitless sound; he protests against the much speaking, because it hinders action, or dries up the source from which action should spring. We find here, then, a very lawful simplicity, a modesty which commands respect, the simple expression of the spirit of the primitive Church, content with what it possessed, without having acquired any scientific consciousness, all the more happy in its hopes that it never thought of questioning them, and, beyond all, sure of its duty, and determined to do it. We may discern here a defective intelligence, failing to appropriate the vast treasures of wisdom contained in the Gospel; but assuredly we shall not discover any dangerous error, or any aberration of heart.

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